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Synagogue, Judaism and Jewish Identity and the Intermarried Couple

by

Stephen D. Gold

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

1987

Referee, Professor Robert L. Katz

To Cindy

Table of Contents

DIGEST

"Synagogue Judaism and Jewish Identity and the Intermarried Couple" contains a chapter reviewing the recent literature on Jewish intermarriage. This chapter surveys the definitions of intermarriage, its causes and its effects. The effects of intermarriage are discussed in terms of Jewish survival as well as its qualitative effects as viewed from the perspectives of communal issues and personal issues.

The remainder of this thesis is the documentation of the author's own qualitative study of ten Jewishly affiliated intermarried couples. The study is based upon in-depth interviews with the couples and it begins with a full account of the methodology. The methodology describes the selection and procurement of respondents, includes and explains the rationale for the interview schedule, and it outlines the data collection procedures.

The next chapter reports on the findings under the following rubrics: the couples, families of origin and their interfaith attitudes, interfaith attitudes of the couples, their courtship and wedding, religious observances and the home, religious upbringing and education of children and religious affiliation and acceptance in the Jewish community.

The fourth and final chapter contains a summary and evaluation of the findings by category as well as a conclusion. The author concludes that the intermarried couples in his study have a Jewish identity which contains some Christian elements. Judaism was the dominant religion,

but the families' commitment to Judaism and to raising their children as Jews will undergo challenges and illustrate the need for these couples to make more religious decisions as their children grow older. Possible reasons for the dominance of Judaism in these families are discussed. The author claims that other Jewishly affiliated intermarried couples share this Jewish identity, and that this identity can only be nurtured in a community willing to accept it.

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I wish to express my gratitude to a number of people without whom I could not have written this thesis. Dr. Robert Katz, the adviser for this thesis, was instrumental each step of the way--from the proposal design to the structure of individual chapters. I am grateful to him for sharing his expertise so readily.

I must also thank Rabbis Alan D. Fuchs, Solomon T. Greenberg, Gerry H. Walter and Gary Zola who were all indispensable in helping me to find respondents for my study. I am also exceedingly indebted to the respondents themselves for agreeing to participate in the study, giving of their time and for sharing so much of themselves.

My wife, Cindy, typed much of the interview transcripts--a tedious job, and for that I am very grateful. But Cindy lent much more than practical support. She never complained during the long periods of time I was away at night conducting the interviews. Cindy helped me take a break when I needed it, and made me work the rest of the time with gentle reminders. Most of all, when everyone else wanted me to abandon this project and write a more conventional thesis, Cindy steadfastly insisted that I forge ahead. I thank God for her wisdom and for her confidence in me.

S.D.G.

Cincinnati
February 28, 1987

INTRODUCTION

Lydia Kukoff* observed that many intermarried couples are now joining congregations. This was not the case, she added, fifteen or even ten years ago--it is a revolution.

Revolutions interest me, and I wanted to learn more. I had always assumed that Jews who intermarried would probably not maintain close ties to the Jewish community. After all, they intermarried--I guess they did not want to. But then in one of the first articles I read, Kerry M. Olitzky asserts,

> This is the first generation in which non-Jewish members of the family have sought membership in synagogues, participated in Brotherhood and Sisterhood functions, and joined with others on various committees whose decisions steer the future course of American Judaism.[1]

I was now even more curious to learn more about this "revolution," but I did not just want to read about it in books. I wanted to see it close up. I wanted to meet the people who were shattering my assumptions, who were waging the revolution.

*Member of and Program Consultant to the Task Force on Reform Jewish Outreach of the UAHC and the CCAR.

This thesis is a product of my observations from the "front lines." The first chapter is a summary of all that I learned from the books and articles on the subject of intermarriage. The rest of the thesis is the methodology, findings and analysis of my own in-depth study of ten Jewishly affiliated intermarried couples in Cincinnati. Norman B. Mirsky's words gave some inspiration as I set forth on my own path.

> That is if we restrict ourselves to attempting to verify what we already believe to be true without venturing into the risky waters of possible error we will be doing a disservice both to those who have entrusted us to become explorers of unknown territory and to the territory itself--the land of the Jewish-American soul.[2]

Notes

[1]Kerry M. Olitzky, "The Teacher's Challenge," Compass, 8, No. 1 (Fall 1984), 16.

[2]Norman B. Mirsky, "Informal Judaism and Jewishness: A Partial Taxonomy," Paper delivered to the Research Design Subcommittee of the Task Force on Interfaith Marriages, pp. 2-3.

Chapter 1

Survey of the Recent Literature on Intermarriage

People have written about intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews for about as long as they have been marrying one another. The phenomenon and the topic are not new. Therefore, this chapter, surveying the literature on the subject, is restricted to recent offerings. However, recent writing on the subject mentions earlier work, so this work was not absent from the research.

I had three main reasons for reviewing the literature on intermarriage. Before designing my own research, it was helpful to see what had already been said on the subject. The literature helped me define many of the issues I would want to explore in my own work. Acquaintance with the issues raised helped me formulate specific questions I would ask the couples. In addition, having surveyed recent work in the field, I could then compare its findings to my findings, looking for similarities and differences. What follows, then, is a distillation of the current work on Jewish intermarriage.

A. Introducing the Issues

Because of the plethora of issues dealing with the subject of intermarriage, this chapter is organized by issue. There is by no means agreement as to just what constitutes a Jewish intermarriage and what term best labels such a marriage. The second section, therefore, addresses itself to this fundamental issue. Interest in the causes of

intermarriage was and still is prevalent in the literature. Section C, then, relates what authorities propose are the causes of this phenomenon. Intermarriage has aroused the greatest alarm and amount of debate in the Jewish community because of its perceived threat to the survival of the Jewish people. Section D surveys the debate on this issue. In recent years, the literature now reflects a concern--with the qualitative effects of intermarriage. The last two sections will address these issues considering them first from the perspective of the community and then from the perspective of the individual.

B. Definitions of Jewish Intermarriage

Just what constitutes a Jewish intermarriage should be easy enough to explain: it is simply a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. Unfortunately, reaching a definition of Jewish intermarriage is not that simple. In the Jewish view, an intermarriage is just as described above--a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. The fact that one partner in a Jewish marriage is not a born Jew but has converted to Judaism has no bearing on the status of that marriage as a Jewish marriage. Religiously speaking, both partners are Jews, and so their union is not an intermarriage. On the sociological view, however, the distinction is made between born Jews and converts. So, on this view, an intermarriage is a union between a born Jew and a person not born Jewish. Thus, even where a conversion takes place, whether before or after the marriage, that marriage is, sociologically speaking, an

intermarriage. Judaism and sociology, therefore, have different criteria for what constitutes an intermarriage.

Both Jewish tradition and sociological research have good reasons for regarding intermarriage differently. For Judaism, there are halahic, even ethical, reasons for considering converts fully as Jews. Consequently, their marriages must be characterized as Jewish. Sociology, for its part, does not even make a judgment on the religious status of converts; instead it views the entire dynamic of the marriage in formulating its characterization of such a marriage. In "Sociological Research on Jewish Intermarriage," Mark L. Winer explains that the convert's kinship network is non-Jewish, and this reality influences their behavior.[1] Moreover, we should add, that the born Jews in such a marriage have non-Jewish in-laws, and the reality of this network will affect the marriage similarly to the way it affects marriages between Jews and non-Jews. For the different standards of Jewish practice and sociological research, then, these different definitions of Jewish intermarriage are valid. Moreover, both are instructive. It is important to regard converts as Jews without question, but it is also important to realize that their background and family are not Jewish, and this affects the marriage. We need both definitions, therefore, but we must be clear on which one we or others mean when we use the term "Jewish intermarriage" in any given discussion.

Even where the definition being used is specified, different writers use different terms to identify marriages between Jews and non-Jews, people not born Jewish. In a series of articles in the Fall

1984 edition of Compass Magazine devoted to this subject, the writers use a variety of terms, and they point out which definition they mean. For example, In "Insights into Attitudes," Joel D. Oseran uses the terms "interfaith marriage" and "mixed marriage" interchangeably. In a footnote he defines "interfaith marriages" as one "where one spouse in the couple is not Jewish and has not converted to Judaism."[2] Oseran clearly implies, then, that a marriage where one partner has converted is not an "interfaith marriage." Bruce Kadden makes this distinction explicit in his article, "The Educator's Challenge" when he comments, "for the purpose of this article, an interfaith or intermarriage is a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. If a conversion has occurred, it is no longer an intermarriage."[3] Kadden uses the terms "interfaith marriage" and "intermarriage" interchangeably, and he seems to be aware of the sociological definition since he points out the Jewish view in cases of conversion, but he realized that he is defining his terms for use in a particular context.

To cite another example, in their article in the Journal of Reform Judaism, Melanie W. Aron and David Jeremy Zucker use the term "mixed marriage," and they apply a very broad definition to this term. They state, "we consider 'mixed marriage' to encompass a relationship between two individuals only one of whom identified himself/herself or is identified as being Jewish."[4] This definition implies that where conversions take place, these marriages are certainly not "mixed marriages," since the converts (presumably) also identify themselves as being Jewish. Moreover, another possible implication is that marriages where non-Jewish spouses have not formally converted to Judaism also may

not be considered "mixed marriages" according to this definition. That is, if these non-Jewish spouses no longer practice their former religion and, in fact, practice Judaism, they may identify themselves or be identified as being Jewish. Thus, the marriage is not a "mixed marriage" according to Aron and Zucker's broad definition. Clearly then, different authorities apply different terms to identify marriages between Jews and non-Jews.

Yet other authorities show distinctions between the different terms. They apply one term to one kind of marriage between a born Jew and a person not born Jewish, and they apply another term to a different kind of marriage between a born Jew and a person not born Jewish. These authorities recognize important differences among these marriages. For example, Albert Gordon makes a distinction between the terms "intermarriage" and "mixed marriage," using the term "mixed marriage" to mean a marriage where the partners keep their religious identifies.[5] Egon Mayer also makes a distinction between the terms "intermarriage" and "mixed marriage" in his 1976 national study. For his study, Mayer accepted the sociological definition of intermarriage. But he was aware that some of his respondents had converted, so he applied two additional terms to describe different kinds of intermarriages. The term "mixed marriage" was reserved for couples where no conversion had taken place, and the term "conversionary marriage" was applied to couples where the non-Jewish spouse had converted to Judaism.[6] Mayer recognized that there would be possible differences between these kinds of marriages, and in the name of precision, he was able to take into account both the needs of sociological research and the Jewish viewpoint. Mayer employs

the same terminology and definitions in his book, Love & Tradition: Marriage Between Jews and Christians.[7]

Winer also attempts to use terms that precisely reflect reality when he warns against the misuse of the term "interfaith marriage." He claims that this term ignores the ethnic component of Jewish identity because it assumes that a Jewish intermarriage is only interreligious. Winer views Jewish intermarriage as both interfaith and interethnic.[8]

Defining Jewish intermarriage, then, is not that easy a task. Because of the many varieties of situations, any one term is not sufficient. It is either too broad to describe important differences among the variety of marriages, or it is too narrow to include the differences among marriages. The Jewish view is right in not considering a marriage between a born Jew and a convert as an intermarriage, but then we should not ignore important differences between these marriages and those between two born Jews. The sociologists are correct in pointing this out, but incorrect if they employ only the one term, "intermarriage," to refer to both marriages between born Jews and converts and those between Jews and non-Jews. Now it is the sociologist who would be ignoring important differences between these types of marriages. Mayer's terminology and Winer's observation about the ethnic component in marriages are therefore excellent in their use of precise terms to describe complex phenomena. Yet there is no reason to believe that these phenomena will remain constant. As reality continues to change and present us with new

situations, we will need to develop new terminology if we want to discuss these new phenomena precisely and intelligently.

NOTE: For the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to use the term "intermarriage" as Egon Mayer defines it. Since my research does not deal with couples where one partner has converted to Judaism, the intermarriages discussed here do not include conversionary marriages. Unless otherwise specified, "intermarriage" refers to "Jewish intermarriage."

C. What Causes Intermarriage?

For many centuries in Europe, Jews who intermarried were largely motivated by a desire to shed their minority status which was despised by the majority culture. As Charles Silberman states, "for socially ambitious Jews, intermarriage and baptism were two sides of the same 'ticket of admission' to the larger culture."[9] Many of these Jews were also economically ambitious, since their new status as a Christian entitled them to engage in various business and commercial enterprises that were formerly denied to them as Jews. Silberman notes that similar motivations accompanied intermarriage in the United States with the ruse of antisemitism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[10] The desire to rid oneself of one's Jewish identity through intermarriage, however, may not be the only cause of intermarriage; for the cause of this phenomenon in one place at one time may not be the cause at another place and time. Despite the exception noted above, the Jewish experience in America has been very different than in Europe. Generally, Jews have been permitted to participate in the social and

economic culture of this country. Yet, intermarriage still persists, and to a much larger degree than at earlier times. Other causes, therefore, must be sought to explain intermarriage in a society that permits Jews full participation without demanding that they lose their religious identity. Indeed, other causes have been sought, and the literature on Jewish intermarriage is full of theories to explain this phenomenon. This section, therefore, will attempt to relate what researchers have proposed are the causes of intermarriage and what their reasoning is for suggesting these causes.

Most agree that in eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, intermarriages were frequent because of the small and dispersed Jewish population. Simply, there just was not a wide selection of Jewish marriage partners. However, with each succeeding wave of Jewish immigration, the Jewish population grew. The first generation immigrants had a strong Jewish identity (even if many were not very observant), and they tended to live near one another. Intermarriage rates were low. But according to Julius Drachsler, who conducted the first systematic study of intermarriage in America, the rates went up for the second generation of Eastern European Jews.[11] The rate of intermarriage rose for every succeeding generation, according to Mark L. Winer.[12] With more Jews available, why were more marrying non-Jews? There must have been other forces at work.

Marshall Sklare suggests that before World War II Jews intermarried to escape their identity and thereby escape antisemitism which was inhibiting their upward social mobility. But after the war, Sklare contends, there was less antisemitism, and Jews began intermarrying for

different reasons. Now Jews who intermarried were not concerned with religious differences; they accepted the universalistic values now being espoused in the universities. The ideal of romantic love was also a strong factor, according to Sklare.[13]

Albert Gordon echoes Sklare's opinion in his book Intermarriage: Interfaith, Interracial, Interethnic, published in 1964. He also points to the rising numbers of students attending universities, and the fact that these places of higher education convey secular values. Gordon also considers the culture's de-emphasizing of religious differences along with the desegregation of our society as factors in the rise of intermarriage.[14]

More recently, other writers point to the special quality of American society as a cause of intermarriage. In A Certain People, Charles Silberman considers the "open society" in which Jews and Gentiles live, work, study and socialize together as a cause of intermarriage. "Since the choice of marriage partners is strongly influenced by 'propinquity' . . . marriages between Jews and Gentiles have become more common."[15] Bruce Kadden, in his article, "The Educator's Challenge," believes that intermarriage is a result of Jews leaving the "ghettos" and integrating into general society.[16] In Kerry M. Olitzky's "The Teacher's Challenge," the ". . . realities and results of living in a free, religiously pluralistic society" is cited as a factor in intermarriage.

Egon Mayer neatly sums up these types of views as belonging to social scientists who are demographically inclined since they ". . . believe that individual behavior is largely determined by population

composition and the constraints and opportunities it offers."[17] On this view, then, intermarriage occurs as a result of the social environment where the chances are good for people to meet, fall in love with and marry people not belonging to their own religious or ethnic group.[18]

Other researchers, however, do not see the causes of intermarriage as socially determined. Instead, they look at family influences and psychological phenomena as being responsible for intermarriage. A study conducted by Bernard Farber, Leonard Gordon and Albert J. Mayer in the Kansas City metropolitan area in 1976 notes that religious upbringing was a factor. Their findings suggest that the less traditional the religious upbringing offered by the parents to the children was, the greater were the chances of those children intermarrying.[19] Gordon also sees direct parental influence as a factor when he cites a lessening of parental authority as a cause of intermarriage.[20]

More subtle psychological influences are seen as the cause of intermarriage by yet other authorities. Egon Mayer nicely summarizes the work of Louis Berman whose book, Jews and Intermarriage: A Study in Personality and Culture, published in 1968 examines the psychological make-up of Jews who intermarried. Berman found that excessive attachment between mothers and sons, or between fathers and daughters, excessive mothering and/or fathering, repressing sexual training in puberty and adolescence and existential insecurity were all psychological factors contributing to intermarriage.[21] Mayer reasons that if these psychological traits are not found in most Jewish intermarriers, then they explain very little in terms of why people

intermarry. But if these traits are found in many Jews who are intermarried, then there is good reason to believe they are also found in many Jews who did not intermarry. If this is the case, then these traits certainly do not explain why some of these Jews intermarried. Yet Mayer is willing to assume (as Berman asserts) that those who intermarried, at and before the time Berman wrote his book, did have a different psychological make-up than those who did not intermarry because Berman draws on research done when ". . . intermarriage was a rather uncommon, highly stigmatized phenomenon. . . ."[22] However, this is not the case today, argues Mayer, so these explanations, if accurate then, are "obsolete" today.[23]

At least one of Berman's ideas is not obsolete, however, since his theory about sibling position as a factor in intermarriage has been picked up in the recent literature. Berman theorized that the youngest child in a family has the greatest chances of intermarrying followed by only children, and the oldest child is the least likely to intermarry.[24] In his article, "Psychological Implications of Mixed Marriage," Sanford Seltzer informs us that Monica McGoldrick and Nydia Preto, writing in 1984, refer to what they call "detriangulation" in their article, "Ethnic Intermarriage, Implications for Therapy." Detriangulation is a clinical symptom of intermarriage in which a child uses the marriage to escape the sense of entrapment in one's family of origin.[25] In another article entitled, "The Myth of the Shiksa," Edwin H. Friedman expands on this theory of detriangulation. Friedman rejects theories which explain intermarriage as a result of Jews who are uncommitted. He also finds unconvincing, explanations which contend that if the child comes from a

strongly Jewish family, the child must be rebelling.[26] He asks, if Jewish commitment prevented intermarriages in many cases, ". . . why did it not have the same prophylactic effect in many other families?"[27] Friedman claims, "over and over, I found that the Jewish partners who came from a family with a strong cultural tie felt intensely Jewish despite their decision to marry a non-Jew."[28] He determines, therefore, that while children are influenced by cultural family background, this influence is only indirect, for the way children perceive and are influenced by the culture depends upon their position within the family.[29] Interestingly enough, Friedman found that Jews who intermarried the most ". . . overwhelmingly occupied the sibling position of oldest or only. . . ."[30] He therefore agrees with Berman about the only children but disagrees completely about the oldest, since Berman believed it was the youngest child who was most likely to intermarry and the oldest who was the least likely.

In Love & Tradition, Egon Mayer considers the possibility that the different values that different Jews hold may explain why some Jews intermarry and why some do not. Mayer believes that the "conventional wisdom" is that different values do account for intermarriage. But after examining scholarship over the past thirty years and recent survey data, Mayer contends that they do not support the "conventional wisdom."[31] Mayer concludes, then, that

> Intermarriage, like all marriage, then, is the outcome of an intricate developmental process in which emotions, values, and perceptions are reflected upon and negotiated within and between the partners, as well as between the partners and their respective families.[32]

Even this survey of the causes of intermarriage as portrayed in the literature illustrates the variety of explanations that have been suggested. Which ones are right? Perhaps all of them are right and all of them are wrong. They are all correct, but for only some people some of the time, so they are all incorrect for the rest of the people the rest of the time. As times and circumstances change, researchers will very likely detect new motivations for the persistent phenomenon of intermarriage.

But why is discovering the cause of intermarriage so vital? Curiosity about our society and wanting to understand why people do the things they do is reason enough. But it is more than just curiosity, for underlying some of the work in this area is the belief that intermarriage is a problem that we must solve, so once we know the cause of the problem we can put a stop to it. Underlying this belief is the assumption that intermarriage is a threat to Jewish survival. Statistics on intermarriage are cited in support of this view, but as we shall see, there is always new statistical data, and different authorities disagree as to what they portend for the Jewish future. We turn then to a consideration of this issue.

D. Jewish Survival and the Effects of Intermarriage

"Each intermarriage drives a nail in the coffin of Judaism." So said the radical Reform Rabbi David Einhorn in the mid-nineteenth century. More than a century later, Rabbi Sol Roth, former president of the Rabbinic Council of America, called intermarriage "a holocaust of our own making."[33] Writing in the introduction to Egon Mayer's 1976

national study on intermarriage, Yehuda Rosenman states that he hopes the report will help the Jewish community ". . . assess the impact of intermarriage on Jewish life and plan policies and programs to ameliorate its threat to the Jewish future."[34] The attitudes of these three men have been and still are shared by most Jews. As Edwin H. Friedman states in "The Myth of the Shiksa," "There can be no question that within the Jewish ethnic community intermarriage has long been perceived as a major threat to the survival of the Jewish people and their way of life.[35]

Yet as always with the Jewish people, there is a minority opinion. Another reformer and a contemporary of Einhorn, Samuel Holdheim performed the first known marriage between a Jew and a Christian. He believed that intermarriage affirms the ideals of universalism, teaching that we are the children of the "one Father who created us all." Since the universalistic ideal includes a world where peace and harmony reign and where differences are met with tolerance and mutual understanding, Holdheim probably did not believe intermarriage was a threat to Jewish survival, but rather, just the opposite. Over a century later, there are still voices echoing this minority opinion. One such "voice" is Charles Silberman, who writes, "far from being 'a holocaust of our own making,' . . . intermarriage may actually increase the number of Jews and provide a much-needed spiritual boost as well. . . ."[36]

Which opinion is correct? What are the implications of intermarriage for Jewish survival? Many research studies have been conducted that give us data with which to address these questions. Several books and essays in the literature on intermarriage summarize

the research that has been done on the subject. Mark L. Winer's "Sociological Research on Intermarriage," A Certain People by Charles Silberman, and Bernard Lazerwitz's article, "Intermarriage and Conversion: A Guide for Future Research" to name just a few, all provide a detailed summary of the studies that have been done on the subject and their findings. Also, virtually anything that has been written on intermarriage cites a statistic or two in the course of its discussion. However, ". . . conclusions about the incidence of intermarriage," says Marshall Sklare, "depend to a large extent upon which survey one chooses."[37] That is, different studies indicate very different intermarriage rates. Complicating our task even further, different researchers and sociologists draw different conclusions about Jewish population growth even when they draw their conclusions from the same statistical data! As Winer comments, "One can examine the incidence of Jewish intermarriage from the perspectives of 'the glass half-empty or half-full'."[38] Therefore, we can expect different people to have different predictions concerning Jewish survival.

In "Intermarriage & Jewish Survival" (Commentary, March 1970), Marshall Sklare takes the rather pessimistic approach. His view is informed by the premise that intermarriage is a threat to Jewish survival. He writes, "it is intermarriage which weighs more heavily than all the positive trends combined; and which calls into question the 'creative survival' of the American Jewish community."[39] This point, comments Sklare, should not be ". . . surprising, since intermarriage strikes at the very core of Jewish group existence."[40] Sklare contends that intermarried couples are more outside the sphere of the Jewish

community than are inmarried couples. Citing a 1965 Boston survey which found a 7 percent cumulative intermarriage rate, Sklare notes that the incidence of intermarriage is highest (20 percent) among young couples. Sklare reasons, that since these young couples are also most likely to have children, they have the greatest "influence" on the future of the Jewish community.[41] Later on, Sklare expresses doubts that children of intermarriages will remain in the Jewish community.[42] For Sklare, therefore, the influence he speaks of must mean a decrease in Jewish population. Sklare's premise that intermarriage necessarily decreases the Jewish population, perhaps grows out of his belief that intermarried couples do not raise Jewish children. As we shall see, this view is challenged, but there is also research data that supports Sklare's doubts about intermarried couples raising their children as Jews. Finally, Sklare observes that intermarriage signals an end to discrimination against Jews and full acceptance to and equality with the rest of the population. (This state of affairs is how Samuel Holdheim would have it.) However, concludes Sklare, intermarriage also makes one doubt the "basic premise," the "article of faith" that Jews can live in a free society and remain vibrantly Jewish.[43]

Bernard Lazerwitz conducted a qualitative study in the late 1960s where he compared the group identity of converts and intermarried in Catholic, Jewish and Protestant intermarriages. He presented his study and findings in an article entitled, "Intermarriage and Conversion: a Guide for Future Research" (The Jewish Journal of Sociology, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1971). His specific findings will be summarized later in this chapter, but in general Lazerwitz concludes that ". . . the basic threat

to Jewish continuity does not stem from intermarriage. Rather intermarriage (without conversion) is but a symptom of diaspora Jewry's growing dissatisfaction with contemporary Jewish institutions and cultural forms."[44]

While Bernard Lazerwitz was completing his study, a national survey of the United States Jewish population was being prepared. This survey was known as the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS), completed in 1971. The NJPS was a quantitative study and it measured intermarriage rates for the entire country for particular periods of time. It found that for marriages before 1940, the intermarriage rate was 2 to 3 percent; for marriages between 1941 and 1960, the rate was 6 to 7 percent; between 1960 and 1965, it was 17 percent; and between 1965 and 1970, of those Jewish individuals marrying, 32 percent of them intermarried.[46] Significantly, the cumulative rate of all Jews intermarried was only 9 percent,[46] yet clearly the current rate for 1965-1970 was much higher. This statistic reveals precisely what the 1967 Boston survey statistic revealed--that the intermarriage rates are highest among young couples.

That the intermarriage rate had accelerated so quickly in so short a period of time greatly alarmed the Jewish community. Rabbis throughout the country spoke about the impending "demographic holocaust" that threatened the Jewish community. Federations quickly formed task forces on intermarriage, Hillel directors sought ways to prevent Jewish students from intermarrying, and many "how-to-stop-an-intermarriage" books appeared.[47]

Despite doomsday expectations for the Jewish community, the 32 percent statistic for intermarriages between 1965 and 1970 was heavily criticized. One of the critics was Bernard Lazerwitz, the demographer in charge of this study's sampling procedure. He pointed out that the sample for 1965-1970 consisted of only 83 cases and that this sample is so small that it makes the margin of error so great that the 32 percent statistic is worthless. Charles Silberman reports that Lazerwitz urged the scientific director of the study, Fred Massarik, not to use the 32 percent intermarriage rate. Obviously, his advice was not heeded.[48]

Another national study was conducted in 1976 by Egon Mayer, but this one tested for qualitative effects of intermarriage. Mayer studied 446 couples from 8 communities: Cleveland, Dallas, Long Island, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Westchester. A summary of his findings will be included later in this chapter. Mayer published his study and findings in a summary report entitled Intermarriage and the Jewish Future (The American Jewish Committee, 1979). He concludes that his findings ". . . tend to reinforce the fear that intermarriage represents a threat to Jewish continuity."[59] But Mayer is not very pessimistic about the future of the Jewish community. Mayer finds reason for hope in his findings on conversionary marriages, since they compared favorably with endogamous marriages. Mayer states, however, that his findings do not support the claims of some Jews that intermarriage resulting in conversions may add to the Jewish population. But he does add later that more born-Gentile spouses may be open to conversion than had been thought, and that just because they do not

convert before marriage is no reason to believe that they may not convert later.

Mayer also sees possibility in the intermarriages where no conversion has taken place, because the Jewish spouses still identify as Jews and their lack of Jewish practice results from their disinterest and met opposition from the non-Jewish spouses or their desire to raise any children in another religion. Because of these possibilities, Mayer suggests that the Jewish community respond with position programs designed to reach out to the intermarried couples. Clearly, Mayer does not see intermarriage as meaning certain demographic disaster. Rather he sees the possibilities for intermarried couples identifying more closely with Judaism and becoming Jewishly involved if the Jewish community responds to these opportunities creatively and constructively.[50]

In the Kansas City study, also done in 1976, Farber, Gordon and Mayer also investigated the qualitative effects of intermarriage. Their study, entitled "Intermarriage and Jewish Identity: The Implications for Pluralism and Assimilation in American Society" (Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1979), concentrated on the issue of cultural group identity where the key variable is intermarriage. They interpret their findings in two ways, the first based upon traditional sex-role patterns and the second based upon emergent sex-role patterns. In both cases, they conclude with a prediction on Jewish population size which has obvious implications for Jewish survival.

Their first interpretation, based on traditional sex-role patterns, reasons that since, traditionally, more women than men convert when they

intermarry, and presently almost as many Jewish women as men are intermarrying, then more intermarried Jewish women will be converting out of Judaism. Based upon this interpretation of their findings, Farber, Gordon and Mayer predict a loss of Jewish group identity, and therefore, a loss in Jewish population size.[51]

The second interpretation is based upon emergent sex-role patterns which entail the role of women in society as becoming more equal to and independent from men. No longer will most women in intermarriages convert to their husband's religion. So even if more women are now intermarrying, fewer will be converting out of Judaism. Based upon this interpretation, the researchers formed two conclusions: (1) since both partners in the intermarriage will retain their religious identity, there will be a smaller immediate loss of Jewish group identity. This being the case, they wonder about the children's religious identity, and (2) although the woman will not convert from Judaism, neither partner will actually retain their religious identities, rather both will abandon their religious identities and adopt a non-religious, secular identity. This trend will lead to as great an immediate loss of Jewish group identity as predicted in the first interpretation, and therefore, as great a loss in Jewish population.[52]

In "Rethinking the Intermarriage Crisis" (Moment, June 1978), Fred Massarik does just that by considering the effects of intermarriage and by questioning the assumption that intermarriage necessarily means Jewish population decline. He reasons that if half of the intermarried couples raise their children as Jewish there is no loss to the Jewish population. Furthermore, if over half these couples raise Jewish

children, there is even a chance of Jewish population growth. Massarik points out that indeed, when the mother is Jewish chances are "extremely high" that the children will be raised as Jews; chances are "lower" but not "insignificant" when the faith is Jewish.

Massarik's approach is to research the qualitative effects of intermarriage before making any predictions about Jewish population (growth or decline). He regards different kinds of intermarriages; that is, which spouse is Jewish and which non-Jewish and what happens after the marriage. Massarik reports that around 30 percent of the non-Jewish wives convert to Judaism after the wedding. Non-Jewish husbands, however, rarely convert (not more than 3 percent), but 40 to 50 percent consider themselves Jewish in a phenomenon Massarik calls "Jewish drift."

This sociologist also applies this approach to the 1970 NJPS study and concludes by demonstrating that intermarriages included in that study led to anything but a decrease in Jewish population. For two age groups important to Jewish survival (children under 10 and adults between 20 and 29 years of age), intermarriage led to a total net increase of 2.1 percent. By looking at the effects of intermarriage, Massarik further contends that intermarriage may increase the Jewish population, because birth rates determine Jewish population size. Thus, drawing upon his earlier example, if two Jews intermarry and have two children each and raise them as Jews, there are more Jews than if these two Jews married each other and had two children.

For Massarik, then, intermarriage does not necessarily mean that those who are intermarried do not identify as Jews, fail to raise Jewish

children, or drop out of Jewish communal life. Massarik urges us to see intermarriage as the complex phenomenon it really is and not jump to doomsday predictions based on intermarriage rates without looking at the actual effects of intermarriage. These effects will have much more to tell us about implications for the Jewish population than the rates themselves. Moreover, Massarik concludes that since intermarriage rates will continue to be high and intermarriage creates opportunities as well as risks, the Jewish community should concentrate its efforts on accentuating the opportunities.[53]

In an interview with Moment Magazine (Moment, September 1984), Steven M. Cohen and Calvin Goldscheider take a similar approach to intermarriage that Fred Massarik takes. However, both Cohen and Goldscheider place emphasis on the effects of fertility on Jewish population size. They point out that women are simply having children later in their lives, so that while fertility rates may be low for younger women, the rates have risen sharply for women aged 35 to 39 years. Jewish women are included in these statistics. Goldscheider, however, assigns a larger role to intermarriage and migration for effecting Jewish population than did Massarik. But he adds that nothing is known about the quantitative impact of intermarriage. There is no reason, according to Goldscheider, to predict more than a minor decline while there is an equally good reason to predict an increase in Jewish population.

Both authorities also stress that one must examine the effects of intermarriage, noting as Massarik does that intermarriage results in conversion of non-Jewish wives and the raising of more Jewish children.

Goldscheider also considers the qualitative aspects of intermarriage as having an effect on Jewish population size. (In this regard, therefore, he is also questioning the assumption that intermarriage leads to fewer Jews, although he does not explicitly express it.) He discusses the fact that many non-Jewish spouses "feel Jewish," say they are part of the community and behave as such. Therefore, these people are Jews, according to Goldscheider. For determining who is in the Jewish population, he is interested in what they do, accept and how they are accepted; he does not believe that intermarried Jews or even their spouses are lost to the Jewish community. Finally, Goldscheider sees a "strong Jewishness" in intermarried couples.[54]

Charles Silberman expresses an optimism similar to, and even greater than the optimism expressed by Massarik, Cohen and Goldscheider in his book, A Certain People. He claims that "it seems unlikely . . . that intermarriage will lead to more than a slight reduction in the number of Jews, and it could bring about an increase."[55] He also argues that the Jewish birthrate is high enough to keep the Jewish population at its current size. Silberman admits that his views run counter to popular belief, so he analyzes why people assume that the intermarriage rate is so high, why they believe intermarriage adversely affects Jewish population, and why the Jewish birthrate is so low. Then he advances arguments to show why the reasons people advance for their views are unfounded. He cites and interprets statistics to show that the intermarriage rate is not as high as people believe. He closely examines the qualitative effects of intermarriage, especially including conversion, to show that the Jewish community is doing anything but

losing Jews. His views echo Egon Mayer's when he points out that when a born-Gentile spouse does not convert, it does not mean the Jewish spouse is lost to the Jewish community. He claims that the Jewish spouses are more committed to passing along Jewish identity to their children, than are their non-Jewish spouses to passing on their identity to the children. Silberman also formulates arguments, more detailed, but essentially the same as Cohen and Goldscheider to show that the Jewish birthrate is not any lower than it has been. In short, then, Silberman is extremely confident in the Jewish community's chances for survival.[56]

Just as with the causes of intermarriages, the experts do not agree on what are its effects as regards Jewish survival. Once the assumption that high intermarriage rates mean lower Jewish population (and thus less chances for Jewish survival) was questioned--a pandora's box was opened. But far from plagued with questions regarding the effects of intermarriage, we are blessed, for they help us begin to see this phenomenon for what it really is--complex! Clear-cut, hard quantitative statistical data (which is not really so "clear-cut") can only tell us so much. Therefore, qualitative effects have finally found their rightful place in the discussion.

The question of Jewish survival, however, is only the general issue for discussing the qualitative effects of intermarriage. For this general issue is informed by more specific issues such as the attitudes the Jewish community has and expresses toward intermarried couples and the Jewish identity of these couples and their children. These two issues and others, then, teach us much more about intermarriage as a real phenomenon, rather than as some abstract sociological construct.

Now that we have examined the broader context, we can turn to a consideration of these types of issues.

E. The Effects of Intermarriage: Communal Issues

According to Bruce Kadden ("The Educator's Challenge, Compass, Fall 1984), "Significant numbers of intermarried couples are joining congregations and seeking a Jewish education for their children."[57] This trend certainly has an effect on Jewish communal institutions. Moreover, it reflects the attitudes of intermarried couples toward Judaism and the Jewish community, and the attitudes of community toward intermarriage and intermarried couples.

Why these couples are now joining synagogues may have something to do with the fact that Jewish spouses are not choosing non-Jewish partners to escape their Jewish identity. We recall that Louis Berman had formulated a psychological profile of Jewish intermarriers. One of the traits is existential insecurity which includes a desire to marry a Christian. In describing a problem of mutual accommodation that the Jewish and Gentile partners will face as a result of their cross purposes for marrying the other, Berman writes that the Gentile marries the Jew to get into Judaism, ". . . while the Jewish partner hoped his cross-ethnic mate would help him find a way out of the Jewish community."[58] As Mayer comments on Berman's finding--that may have been true some years ago, but not today (see above, pp. 10-11). Indeed, whatever the motivating influences for intermarriage are, a desire to escape Jewish identity cannot be one of them for those who join

synagogues and take active measures to provide a Jewish education for their children.

If attitudes of intermarrieds are changing, then so too are the attitudes of Jews and the community in general. Marshall Sklare, Charles Silberman and Egon Mayer all comment on how the attitudes toward intermarriage have undergone great change. Sklare describes how Jews have gone from combatting intermarriage to accommodating it. Sklare had done a study on a Chicago suburb (given the fictional name of Lakeville) in 1958, and again in 1968. Among his findings was that in just ten years attitudes toward intermarriage had become much more lenient.[59] Charles Silberman remarks on an identical attitude shift in comparing a Boston study done in 1965 and again in 1975. While 25 percent of the respondents said they would be neutral or accept an intermarriage on the part of their child in 1965, an increase to 59 percent gave this answer in 1975. "However much Jews may oppose intermarriage in principle, in short," claims Silberman, "they accept it in practice."[60]

Egon Mayer describes what he calls the "rejectionist" approach once taken by Jewish families and communities toward a child who intermarried, whereby ties with the child were broken-off completely. Mayer claims that this approach, customary until the 1950s, ". . . more or less ensured the eventual assimilation of the Jew who married a Christian."[61] Moreover, conversion was unacceptable to Orthodox and Conservative Jews and Reform Jews did not welcome the intermarried couples into the community. The Jewish community was opposed to intermarriage and to intermarrieds.[62]

Quite possibly, therefore, some Jews who intermarried were still very much interested in retaining their Jewish identity and expressing it. But once they married a non-Jew, they had no outlet for Jewish expression--not even their families. They were, in Mayer's words, "beyond the pale." Mayer describes a man who had intermarried and whose parents would not even let him in their house when he tried to show them his first son--their first grandson--because to his parents, the child was not Jewish. After this, he decided to join his wife's church.[63]

Mayer considers that the rejectionist approach may have helped to prevent some intermarriages, but it assured that those Jews who did intermarry would leave the Jewish community, and the community would want him to leave. But once more Jews began intermarrying, argues Mayer, the rejectionist approach became highly hazardous since now many Jews would be lost to Judaism and the Jewish people.[64] Thus, attitudes began changing on the part of Jews. If rejecting the intermarried was once viewed as the way to save the Jewish community, now, welcoming them is viewed as the way to save it, and, at the very least, as the way to prevent estrangement between parents and their children.

It is difficult to know which came first--the change in attitudes on the part of the intermarrieds or on the part of the community. Perhaps it matters little which one was the cause and which the affect; certainly it is a reciprocal process. Once intermarrieds saw that they would be welcomed, they entered the Jewish community--or never bothered leaving. Once the Jewish community noticed that many intermarried Jews were committed to Judaism, they welcomed them into the community. Regardless of who changed their attitude first, this change in attitude

was reflected in changes undergone by the Jewish movement in the United States.

While the Orthodox movement has not changed its official position with regard to intermarriage or conversion of the non-Jewish spouse, there are noticeable changes on the part of its constituency and some rabbis. Instead of observing shiva for an intermarried child, there are instead quiet efforts to convert the non-Jew. Presently, however, intermarried couples are not permitted to join an Orthodox synagogue. The Conservative Movement has now formed a Commission on Jewish Conversion and rabbis have organized formal conversion classes. Many conservative synagogues no longer forbid intermarried Jews to hold office.

The Reform movement seems to have gone in both directions at the same time--more liberal and more conservative. For many years, Reform opposed intermarriage but was tolerant of rabbis who performed intermarriage ceremonies. The wording of the 1909 CCAR resolution concerning intermarriage is quite mild. "The CCAR declares that mixed-marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should, therefore, be discouraged by the American rabbinate."[65] This same resolution was reaffirmed in 1947. This resolution does not even mention performance of the ceremony--only that intermarriage itself ought to be discouraged. Then, just three years after there was a discussion at the UAHC biennial convention over whether to reverse the 1909 resolution "discouraging" intermarriage, a stronger CCAR resolution was passed in 1973. It reiterates the 1909 resolution, then continues by saying that it ". . . now declares its opposition to participation by

its members in any ceremony which solemnizes a mixed marriage."[66] Now, the CCAR stated quite clearly that it does not want its rabbis officiating at such ceremonies.

While the Reform movement was moving more conservatively regarding officiation, however, it made new, bold steps toward welcoming intermarried couples into its synagogues. In 1978, Rabbi Alexander Schindler (President of UAHC) called for a program of outreach to intermarried couples and converts. He proposed that the Reform movement welcome intermarried couples into its synagogues, encourage them to raise their children as Jews, and encourage the non-Jewish spouse to convert. If this step did not change the Jewish community, nothing else would. As Egon Mayer states, "that proposal reversed a nearly 1,600-year-old tradition on the part of Judaism of not only not seeking converts, but, in fact, discouraging non-Jews from entering the Jewish fold."[67] Now, Jews, Reform Jews anyway, were to begin welcoming them. As Schindler urged, "we must remove the 'not wanted' signs from our synagogues, and from our hearts."[68] So although most Reform rabbis do not officiate at intermarriage ceremonies, "Outreach" programs are growing in most Reform Congregations. Perhaps the Reform movement can have its cake and eat it too; that is, reject intermarriage and accept the intermarried.

Intermarried couples have clearly made themselves felt in the Jewish community. Old attitudes about intermarriage and treatment of intermarried couples have undergone drastic change in this country. Jewish communities had to make a decision: either continue rejecting intermarried couples in the name of Jewish survival and watch the Jewish

population diminish, or accept them and watch the face of American Jewry change forever. We chose the latter, and just what this change will mean for the Jewish community is a question we can only begin answering in the next generation.

F. The Effects of Intermarriage: Personal Issues

Assessing the effects of intermarriage on the personal level is very subjective, and so more difficult to determine than effects at the communal level. Nevertheless, the literature does discuss topics that have implications for such issues as the Jewish identity of intermarried couples and their children, the married relationship and the relationship between intermarried couples and their families.

At first it does not seem to make much sense to speak about the Jewish identity of intermarried couples; after all, only one of them is Jewish. True enough, but as mentioned earlier, the Jewish spouse often identifies as a Jew and some are committed and active, and non-Jewish spouses may convert sometime after the wedding. Even when they do not, they may in some ways identify with Judaism and/or Jewish customs. Norman B. Mirsky's article, "Informal Judaism and Jewishness: A Partial Taxonomy" (Journal of Reform Judaism, Vol. 33, No. 2, Spring 1986), is extremely helpful in explaining how formal, institutionalized forms of Jewish identification are not the only Jewish expressions that reveal Jewish identity. Mirsky does not discuss intermarried couples or non-Jewish spouses in an intermarriage, yet any of his levels of informal Jewishness can be applied to some of these marriages and non-Jewish spouses. "Metaphoric," "felt or perceived," and "style" make up

Mirksy's partial taxonomy of positive informal Jewishness. In general, Mirsky defines informal Jewishness as a kind of identity that is expressed outside of formal Jewish institutions, or if they are expressed inside these institutions, not originally by the caretakers of those institutions.[69]

Steven M. Cohen, Calvin Goldscheider, Fred Massarik, Kerry M. Olitzky and Charles Silberman all indicate that intermarried couples do have some form of Jewish identity. Cohen states that "the vast majority of Jewish women in intermarriages retain not simply Jewish identity but Jewish activity of some sort, men somewhat less so."[70] Massarik observes that "the impact of conversion or intermarriage is considerable." He cites that the available data indicates a 40 percent conversion rate for women, but he claims that it is probably around 30 percent. The rate for men, however, is not more than 3 percent, according to Massarik, "but here is where we see the phenomenon of 'Jewish drift': between 40 and 50 percent, by their own description, regard themselves as Jewish."[71] Silberman clearly agrees with Cohen and Massarik, for after he discusses the import of conversions to Judaism, he states that, "the fact that a born-Gentile spouse chooses not to convert to Judaism does not necessarily mean that the Jewish spouse becomes an 'export' or that the Gentile spouse is hostile to Judaism."[72] Olitzky also observes that non-Jewish spouses are, to use Massarik's term, drifting over to Judaism. "This is the first generation in which non-Jewish members of the family have sought membership in synagogues, participated in Brotherhood and Sisterhood functions, and joined with others in various committees whose decisions steer the future course of

American Judaism."[73] Goldscheider concurs with Olitzky, saying that intermarried couples fit into the networks that have developed among Jews. He asks us not to consider just the organized membership part of the community, but also: "the friendship patterns, educational patterns, cultural patterns, visits to Israel patterns and so on. You find very little difference," he concludes, "between those in intermarried households and those not in intermarried households."[74] If what these authorities say is true, then there is a Jewish identity to be found in intermarried couples.

Just how deep is this Jewish identity? How active, and how committed can such a couple really be without eventual conversion of the non-Jewish partner? Any definite answers to these questions are probably impossible to give and perhaps irrelevant. In speaking of informal Jewish identities, it is difficult to measure Jewish commitment. Nonetheless, some authorities comment on the "quality" of the Jewishness. In discussing how intermarriage may actually be increasing Jewish population, Cohen admits that these families may be leading what some would consider "a low level of religious Jewish life." Thus while intermarriage may be slightly increasing Jews, it is slightly decreasing Jewishness.[75] Massarik on the other hand proposes that because some intermarried non-Jews are "drifting" toward Judaism and some in-married Jews are "drifting" away, ". . . the quality of Jewish life may be as rich among some intermarried families as among many of the in-married."[76] Silberman describes an "exchange of population" where conversion to Judaism is involved. While some marginal Jews "drop out" they are replaced by Christians who become Jews. Referring to

"quality" of commitment, he quotes Milton Himmelfarb who says, "our imports are better than our exports."[77] All these observations, of course, are no more than possibilities, and these authors wisely present them as such. Goldscheider goes even a step further by arguing that we certainly cannot all agree on what the criteria are for "qualitatively good Jews." He uses the example of which Jews keep kosher; if that is the criterion, then we are left with a very meager Jewish population. Goldscheider considers many other expressions that convey Jewish identity and is satisfied that an open approach that is non-judgmental is best in considering "Jewishness."[78]

Even while remaining open to informal expressions of Jewish identity, some studies have been done (referred to earlier) which tells us about the religious/cultural behavior of intermarried couples. Based on the findings, we need not judge or measure levels of Jewish commitment, but rather, these studies help us see the variety of Jewish identity.

Bernard Lazerwitz's late 1960 study of group identity of converts and intermarrieds included 63 Jewish intermarriages in which there were 11 conversions to Judaism and 3 conversions from Judaism. Among the spouses of converts, Lazerwitz found that they received much religious education when they were young, were active in their religio-ethnic communities during their childhood and adolescence, and they still are active. As committed members in their religio-ethnic communities, spouses of converts intermarried with marginal members of other faiths, and these marginal members regarded it as the "natural thing to be converted."

Those who intermarry, however, are marginal members of their communities married to marginal members of other groups according to Lazerwitz. Their parents were marginal in their attachment to the group, and they gave their children little religious education. After the marriage, there will be even less attachment to either spouse's faith, but if they feel their children should have some religious background the couple will seek out a mutually "neutral" faith such as Unitarianism.

Lazerwitz also concluded that "marginal members" deliberately seek out marital partners from other groups in contrast to "core members" who intermarry as a result of a more accidental set of factors (in which case the spouse converts to the core member's faith). Finally, Lazerwitz concludes that it is usually the women who converts if they marry a man who is active in his faith, including intermarried Jewish women who are remote from Judaism. But if it is the man who is marginal, although the children will be reared in the mother's religion, the man will usually not convert.[79]

In the Kansas City study conducted by Farber, Gordon and Albert Mayer in 1976, which also concentrated on cultural group identity, we recall that they interpreted their findings in two possible ways (see above, pp. 19-20). The first interpretation based on traditional sex-role patterns predicted a loss of Jewish group identity if the increasing numbers of Jewish women intermarrying convert out of Judaism. The second interpretation, based on emergent sex-role patterns, predicted a smaller immediate loss of Jewish group identity if neither partners convert. But another possibility considered that while neither partner

may convert, both may adopt a non-religious identity, and thus there will be a loss of Jewish group identity.[80]

Egon Mayer's study of eight Jewish communities in 1976 yielded important qualitative data on the effects of intermarriage. He found that most born-Jews in a mixed-marriage affirm a Jewish identity, but they do not act on this affirmation to a large extent. Only a minority provide a Jewish education for their children. The born-Gentile spouses did not identify strongly with their religion, and some who did not convert even said they identified somewhat with Judaism. No pressure on the part of born-Gentile spouses, therefore, was found that could explain lack of Jewish practice in these families. In fact, few of the families wanted to raise the children in a religion other than Judaism. Many more children were celebrating Jewish observances than those celebrating Christian ones, but the majority of the children were being raised without any ethnic or religious identification. The findings were quite different, however, in conversionary marriages. In these marriages, Jewish attitudes and practice were more prevalent than in mixed marriages, and in fact, based on what is known about endogamous marriages, the conversionary marriages compared favorably to these marriages as well. And finally, in marriages where the born-Gentiles converted or where there was more "Jewishness" the factor most responsible for this was the extent of Jewish background and expression on the part of the born-Jewish spouse.[81]

The findings of these studies do not seem as optimistic as the comments of Cohen, Goldscheider, Massarik or Silberman. The difference may be explained in several ways: the studies were done earlier than

the writings of these authirities, and things have since changed; the studies only tested for expressions of formal Jewish identity, and therefore, could not take into account informal expressions; the studies were limited to only a fraction of the population of intermarried couples, so they may not be representative of a larger group of intermarried couples. Of course, Cohen, Goldscheider, Massarik and Silberman may all be too theoretical, and overly-optimistic in looking at selected cases where Jewish identity and involvement may be high. Again, determining the effects of intermarriage on such a personal level is very difficult. At best we can only get a rough idea, but even this shatters the old myths that Jews who intermarry are lost to Judaism and never cared that much anyway. In considering the causes of intermarriage and its effects on the communal level, we saw that these kinds of ideas were not valid, and even the more pessimistic findings tell us that some intermarried couples are Jewishly committed. We should note, that studies examining the Jewish practices of in-married couples may not yield results that are much better. Moreover, those intermarried couples that are not that involved presently, may in the future become more affiliated and active in the Jewish community.

One motivating factor for increased involvement in the Jewish community is children. Children approaching schooling age often result in couples who have never formerly joined a synagogue to do so, so that they can enroll their children in the congregation's religious school. Those who are already affiliated may increase their involvement by working on the religious school committee, for example. This trend is true for both intermarried and in-married couples.

Bruce Kadden reports that significant numbers of intermarried couples are seeking a Jewish education for their children.[82] Kerry Olitzky states that these numbers are "increasing,"[83] and Rabbi Joel D. Oseran confirms that this phenomenon is taking place at his religious school where he serves as the educator.[84] Parents who have decided that they will raise their children in some religion will usually turn to a religious school and thereby become more involved than when they had non school-age children. Rabbi Barry Roger Friedman in "Different People, Different Needs" (Compass, Fall 1984) describes the dynamics of an intermarried couples group that was formed at his synagogue. Among his observations was that couples who did not have children did not really address the issue of two religions in the home. They did not feel that children were relevant to the issue of religion, and they dealt with religion as a "theoretical construct," not an "ongoing daily concern." In contrast to these couples were others with children who had dealt with the issue of two different religions in the home, because the presence of children made them face the issue. Friedman claims that they were more practical when it came to facing the possible problems of living in an intermarriage. We see, then, that children help intermarried couples begin to address issues about their marriage that not only include but even go beyond issues of children and religious education. Not surprisingly, therefore, Friedman reports that when the intermarried group gathered for a reunion, a couple who had no children at the earlier sessions, but were presently expecting their first child, now felt the importance of the subject of religion.[85]

Regardless of the fact that more intermarried couples are enrolling their children in Jewish religious schools, it does not mean a final decision has been made to raise these children as Jews. In his article, "A Teacher's Challenge," Olitzky advises that teachers should not assume that a child's attendance in the religious school precludes that child's attendance in a church school.[86] In "Parents and Children of Mixed Married Households: Some Suggested Guidelines for the Religious School and the Synagogue" Sanford Seltzer makes precisely the same point. He explains that the "Jewish option" may be only one of the other options being considered, and the family's joining a synagogue and giving a child a Jewish education might have more to do with the current religious environment in America than with a firm commitment to Judaism.[87]

In general, children from intermarriages represent a different kind of student in the classroom. Their religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds may differ greatly from the backgrounds of other students both of whose parents are Jewish. "The Educator's Challenge," by Bruce Kadden, Kerry M. Olitzky's "The Teacher's Challenge" and Seltzer's article all relate what some of these differences might be and why they present special challenges to the religious school and to the teacher. The key word here is "challenges." None of these writers suggest that these children do not belong in the classroom; on the contrary, differences are noted and suggestions are made so that all who are involved can assure a good education for these children while at the same time remaining sensitive to their feelings and needs.

Egon Mayer has done the only study on the Jewish identity of children of intermarried couples. It is entitled, "Children of Intermarriage: A Study in Patterns of Identification and Family Life." Additional such studies would greatly aid Temple Religious Schools in anticipating the needs of such children and meeting these needs. This study was conducted in 1981 and 1982 using the children of the intermarried couples that Mayer studied in his 1976 survey. Just as Mayer compared mixed and conversionary marriages in his original study, in this one, he compared the children from both types of marriages. Mayer found that most of the children from conversionary marriages considered themselves Jewish, in contrast to a quarter of the children from mixed marriages. A majority of the children from mixed marriages valued their Jewishness in contrast to the majority of children in mixed marriages who were indifferent to their Jewishness. Both sets of children attached greater significance to their religious identity than to their ethnic ties The children of conversionary marriages received more Jewish education, observed more life cycle events and Jewish holidays and had more Jewish objects in their homes than the children of mixed marriages. The former group had a higher rate of synagogue affiliation than the latter. Of the married children from conversionary marriages over a third were intermarried while the overwhelming majority of married children from mixed marriages were intermarried. Of the children from mixed marriages who were intermarried themselves, none of their non-Jewish partners had converted to Judaism.[88]

Clearly, Mayer's findings do not offer much hope that intermarried couples will raise Jewishly committed children in large percentages.

The optimist might say that large percentages do not matter. As long as some raise Jewish children, there is hope. Regardless of one's orientation, however, it must be kept in mind that Mayer used a very small sample for his study. Unfortunately he only received a response rate of 29.6 percent of the only 394 children Mayer was able to send a questionnaire. These figures translated into only 117 children representing 70 different families. Even more importantly, the respondents were between 16 and 46 years of age; thus these children (particularly those in the higher age groups) were products of earlier intermarriages.[89] How intermarried couples will be raising their children today may be quite different than other couples were years earlier.

The Jewish identity of children is related to the issue of their Jewish status in the eyes of Jewish law. The Orthodox and Conservative movements recognize only the children of Jewish mothers as Jewish, while the Reform and Reconstructionist movements recognize the children of either Jewish parent as being Jewish. The controversy surrounding the patrilineal descent decision has obvious implications for intermarried couples who have decided to raise their children as Jews and where it is the father who is Jewish. In his book A Certain People, Charles Silberman has a good discussion on background and of the issue and its current implications.[90] For intermarried couples, however, the issue is not just one for halahic debate--it affects them in a very real way. For they must decide if they want their children to undergo formal conversion and gain recognition as Jews by the entire community or if

they accept and follow Reform's requirements by bringing up the children in a Jewish lifestyle.

Marital stability is yet another issue discussed in the literature on intermarriage. In "Intermarriage & Jewish Survival," Marshall Sklare discusses what he calls the "discord approach." The discord approach is his generic term for those arguments that parents use to convince their children that they should not intermarry because two different religions in one home leads to disharmony. Sklare notes that fewer parents in the community he studied found the approach helpful or even valid, and he himself seems to indicate that it is not a valid argument.[91] Indeed, there are so many variables in any one marriage, that it would be hard in most cases to find just one that contributes the most to marital disharmony.

Nonetheless, there are issues and problems that intermarried couples face that in-married couples may not face at all or in such a large degree. Some couples seek marital counseling from clergy or trained therapists. Most (Reform) rabbis today will insist upon pre-marital counseling for <u>all</u> couples contemplating marriage, so efforts are intensified with an interfaith couple who may have more issues and questions with which to address. Many Reform synagogues are also organizing discussion and/or support groups for intermarried couples. These groups may include couples planning to be married, just thinking about it, parents of such couples, and couples where a conversion has taken place. The composition of such groups varied with each community and each community's needs. Many issues are discussed among these groups such as family and in-law issues, children, religious

observances, conversion and many others. "Different People, Different Needs," by Barry Roger Friedman, "Mixed Marrieds' Discussion Group" (Compass, Fall 1984) by David Jeremy Zucker and "The Structure, Function, and Organization of a Mixed-Marriage Support System (Journal of Reform Judaism, Vol. 31, No. 3, Summer 1984) by Zucker and Melanie W. Aron all discuss in fine detail these kinds of support groups for intermarried couples. All three articles reported good results from these groups and offered insights into many of the issues that intermarried couples face.

Needless to say, the divorce rate for all groups in the United States is rising. With all the reasons for so many more divorces, there is no reason to think that religion did not play at least some role in some of these divorces. But as we have been emphasizing in this chapter, one must also look at the effects of a phenomenon, not just the cause.

Sanford Seltzer does just that in "Intermarriage, Divorce and the Jewish Status of Children." Seltzer observes that when there are child custody cases involving a couple in which the husband is Jewish and the wife is not Jewish or is a convert to Judaism, since custody usually goes to the woman (90 percent of the time), this will have important consequences for the Jewish community. Other issues impinge on this complex religious and legal issue, such as matrilineal-patrilineal determinations of Jewish identity and status and conversion procedures. Seltzer discusses several relevant court cases which illustrate all the issues involved and which highlights the dilemma facing Reform Judaism. Decisions that the Reform movement have made led to unhappy consequences

in the courts. For example, even if the children were to be raised as Jews according to a pre-marital agreement, if a non-Jewish wife receives custody of the children following a divorce, some courts have found that the wife may raise the children as she chooses. The fact that Reform Judaism has decided that the children are Jewish has not been accepted by some courts. Seltzer outlines the problems clearly and closes with recommendations to ease the problem.[92]

One final issue that concerns intermarried couples is their relation to their respective families. Often problems arise as soon as a young couple from two different religious backgrounds tells their parents that they wish to get married. Then there are decisions regarding the ceremony, decisions concerning who visits who for which holidays, and in which religion the children/grandchildren will be raised. Few couples are an island unto themselves; they have families that influence their situations. In many cases there will be tensions between the families and certainly tensions between the children and their parents. Parents may be dealing with their own feelings of guilt, failure, anger and/or betrayal while children may resent their parents' reactions.

Egon Mayer's findings on this issue run contrary to these remarks. He found that the differences in religious background did not contribute to estrangement from parents. The relationships between both spouses and their parents were consistently reported to be close and harmonious.[93] These findings are probably not true for many couples, but if this trend is increasing, it might be due to the fact that

parents are now accommodating to intermarriage and combatting it. Not wishing to crate tensions and distance between themselves and their children, they accept the marriage with grace.

G. Summary

The literature on intermarriage is vast. This chapter has sought to review its contents by organizing it according to several key issues. The first issue is that of the definition of the term "intermarriage." What constitutes a Jewish intermarriage is not universally agreed upon by all writers. Section B, therefore, summarizes the various usages of the term as found in the literature. This thesis employs Egon Mayer's terminology using the word "intermarriage" as a general term to mean any marriage between a Jew and a person not born Jewish. Under this general category, there are mixed marriages where the person not born Jewish has not converted to Judaism, and there are conversionary marriages where there has been a conversion to Judaism.

The causes of intermarriage have always interested scholars and laymen alike. When the incidence of intermarriage was low, discovering why a few Jews deviated from the behavior of the rest was a topic considered from a historical point of view. Once the intermarriage rates began to rise, many researchers began advancing sociological and psychological reasons for intermarriage and the increasing incidence thereof. Section C summarizes the various explanations proposed by these reserachers.

Explaining the causes of intermarriage was much more than an academic pursuit. Many people felt (and still do) that intermarriage was a threat to Jewish survival. Discovering the causes, therefore, was essential for decreasing intermarriage and ameliorating its threat to Jewish survival. More recently, some authorities are suggesting that intermarriage is not decreasing the Jewish population and therefore, it is not a threat to Jewish survival. Section D relates the various positions on this debate.

The effect of intermarriage on Jewish survival is not the only effort of intermarriage discussed in the literature. There are qualitative effects, and these are surveyed in Sections E and F. Section E looks at the effects in terms of communal issues, and Section F examines them from the perspective of personal issues.

Notes

[1]Mark L. Winer, "Sociological Research on Jewish Intermarriage," Journal of Reform Judaism, XXXII, No. 3 (Summer 1985), 38.

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[3]Bruce Kadden, "The Educator's Challenge," Compass, 8, No. 1 (Fall 1984), 5.

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[6]Egon Mayer and Carl Sheingold, Intermarriage and the Jewish Future (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1979), p. 5.

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[15]Silberman, p. 288.

[16]Kadden, p. 5.

[17]Egon Mayer, Love & Tradition: Marriage Between Jews & Christians (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), p. 99.

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[19]Bernard Farber, Leonard Gordon, and Albert J. Mayer, "Intermarriage and Jewish Identity: The Implications for Pluralism and Assimilation in American Society," Ethnic and Racial Studies, 2, No. 2 (April 1979), 223.

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[28]Ibid., p. 504.

[29]Ibid., p. 316.

[30]Ibid., p. 505.

[31]Love & Tradition, pp. 104-118.

[32]Ibid., p. 119.

[33]Silberman, p. 286.

[34]Mayer and Sheingold, p. 4.

[35]Edwin H. Friedman, p. 499.

[36]Silberman, p. 297.

[37]Marshall Sklare, "Intermarriage & Jewish Survival," Commentary, XIXL, No. 3 (March 1970), 51.

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[41]Ibid., pp. 51-52.

[42]Ibid., p. 53.

[43]Ibid., p. 52.

[44]Bernard Lazerwitz, "Intermarriage and Conversion: A Guide for Future Research," The Jewish Journal of Sociology, XIII, No. 1 (1971), 60.

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[46]Grossman, p. 3.

[47]Ibid., p. 2.

[48]Silberman, pp. 289-290.

[49]Mayer and Sheingold, p. 30.

[50]Ibid., pp. 30-32.

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[54]Steven M. Cohen and Calvin Goldscheider, "Jews More or Less," Moment, 9, No. 8 (September 1984), 41-46.

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[73]Kerry M. Olitzky, "The Teacher's Challenge," Compass, 8, No. 1 (Fall 1984), 16.

[74]Cohen and Goldscheider, p. 43.

[75]Ibid., p. 43.

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[77]Silberman, p. 299.

[78]Cohen and Goldscheider, p. 43.

[79]Lazerwitz, pp. 41-60.

[80]Farber, pp. 226-228.

[81]Mayer and Sheingold, pp. 29-30.

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[89]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[90]Silberman, pp. 321-323.

[91]Sklare, pp. 53-54.

[92]Sanford Seltzer, "Intermarriage, Divorce and the Jewish Status of Children," in Senior Practicum, Part One, pp. 621-625.

[93]Mayer and Sheingold, p. 30.

Chapter 2

Methodology

A. Selection and Procurement of Respondents

For the purposes of this study, I sought couples who were intermarried and affiliated with at least one Jewish institution. By intermarried I mean a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. Marriages where a conversion had taken place were not considered in this study. In one case, a woman had converted to Judaism, but she was the Jewish partner who later married a Catholic. Only one Jewish affiliation was required but not to the exclusion of other non-Jewish affiliations. This study, therefore, does not presume to speak about intermarried couples, but only and always about Jewishly affiliated intermarried couples. Hereafter, when phrases like "the intermarried couples . . ." or "these couples . . ." are used--"Jewishly affiliated intermarried couples" is understood. In seeking couples with at least one affiliation, it was understood that there would be involvement on at least some level with Judaism and the Jewish community. Some Jewish identity is already presumed therefore. The goals of the study were to see just what was entailed with the couples' involvement and identification with Judaism and Jewish structures and what other religious involvement might exist.

In order to find couples who met these criteria, I enlisted the help of all the area rabbis. The letter that I sent to each rabbi follows this section. I asked them if they knew any intermarried

couples in their congregation who might be willing to participate in the study. I asked the rabbis to make the initial contact with the couples, and if they showed interest to put me in touch with these couples. All of the rabbis were helpful, and my respondents came from a variety of synagogues thanks to the help received from all the area rabbis. I also made an appeal, in person, before an Introduction to Judaism class which did result in finding one couple.

Once I made contact with a potential respondent, I described my study and the nature of my questions, touching upon all the kinds of questions I would be asking. I asked each person to talk it over with his/her spouse and get back in touch with me. When we spoke again, I answered any remaining questions, and I was usually able to schedule an appointment--even during World Series play!

By asking rabbis to serve as "middlemen," I built a qualification into my study. I spoke only with couples who were fairly at ease in the Jewish community or who at least were not angry or antagonistic toward it. I had little opportunity to hear why couples preferred not to participate in the study, since my initial contact was preceded by the rabbi's contact. I only spoke with very likely respondents. I feel this limitation, however, is outweighed by the importance of respecting people's privacy. I would not ask rabbis to single out intermarried couples and give their names to someone neither the rabbi nor the couple had ever met. No doubt, some couples would feel offended and betrayed that their rabbi would do this, and many would not appreciate some stranger calling, already knowing something personal about them.

Therefore, I asked the couples' rabbi to "clear the path" and make even our initial contact a positive one.

The couples' willingness to talk to me was an obvious necessity, but also a limitation. Their willingness to meet with me and share personal issues on an emotional subject indicated that their marriage was a happy and stable one. A couple having difficulties as a result of two different religions under one roof would not agree to discuss the issues with which I was dealing. While this limitation could not be avoided, it must be noted so all results will be viewed bearing this in mind.

Dear Rabbi _____:

I am a senior rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College--Jewish Institute of Religion. I am presently working on my thesis which is entitled, "Synagogue, Judaism and Jewish Identity and the Intermarried Couple." I am seeking your help in my research since most of my study will focus on intermarried couples. Would you be willing to contact intermarried couples in your congregation who might agree to participate in this study? To respect their privacy, I am not asking for any names, so I would need you to contact them first to see if they would be interested. If they are, then either they could contact me, or you could give me a list of those who have already told you that they would be willing to participate, and I could call them. I am planning to conduct family oral histories, so I hope to arrange face to face interviews with the respondents.

Rather than just give you a brief summary of what my thesis is about, I have enclosed a copy of my proposal, so you will know precisely what kinds of issues I will be dealing with. This way, you will be able to show it or explain it to possible participants. If you have any questions, please call me at 751-5397.

I would greatly appreciate any help you might offer, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

B. The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule was designed for a qualitative study of cases as opposed to a statistical study. The number and nature of the questions were devised to allow respondents to answer questions in detail. The objective was to conduct in-depth, personal interviews that would yield full family histories, past and present, describing religious choices, lifestyles and attitudes. In this way, a detailed picture would emerge illustrating what it is like to enter an intermarriage and live in one. The interview schedule follows this section.

I gathered some basic data concerning each couple in order to view them within their own marital situation. Certain questions and answers make sense only if I knew a couple was recently married or a couple had two children, or they married at an older age.

Many of the questions focused in on the families of origin. Here I was looking for patterns in family background of religious upbringing including observances, affiliation and education. These in turn might explain current behavior and attitudes and perhaps account for marital choice.

Some of the questions inquired into what attitudes there were concerning intermarriage. By tracing these attitudes over three generations, we might explain again why these people intermarried and/or what accounts for their present religious lifestyles and attitudes. Since both the attitudes of the respondents and their parents were recorded, comparisons were also possible.

One line of questioning concerned the courtship period and the wedding. Answers to these questions help us learn how the marriages came about and what religious issues were discussed early on. Descriptions of the weddings should indicate one early religious issue that was settled and in what way it was settled. Thus, it should also give us a glimpse of how a couple first approaches a marriage in which each partner comes from a different religious background.

Three other categories of questions, religious home observances, religious upbringing and education of children and religious affiliation(s) were included to construct a detailed profile of each family's present religious lifestyles and what their attitudes toward lifestyles are. Here, we hope to see how two people, emerging out of two different religious traditions, merge in one family and balance in whatever proportions the traditions that they have brought with them.

FAMILY ORAL HISTORIES

Years married.
Respective ages when married.
First, second . . . marriage.
Any children? How many?
Jobs.
Years in community.

Where necessary, each question was asked of both husband and wife.

1. What is your parents/grandparents background in terms of religion?

   Were they affiliated with a synagogue/church?
   What kind?

2. What kinds of religious observances were practiced in the home?

3. How often did you attend Synagogue/Church as a child?
   What occasions?

4. What kind of religious education did you receive?
   How old were you when you began/ended formal religious education?

5. Do you know what were the attitudes of your parents/grandparents toward intermarriage?

   Did they communicate these attitudes to you? What were they?
   Have these attitudes changed?

6. Was it important for you to find a marriage partner of the same religion as yours?

7. How did the two of you meet?

8. What happened after that? what course did the relationship take?
   How soon after you met did you decide to date?
   When did you realize things got serious? How did you react?

9. How long after you met did you decide to get married?

10. How did the decision to get married come about?

11. Did the difference in religious backgrounds come up in any discussions about . . . dating? engagement/marriage?

12. Did you make any decisions on account of religious differences when planning married life prior to the marriage? What were they?

13. When you announced your wedding plans, what were the reactions of your parents/grandparents? Did their feelings change in any way later? How did you feel about their reactions?

14. How did your parents relate to your boyfriend/girlfriend?
    Once you were engaged?
    By the wedding?
    Now?
    Would you attribute any of these to religious differences?

15. How did you feel when you told your parents you were marrying a Jew/non-Jew?

16. What was the first Jewish thing you did together as a couple?
    . . . in your own home?
    . . . as a family?

17. What religious observances do you do now in the home?
    Explain a bit about them; what part do children and their grandparents play?

18. How are these particular observances meaningful for you?
What do you like about them?

19. Do you observe any Easter, Christmas celebrations in your home?
Which?
How do children participate in these celebrations?
(Grandparents?)

20. How are these celebrations meaningful for you?
What do you like about them?

21. What Jewish organizations are you affiliated with?

22. When did you join? Was this before or after children?
How did you feel at the time? (fears, doubts)

23. What do you get out of your affiliation?
What do you enjoy, find meaningful?

24. Are you members of any Church?

25. When did you join?
How active are you? How often do you attend services and other functions?

26. (If no children) Are you planning to have children?
How will children affect your decisions in terms of religious affiliation?

27. (If children) How did having children affect your decisions in terms of religious affiliation?

28. How will you raise your children in regards to religion?
How did you reach this decision?

29. Do you send your children to any type of religious school?
What kind is it?

30. What do you want your children to get out of the religious school?

31. (For non-Jewish spouse if applicable) You have decided to join a Jewish institution and to raise your children as Jews. How do you make these two things compatible in your own mind, for yourself?

(Is conversion a possibility you have ever considered . . .?)

32. (If affiliated with a church) How do you balance dual affiliations? (celebrations, etc.)

33. Do you consider your family different in some ways to other families because of the differences in religious backgrounds? What is different?

    Have any issues been discussed or any obstacles overcome that you would attribute to the differences in religious backgrounds?

34. What kind of wedding ceremony did you have?
    Who performed the ceremony?
    Where was the ceremony held?

35. Is this what you had wanted? Why? Why not?
    (What did you want?)

36. What did the ceremony mean to you at the time?

37. What process did you go through to become married? Any preconditions for clergy officiation? How did it make you feel?

38. What part did parents play in the process?

39. Do you feel rabbis should officiate at mixed marriage ceremonies?
    Why? Why not?
    If yes, under what conditions?

40. Are you comfortable in your affiliation with the Jewish community?

41. What were your feelings when you first joined?

42. How do people perceive you as a couple (seeing that you are intermarried and affiliated?)

43. Did someone invite or in some way encourage you to join?
    Who?
    How did that come about?

44. What have people done to make you feel welcome?

45. Do some people make you feel like an outsider?
    How? What do they do?

46. Have your children faced any difficult situations because their parents are intermarried?
    If so, where? (religious school, youth group . . .?)

47. Do you want your children's religious school teachers to know that your children come from an intermarriage?
    Why? Why not?

48. How do you participate in the Jewish community?

49. Are there any limits that you know of that would limit your involvement--in ritual, holding Temple office, etc. . . .?

50. What advice would you give to a couple thinking about entering an intermarriage?
What issues should they consider?
What choices and decisions should they make right away?

51. What advice would you offer to an intermarried couple who is about to enter the Jewish community formally?

52. Can you think of any reasons why couples like yourself do <u>not</u> affiliate with a Jewish organization?
What stops them?

C. <u>Data Collection</u>

I conducted ten interviews; eight interviews were with both spouses and in two interviews I spoke with only the Jewish spouse. I conducted eight of the interviews in the respondents' homes in a living room atmosphere. The two interviews with the Jewish spouses only were conducted in their offices. I tape recorded the interviews with their permission and took detailed notes throughout the interview. The interviews lasted approximately 3 hours. Transcripts of the interviews were then written up for study, recording of findings and evaluation. The actual names of the respondents do not appear in the thesis, and all other identifying pieces of data have been omitted.

Chapter 3

Findings

The couples with whom I spoke were interesting people who were willing to relate their backgrounds, describe their current family lifestyles, and share their attitudes with me. Although I asked them a series of just over fifty questions, I have grouped their responses into six areas for the purposes of presentation. I shall first briefly introduce each couple by relating some basic information about them, and then relate data on their families of origin, their interfaith attitudes courtship and wedding, religious observances, religious upbringing and education of children, religious affiliation and their acceptance in the Jewish community.

A. The Couples

Meredith and James Abrams have been married for a year. They were 32 and 38 years of age respectively when they were married. Their first child is due in January, and it is the first marriage for both of them. They both grew up in Cincinnati, and James is a business executive, and Meredith manages a women's clothing store.

Chris and Bill Denny were 25 and 26 years old respectively when they were married, and they have been married for 10 years. It is the first marriage for each partner, and they have three children, two

girls, ages 6 and 3, and a boy age 1. Chris is a native of Cincinnati and Bill has been here for 12 years. Bill, who had worked in industrial sales, is currently working for a degree and Chris is a school teacher.

Joy and Jim Cohen, married for 9-1/2 years, were 27 and 26 years old respectively when they were married. They have two children; it is a second marriage for Joy, and it is Jim's first marriage. Jim is a vice president of a large company, and Joy described herself as a homemaker. Joy has been in Cincinnati for 8 years and Jim grew up here.

Diane and Michael Edelstein have been married five years now, and they have two children. It is Diane's first marriage and Michael's second, and they were 30 and 31 years old respectively when they were married. Both natives of Cincinnati, Diane is a homemaker and Michael is a lawyer.

Susan and Bill Fuller have been married for 2-1/2 years; Susan was 25 and Bill was 34 years old when they married. It is a first marriage for Susan and a second marriage for Bill. They have one child, and they are both public school teachers. Susan has lived in Cincinnati for 5 years and Bill for 9.

Randy and David Grady were both 28 years old when they were married 3-1/2 years ago. They have one child; it is their first marriage. Randy is a homemaker who has lived in the Cincinnati area for 8 years and David is a lawyer who has grown up here.

Judy and Kerry O'Brian, now married almost 11 years, were 24 and 26 years of age when they wed. It is a first marriage for both and they

have one 6 year old child. Judy has lived in Cincinnati for 10 years, is a realtor, and Kerry has been here for 15, and he is in sales.

Nora and Rudolph Perez, married 18 years, were 27 and 25 years of age respectively when they were married. It is their first marriage, and they have 3 children. Both doctors, they immigrated to the United States from South America and have been living in Cincinnati for 15 years.

Linda and Jerry Jackson have been married for 2 years now, and Linda was 42 and Jerry was 44 years old at the time. It is Linda's second marriage and Jerry's third. They both have children from previous marriages. Jerry has a scrapmetal business and Linda assists him as well doing volunteer work at her synagogue. Linda has lived in the Cincinnati area for 17 years and Jerry for 21.

Rose and David Lance have been married for 4 years, it is their first marriage, and they have no children. Rose was 26 and David was 32 years old when they were married. Rose is a school librarian and has lived here for 9 years, and David is an accountant, and has lived here all his life.

B. Families of Origin and Their Interfaith Attitudes

Meredith and James Abrams

James Abrams grew up in a Reform Jewish home, and they were members of a large Temple where his father was active and eventually served as president. His father's parents had been members of both an Orthodox and the same Reform Temples, and James described these paternal

grandparents as "very observant." Thus, James' father had a "rich Jewish background" in contrast to his mother who had "very little formal religious school education." The maternal grandparents also belonged to this same large Temple, but they were "very Reform."

Most of James' religious observances centered around the home and family. They all gathered for Shabbat dinner each week at the paternal grandfather's house. Extended family also attended these dinners which were complete with candles and wine. James described the large Passover celebration which took place at his parents' home--usually 30 people came for Seder. Chanukah was observed, but it was not a "big deal." James added that they received a lot of gifts at Christmas, and the family had a Christmas tree until his father became president of the Temple. The family went to Temple services infrequently with James' father attending alone when he was the President.

James received a lot of religious training. He said that "I started Sunday school in second grade--that was late, but I continued until I was a senior in high school." He also studied Hebrew for two years and said, "I recall the book we used; it was called Rocket to Mars." James was also active in the youth group, taking after his father and serving as President for a term. His lifecycle event included consecration, Bar Mitzvah "which was unusual then," confirmation and graduation.

Meredith Abrams' parents and grandparents are Catholic, and her family was affiliated with a church. They celebrated Christmas and Easter at home, and she recalled going to Church frequently with her father when she was young, but went less as she got older. "My father

went the most," Meredith explained; even when they attended Midnight Mass her mother usually did not go. The family did go on Easter Sunday.

Meredith went to Catholic school for six years where she received religious instruction, and she began public school by junior high school age. Meredith was baptized and said that she was taught that "if you were not [baptized] you would go to hell." She was also confirmed in the Catholic Church.

James reported that he received no formal lectures about intermarriage, but that he could tell from his parents' discussions that Jews married Jews. He added, however, that "my parents respected what we children chose. They taught us but let us apply principles. I was never scared to choose." His grandparents had no negative attitudes toward intermarriage. When James announced his wedding plans, he said that his mother was "happy, happy to see that I was finally getting married!" His father was quite ill at the time.

As for Meredith's parents, she said that she did not even know their attitudes. "I did not grow up with any Jews. My parents said nothing about [intermarriage]. I didn't even know Jews existed, let alone that we were not supposed to marry them." Meredith did not know her grandparents' attitudes toward intermarriage. Her parents said, "it's about time," when Meredith announced her intentions to marry James.

Chris and Bill Denny

Bill Denny comes from a Jewish family which was affiliated with both Reform and Conservative synagogues. His mother died when he was 8 years old, and at 13, when his father remarried, the family also joined

his stepmother's Conservative synagogue. Bill's paternal grandparents held membership in an Orthodox synagogue and perhaps a Conservative one too. Bill did not know much about either set of maternal grandparents. Celebrating Shabbat each Friday night, as well as Passover and Chanukah were among the holidays Bill recalled celebrating at home. Family gathered for the Seder, a Potato Latke party at Chanukah and during the High Holidays. The family attended synagogue on the High Holidays and an "occasional Friday night." Bill went to Sunday School, and went to services as part of the religious school program, which also included Purim, Shavuot and Sukkot celebrations. Bill was educated in a Reform religious school until Bar Mitzvah age, when he continued his training at the Conservative Synagogue where he became Bar Mitzvah along with his stepbrother.

Chris Denny described her family as coming from a variety of religious traditions. Her father, a born Protestant, was not originally affiliated with any church, but he became active in the Catholic church after his conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism. Chris's mother was raised as a Catholic and taught in a parochial school at the elementary grade level. She pointed out that her mother was "raised Catholic," because Chris's maternal grandmother was Jewish; "she spoke Yiddish," recalled Chris, and "they went to Plum Street Temple on the High Holy days." The maternal grandfather was Catholic and affiliated with a Catholic church. These grandparents were eventually divorced. The paternal grandparents were Protestant and not affiliated with any church.

Chris's family celebrated Christmas at home and at the homes of her aunts and uncles. She recalled how her father dressed up as Santa Claus and that they lit an advent wreath. Easter dinner was with immediate family and her maternal grandfather and his sister. The children hunted for colored Easter eggs and received Easter baskets. The family recited grace before each meal, did not eat meat on Fridays and fasted before Holy Communion. Chris recalled that "at Lent we sacrificed something--we gave up candy, a TV program, fighting with siblings." Chris attended church regularly, going each Sunday as well as for Christmas and Easter Mass. On Holy Days when there were no classes, the family also went to church. When classes were held, Chris went to services as part of the school program since she attended a parochial school from kindergarten through high school.

Bill stated that he was familiar with his parents' feelings about intermarriage, although "I received no formal lecture." When he became interested in Chris his parents were concerned, telling him that "a marriage will be hard with two different religions. It is hard with children because of another religion in the home." Bill reported that he expected that his parents "would be a bit more verbal than they were. I expected an obstinate 'no'. They were interested in my happiness, my future." Bill understood his parents' feelings because there had been intermarriage in his stepmother's family. Bill said he knew how his paternal grandfather felt about intermarriage, saying, "it was an unspoken attitude. His Jewishness told me."

Chris related that she became acquainted with her parents' attitude toward any kind of marriage outside the church when her brother began

seriously dating a Protestant. There was conflict between her brother and parents. She recalled that "I had to get a special dispensation to be in the wedding party." Chris said, therefore, that her parents' feelings were no surprise to her, even though she received no formal lecture on the subject. Chris reported, however, that when she announced her plans, her parents were not surprised, but noted that she and Bill had been dating for 1-1/2 years. Her parents were pleased but somehow they expressed to her that "it would be hard." She found that her father had a narrow-minded view because "he converted to Catholicism and became active . . . he did not know about Jews. Mom was a bit more open minded, perhaps as a result of her background."

Joy and Jim Cohen

Jim Cohen's parents are Jewish, and he says his father claims he is an atheist, and described his mother as a "bit radical." He pointed out that his mother was one of the founders of a small, liberal congregation which had broken away from a large established congregation. She had found the education there a bit too traditional, so she also was active in designing the religious school curriculum at the new Temple. Both parents are active in fund-raising activities. Both sets of Jim's grandparents belonged to a large Reform Temple in Cincinnati.

Jim recalled celebrating Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot at home with large dinner celebrations. The family also observed Chanukah and the Passover Seder with the immediate family and perhaps a guest. Jim said there was no regular Shabbat observance at home; he went to services on Sunday for Shabbat services following Sunday school classes. Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkat services were also attended, as was a Purim celebration at the Temple.

Jim said he began his religious school education in kindergarten and continued until Confirmation, when he was a sophomore in high school. He remarked that Bar Mitzvah was available, but that he did not become Bar Mitzvah. Jim particularly remembered an older rabbi who taught him Bible. He looked forward to this year and was challenged by the class, also saying that "it was a discovery of who you were."

Joy Cohen comes from a Protestant background. Her father was Methodist and her mother came from one of the Protestant sects. The family attended a Presbyterian Church. Joy's paternal grandparents were Methodist. She said that her grandmother was

> very religious; until she died she sent money to Oral Roberts. My grandfather was also pretty religious; he had read the Bible 2 or 3 times completely. The maternal grandparents were Lutheran but not very religious.

Joy's family celebrated Christmas and Easter, and she described them as being "not very religious." They went to church for Christmas Eve services, as well as on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. When Joy got older she attended Sunday services as well. Joy was baptized in the Church, starting Sunday School when she was "really young, four or five years old." She was confirmed in the 7th grade, and that ended her Sunday School days, and she started attending Sunday services. Joy sang in the church choir, and remembered learning mostly Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments. She also stated, "Maybe it was just the church I went to, but Jesus was never stressed. I never felt we were constantly talking about Jesus and all those things."

Jim reported that he "actually did sit and talk about [intermarriage]" with his father. From Jim's description of the talk,

it was clear that his father professed a very liberal philosophy. He said,

> I remember my father telling me, it didn't matter who I married, I mean, I grew up in a household where the color of your skin didn't matter, how much money you had didn't matter, what your religion was didn't matter. They (parents) cared about how we were going to grow up, who our friends were, what kind of life we were going to live; they really believed that people were equal.

Jim added, however, that his father would discourage him from certain marriages because of "the difficulties that would arise in life as a result of those unions--primarily those [problems] that revolved around children." He also mentioned the problems of having to function in society. Those marriages that Jim's father was referring to were those with a "very religious Catholic" or a "black woman." Jim said his father told him that if these "came up" he would "sit us down and try to discourage us," but if he still wanted the marriage Jim's father would have given them his blessing. When Jim told his parents that he was going to marry Joy, he said they were "real happy."

Joy "never felt" her parents "had any problems with [intermarriage]." She guessed that if she were younger, her parents might have tried to talk her out of a marriage with a "Jewish man or a Black man . . . just because we would have a hard time, well, not especially a Jewish man, but maybe a Black man." Joy knew her paternal grandmother was opposed to intermarriage, but only those involving Catholics. They "never said anything about Jews because it never entered into her way of thinking, but she was definitely against Catholics." Joy reported that her parents "were happy I was getting

married period." Her grandparents were also happy, including the "religious ones."

Michael and Diane Edelstein

Michael Edelstein comes from a Reform Jewish background. His parents belonged to and were active in a large Reform Congregation. His father served as president of the Temple and held many offices, and his mother was president of the Sisterhood for a year. Both sets of grandparents belonged to the same Reform Temple and the maternal grandparents also held membership in a Conservative synagogue. Michael explained that his family celebrated all the Jewish holidays at his maternal grandparents' house, including Shabbat. Chanukah, however, was celebrated in his own home. His family also celebrated Christmas and Easter, "but in a non-religious way." They did not have a Christmas tree, but they exchanged gifts on Christmas and received Easter eggs on Easter.

The family attended synagogue on the High Holidays and approximately ten Shabbat services a year. Michael remembered going quite a bit around his Bar Mitzvah age because many of his friends at the time were also becoming Bar-Mitzvah. He also went on Saturdays as part of the religious school program which he called organized and large with good teachers. Michael was consecrated, became Bar-Mitzvah, was confirmed and graduated from the religious school.

Diane Edelstein was raised as a Catholic; her mother is a "practicing Catholic" who goes to church each Sunday, but who "considers herself excommunicated" because she married a divorced man. Diane's father was raised as a Protestant, but was not a "church goer." Diane's

paternal grandparents were Protestant, and her maternal grandparents were Catholic. The family celebrated Christmas and Easter, and Diane recalled that there were home celebrations for first communions and confirmations. They went to church for these special events of course, as well as on each Sunday, Holy Days, Midnight Mass, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. After high school, Diane said she no longer attended on a regular basis, "only on the major holidays." Diane was sent to a parochial school from kindergarten through high school, and she recalls that they attended Mass each day in school.

Michael reported that when he was in high school, he got the "general idea that one should not intermarry." His mother had raised the issue, and Michael commented, "if there was any pressure it came from my mother and her parents. But that changed." Michael considered that the change may have had something to do with his first marriage, but then said it was probably just that "people's attitudes loosened as time went on." Indeed, when Michael announced his marriage plans, no one was surprised and they "embraced Diane."

Diane seemed to indicate that her parents did not really express any feelings to her on the subject of intermarriage. She pointed out that her parents were themselves intermarried, but she admitted that earlier, her mother would have liked her to marry a Catholic. But when she and Michael were getting married, she expressed no disapproval.

Susan and Bill Fuller

Bill Fuller's parents and grandparents are all Lutheran, and the family belonged to a Lutheran church. Bill explained that his parents "met at church." The Fullers celebrated Christmas and Easter; recited a

prayer before meals and had home celebrations before a special occasion at Church such as a Confirmation. They attended church regularly each Sunday, Christmas, Easter, Good Friday and on weekdays during Lent. Bill was sent to Lutheran schools for his education.

Susan's parents are Jewish; her father is observant and attends a minyan each day either in the morning or in the evening. Her mother was raised in a Conservative/Reform Jewish family. Susan reported that the family belonged to three synagogues in their community: an Orthodox one, as well as a Conservative and a Reform Temple. Susan's paternal grandparents were Orthodox Jews and her maternal grandparents were conservative Jews, but they never belonged to a congregation, although they raised her mother Jewish.

While Susan was growing up, she said that all the holidays were observed at home. They observed Shabbat each Friday night, had a big Seder each year for which they had 30 guests, dinners at Rosh Hashanah and breakfasts after Yom Kippur, and they celebrated Chanukah by exchanging gifts and playing dreidle. Susan remembers that she dressed up for Purim and her family built a Sukkah once. She also recalled that her mother changed all the dishes for Passover. After high school Susan said she became less observant, but there was a time, between 5th and 8th grades, that she went to Shabbat evening services at the conservative synagogue with her mother. In general, however, she attended synagogue twice a year at the High Holidays. Susan also went to Sunday school each week, studied Hebrew twice a week, and attended a one year confirmation class.

Bill reported that his parents "frowned upon intermarriage with Catholics, and they were not tolerant of interracial marriages either. I got the definite feeling that one should not marry Jews by hearing conservations." Bill added that his grandparents felt even more strongly against intermarriage, but that "we did not have any Jews." Bill said when he told his family he was marrying Susan "everyone was really happy and accepting." Bill explained that no one was surprised and that his parents "became more accepting with age." "My first marriage ended in divorce," reasoned Bill, "so they were more accepting the second time around. No one discouraged me." Bill noted that the only problem where his parents were concerned was that his mother held fundamentalist beliefs about salvation and it had already been decided that the children were going to be raised Jewish. "This cannot be too easy for her," commented Bill.

Susan felt that her parents were not against intermarriages, but they were <u>for</u> marrying within Judaism. She said that "I understand this through casual remarks and conversation." When Susan announced her intentions to marry Bill, her mother "said at the very beginning that we would prefer someone Jewish. It will be easier for you, less problems, no religious questions."

<u>Randy and David Grady</u>

David Grady's parents and grandparents are all Catholic, and all are members of a church. His father is in the lay pastoral ministry and his mother has a Ph.D. in Scripture. The family celebrated Christmas and Easter and ate fish on Fridays. They attended Mass each Sunday, Midnight Mass, all the Holy Days, feasts, All Saints Day, Ash Wednesday, and New Year's Day. David attended parochial schools.

Randy's parents are Jewish and belonged to a Conservative synagogue. Her paternal grandparents held membership in either a Conservative or an Orthodox Congregation, while her maternal grandparents were probably members of a Reform Congregation since Randy's mother was confirmed. The family celebrated the major holidays. Passover was observed with a Seder at the paternal grandparents' house or at Randy's house. Her mother changed the dishes for Passover, and Randy remarked that "my father was the strict one." She reported that "we observed each Shabbat, but once I got older, around high school, I observed Shabbat less." They observed Chanukah, exchanged gifts and had big dinners at other holidays. Randy recalled making hamantashen at Purim. Randy said she "really did not attend [synagogue] much," and she had little formal religious training, but her parents gave her informal instruction at home.

David said that his parents never addressed the issue of intermarriage, and that the family knew very, very few Jews. When Randy showed her engagement ring to David's parents, Randy remarked, "That was no trouble. They knew we would get married. They were happy." Randy also said that the issue of intermarriage was never addressed in her home, but that she "could surmise what their attitudes were. She explained that she had very little contact with non-Jews until college, and that her parents saw she had strong religious feelings despite having no formal religious education. Randy reported that she called her parents with the news of the engagement.

> They were not too happy. Dad was more upset than Mom. Mom came to grips with it. She tried to talk to my father about it. He said it was the worst day of his life. My feelings were hurt, I was sad. I

> also knew I had disappointed him. I am an only child. This was a reason for postponing the wedding. Both of us had always done all that our parents had expected of us. Whether it was for school or just anything we wanted to please our parents.

Judy and Kerry O'Brian

(Only Judy was interviewed. She answered the questions about Kerry's family.)

Kerry's father was a Catholic who "abandoned" his religion at some point. Somewhere in his family, there is a Jewish relative. His mother was Methodist; she was a regular churchgoer, and she always chose the church whenever the family moved and joined a new congregation. Kerry's paternal grandparents were Catholic, and they were divorced when the children were still young. The maternal grandparents were Protestant; Judy believed they were Methodist. Kerry's family celebrated Christmas and Easter, they went to church regularly and Kerry attended Sunday school each Sunday.

Judy is a convert to Judaism, so her family background is different than the backgrounds of the other Jewish respondents. Yet, she does have Jewish ancestors. Her father was Baptist, and he died when Judy was 15. Her paternal grandparents were also Baptist; she never met her grandfather because he died when Judy's father was 12. Judy did meet her grandmother on this side, but she had no contact with her. Judy remarked that this woman "was never civil to my mother." Judy's mother was raised as a Protestant in a Presbyterian church. But her maternal grandmother was Jewish, and she married a "very Irish Protestant." Judy never met either grandparent on this side. She pointed out that "technically my mother is a Jew."

At this point Judy explained how she had come to convert to Judaism.

> When I was in college, independently of my mother, I decided to identify Jewishly. I had met Jews at U.C. and this influenced me. At the same time, my mother was doing the same thing, in Dayton. After graduation, I went to Israel. After I returned, I sat and talked with Mom. She had already been to see a Rabbi; he thought she was crazy. She went to see a 2nd Rabbi. She decided to identify Jewishly. We went to conversion class for a number of months. We became members of the congregation in June, 1974. Then I moved to Cincinnati.

While growing up, Judy's family celebrated Christmas and Easter. She commented at this point that she was an only child and that they had no extended family nearby. So the family celebrated with friends, but they had children who were Judy's age, and two of her parents' friends were like grandparents to her.

Regarding church attendance, Judy stated, "We went every Sunday to Church. I recall being dragged along. I didn't really love it. I don't recall too much about it. Judy also went to Sunday school until "there were no more classes to go to."

Judy reported that Kerry did not know the attitudes of his parents regarding intermarriage. As far as her own parents were concerned, marrying a Catholic "would be a big deal, but Jews were not mentioned." When they announced their wedding plans, Judy said that everyone was happy. "Kerry's parents had no problem, and I was relieved. They liked me. There were no fights, no battles." By this time, both Judy and her mother had converted to Judaism. Judy said that "my Mom was concerned about the difference in religion. She said it was a shame he's not Jewish. But if I wanted him, then it was okay."

Nora and Rudolph Perez

(Only Nora was interviewed. She answered the questions about Rudolph's family.)

Nora and Rudolph Perez were born and brought up in a South American country. Rudolph's parents are Catholic and they are affiliated with the Catholic Church. Nora explained that the country is a Catholic country, so certain customs are observed, not because of any particular affiliation, but because it's part of the country's culture. So Nora's in-laws were quite Catholic by their society's standards. They would take a pilgrimage to a particular sanctuary, for example, but not go to Mass every Sunday. They observed the major holidays and sent Rudolph to a private school which was Catholic affiliated. Nora explained, however, that "the public schools were not really good. So everybody went to private schools. Private schools were not really expensive." Nora was pointing out that being sent to a private school in her native country is not like being sent to a private school here. Even the public schools teach Catholicism, so Rudolph's parents sending him to a private school had more to do with him receiving a good education than with receiving a Catholic education.

Nora's background is quite different from Rudolph's. Both her parents are Jewish, they were born in Europe and came to South America to escape Hitler. Her paternal grandparents were quite active in the Jewish community--her grandfather was a rabbi. Nora described her maternal grandparents as "very liberal for Europe," but she was sure that they were also affiliated with the Jewish community. All but the paternal grandmother died in concentration camps--she died before the

Germans invaded their country. Nora's parents met in South America and were eventually married. The paternal grandfather, according to Nora "knew of my mother's and father's wedding. He still wrote to them, even from Dachau at that time." Nora's parents also lost their brothers and sisters in the holocaust.

The family did belong to a synagogue and of the two parents, Nora's father was the more observant. The mother did not have any religious education, and Nora said, "We never observed the Sabbath . . . we didn't light Sabbath candles. My home was never kosher." Nora's father, however, went to synagogue "almost every Friday" and "there was a time when I went with him." He was a leader in the Jewish community. The family would sometimes attend synagogue together--on High Holidays, other holidays and an occasional Shabbat service. The only holiday observed at home was the Passover Seder. "I remember the first Seder at home with all the friends that were Jewish and came to my home." Nora received very little Jewish education, saying classes were held very sporadically, and the classes were "mostly devoted to the male kids, so that they would go ahead and have their Bar-Mitzvahs . . ." Nora explained, "there was no Bat Mitzvah for girls . . . Girls were not really taught to learn Hebrew, to read or write. I learned a little on my own, but nobody ever pursued it. There were very little Jewish activities that I participated in." By the same token, Nora was also sent to the "American School," which she called "the only option available for Jewish kids." Although Bible was taught, there was no religious instruction or services as in the Catholic public and private schools.

Rudolph's parents never considered intermarriage a problem or even a possibility. When Nora and Rudolph wanted to get married, it did not bother Rudolph's parents and they accepted Nora warmly and openly. Nora's parents reacted similarly. Her mother had no objections at all, and her father only "would have preferred" that Nora marry a Jew. Nora was aware of their attitudes when she was younger. When she and Rudolph announced their intentions, they had known one another many years, and "everyone knew we were going to marry."

Linda and Jerry Jackson

Jerry Jackson comes from Southern Baptist parents who did not belong to any church. Few religious observances were practiced in the home. Christmas and Easter were celebrated, family visited at Christmas, and "occasionally, for the holidays, maybe somebody said a prayer before the meal." The family rarely went to church, Jerry's never attended and his mother went infrequently. Jerry did go to a Lutheran church when he visited an aunt and uncle during the summer months when he was a teenager. They went to church regularly. When he was younger, Jerry was sent to a Vacation Bible School for 2 or 3 summers. He had no other formal religious education.

Linda's parents were members of a Conservative synagogue, and she described them as "basically non-practicing." Her paternal grandparents "were not real religious," but her maternal grandfather was a cantor, and her grandmother "kept kosher and was a very religious woman." Linda never knew the grandfather, but she and her mother always went to this grandmother's house for all holiday observance,s including each Shabbat. Linda's father worked on Friday nights and did not join the family.

Holidays were not observed in her own home, and Linda's parents accompanied her to synagogue only on the High Holidays. She did attend services however as part of the religious school program. Linda went to Hebrew school for four days a week and to religious school on Sundays, and then later on Saturdays. She also went away to a Jewish summer camp for a month for four or five summers, but only remembered learning Israeli dancing and a "little calligraphy," horseback riding and swimming.

Jerry was sure that his parents had no objections to intermarriage, and he specified that he meant intermarriages between Jews and Christians. But he admitted that they never expressed an opinion to him on the subject. Of course, by the time Jerry married Linda, he was a grown adult, and his parents would have little to say in the matter. Jerry's youngest son (age 15) however, did express "a lot of opposition" to the marriage, but "not because [Linda] was Jewish, but that she was anybody." Moreover, relations with Jerry's family are practically non-existent. Linda complained that she and Jerry are not included in any family gatherings, even when they have made attempts to show that they want to be included. She was clearly bothered by this.

Linda's parents were against intermarriage, and they made this very clear to Linda when an issue about dating arose.

> My father was a typical European, a Russian, raised in a very closed environment. I can remember one time--I wanted to go out with a fellow and his name was obviously Italian. And my father said, "No way!"

Linda never questioned her father's authority; what he said was the rule. Following what Linda called a "bitter divorce," and then seven years, she had this story to relate:

> When I took Jerry to Cleveland to meet my dad, we didn't know what the response would be--I for sure did not know what the response would be. To this day, my father has never said anything. He loves Jerry. He thinks he's great. And he has never said a word about religious differences ever.

To this day, the relationship between Jerry and his father-in-law is close.

Rose and David Lance

David Lance's background is completely Catholic, and his parents were affiliated with a parish. He explained that in Catholicism "most [religious] observances are done in Church . . . we didn't do too much in the home other than grace before meals. We didn't sit around at night and pray and read the Bible or anything like that." David did mention that they fasted on Fridays during Lent, and Christmas and Easter celebrations were observed in the home. The family went to church very regularly, going each Sunday and on all the holidays. David served as an altar boy and attended Catholic schools.

Rose's parents and grandparents are Jewish. Her grandparents were Orthodox Jews; the paternal set belonged to an Orthodox shul and her maternal grandparents were "Orthodox in tradition in the home but never could afford to belong to a congregation." Rose's parents made Shabbat each week; her mother lit candles, her father said the kiddush but they were rarely able to obtain a challah since they lived in a sparsely Jewish populated area. Rose's family does celebrate Passover--"it was

always a big thing"--with "good friends from the congregation." They refrained from eating leavened food during Passover, had a Chanukah party to which they invited non-Jewish neighbors. "We were an isolated Jewish family in the Bible Belt," explained Rose. "We did a lot more at home during my teenage years than we did at Temple. The center of everything for us is the home."

The family did attend synagogue, some years more, others less. They lived 20 miles from the Temple which was served by student rabbis from Hebrew Union College. As Rose got older, she wanted to attend the social programs held on Friday nights at the public school; there were few opportunities to socialize for youth in their small town. Rose was sent to the religious school, but she did not think it was a very good experience. Rose knew none of the students since everyone came from different public schools; the teachers were any parents, grandparents "or a warm body--basically who was willing to try" to teach; since the school was small the students had the same teacher for the same class for three years "with pretty much the same curriculum for 3 years. . . . Not very stimulating." "It was not necessarily well taught, not necessarily well organized." Rose did relate a positive experience with a full-time rabbi who gave the students tutorial sessions and let them choose an area of study.

> I think there were two of us who wanted to do the Holocaust. We might have a week or two to study a particular book and then we'd come in and discuss it. And that was a very positive thing, that's the only positive thing I remember from however many years, eight years or ten years of religious instruction.

I asked Rose why she chose this subject.

> I'm not sure, I think it was something I had heard a lot about and my grandmother, my father's mother was one of seventeen children at the time she left Poland and was the only one who survived out of the whole family. She didn't even get in touch with any cousins. I felt some concern to learn about that, and probably a lot of the other topics we could have taken had been history or holidays or all those other things that had been touched upon here and there, again, and again, and again. The previous times had not been a happy learning experience.

David did not know the attitudes of his parents on intermarriage because "there was never any reason to discuss it." "I didn't think it would be a problem once it came up and it wasn't." He did not know how his grandparents felt. David's parents knew that David and Rose were eventually going to marry, and in fact, they asked him, "when are you going to ask her?"

Rose's parents said that they would prefer that Rose go off to college and find herself a nice Jewish boy. So Rose knew her parents' attitude about intermarriage, but she also said they were realistic about the situation, given where they were raising their daughter. "They didn't say, as many parents do, you can only go out with Jews, because I would have been a sit-at-home gina for the rest of my life." In fact, Rose's parents were not surprised when Rose announced her plans. They had told her years earlier that "should you decide to marry somebody out of the faith, we're not going to be stupid enough to hurt ourselves by cutting ourselves off from you. . . ." In addition, a tragic event--the death of Rose's best friend at age 25--caused Rose's parents to "really evaluate. My parents decided that what was important was for their children to be happy, healthy and happy." Rose's maternal grandmother often told her, "what is important is the man's character,

not religious trappings." Rose guessed that her other grandmother, who died before she was born, "probably would not have approved, but I also know she had a tremendously big heart and probably would not have disowned me." Rose's paternal grandfather was dying just about the time Rose began dating David. She related this story:

> When my father went out to see him for the last time, my grandfather asked if I was dating anyone, if I was seeing anyone. You see I was 25 already, and we had to get this show on the road. My father said yes. He asked if it was a Jewish boy, and my father said yes, only because he knew his father was dying and didn't want to upset him. He wasn't sure. So I don't know how he would have reacted.

When Rose and David formally became engaged both sets of parents were happy. The two families more than get along, they are quite close. Rose and David had arranged a meeting between the parents before they got engaged to "test the waters." Rose commented, "They hit it off like gangbusters . . . we couldn't <u>not</u> get married after that."

C. <u>Interfaith Attitudes, Courtship and Weddings</u>

<u>Meredith and James Abrams</u>

It was important to find a Jewish marriage partner, according to James, "and it stayed important all the time. I had to overcome the fact that Meredith was not Jewish." James believes, however, that the marriage would not work if "Meredith were a strong Christian." He described marriage as sharing, so since his religion is important to him and he is able to share it, the marriage can work. Indeed, Meredith felt that it was not important for her to find a Christian mate, saying "there is more to marriage than religion."

The Abrams met at a wedding and dated for over eight years before getting married. Religious differences did not seem to be a problem with this couple. Decisions about where to get married and that they would have a Jewish home were already made. Toward that end, Meredith studied with the rabbi who married them in order to learn a few of the basics about Judaism. She said, "I wanted to learn Jewish things . . . I wanted to learn." The Abrams had a Jewish wedding ceremony in a synagogue in which James' rabbi officiated.

Chris and Bill Denny

Bill had always expected to marry a Jewish woman. "But I found growing up that I liked and dated non-Jewish girls. Still, I expected I would marry a Jew, but it was not a matter of urgency." Chris said it was important for her to marry a Catholic, and throughout high school she dated Catholic boys. When she went to college, however, she said, "it became less important to marry a Catholic. At social events, I met all types and dated all types."

The Dennys met at a pub and dated for between 1-1/2 to 2 years. Religious issues were raised, and once they were engaged they met with Bill's rabbi, a priest and attended pre-cana classes (Catholic pre-marriage classes). At the time Bill placed great importance upon raising any children as Jews, and Chris said it "really did not matter." Chris admitted, however, that her decision was based on her feelings for Bill, but "I did not really stop to think of my feelings." Bill agreed with Chris's analysis and sympathized.

Bill and Chris had a dual religious ceremony officiated by a rabbi and a priest in a Catholic church.

Joy and Jim Cohen

The Cohens both felt that they would have problems with any marriage partner who was very religious. Jim said he would have as much difficulty with a "religious Christian woman . . . who believed Jesus Christ was the son of God and then passed it on to the children," as he was married to a "religious Jewish woman." For both Jim and Joy, it was not important to find someone of the same religion, but it was the "strength of beliefs" that mattered. Jim had dated Jewish women, however.

Joy and Jim met in the apartment complex in which they were living and dated for 1-1/2 years before they were engaged. The relationship evolved gradually over time, during which the subject of religion was discussed. Jim said it was "part of getting to know someone," but a few weeks before he asked Joy to marry him, he asked her many questions about religion. Obviously, he was satisfied with her answers.

The Cohens also discussed how they would raise the children and agreed that they would not raise them "real religiously--either Reform (Jewish) or Unitarian." Joy did not mind if they were raised Jewish. Jim felt that it is "not good if one parent has to defend his religion to the child, which I would have to do if the children were raised Christian." The couple also agreed to celebrate Christmas.

Jim and Joy were married in a civil ceremony officiated by a Christian minister in a hotel.

Diane and Michael Edelstein

Michael always thought and expected that he would marry someone Jewish, but he never thought it was impossible for him to fall in love

with a non-Jews. He also dated non-Jewish women. Michael "interpreted" his own thinking, saying that what he "really meant was that I would always remain a practicing Jew and my children would be Jewish, not so much that I really cared if I married a Jew . . ." Jim felt, however, that if he married a Jew he would be able to raise his children as Jews, and he was always aware of the person's religion with whom he was dating. Diane said that it was not important for her to marry a Catholic. She was not a practicing "Catholic" and she was "turning away from Catholicism."

Michael and Diane met at work and dated for almost two years. The relationship "evolved" and the two discussed many things prior to deciding to marry--religion was one of them. They decided they would raise children as Jews and Michael said, "we settled all the issues before we decided to get married, except probably when we were going to get married." The couple was married in a Jewish ceremony by a rabbi at a downtown club.

Susan and Bill Fuller

Neither of the Fullers said it was important for them to marry someone within their own faith. They met at a party where some friends introduced them to one another. They dated for a year before they got married, and the decision to get married was described as "a process kind of decision." Susan and Bill reported that they discussed and decided many religious issues before they were married. They decided to raise the children as Jews since Susan was the more religious of the two, and they did not want to leave it up to the children. In addition, Susan's family lived much closer than Bill's, so it made sense for this

reason too. The couple also decided that they would observe Chanukah and Passover; they planned on going to the family Seder at Susan's parents. They would, however, respect one another's religion. Susan and Bill were married in a civil ceremony by a Jewish Judge in a hotel.

Randy and David Grady

David never thought about whether or not he would marry someone of his own faith, saying "that was a foreign issue." Randy said it was important to her. The couple met in college when they were introduced to one another. They dated for 7-8 years, and when they began, there was no discussion about their different religions, and Randy did not think David would end up being a marriage partner. But when things did become serious, they discussed religious differences. Randy and David were both very concerned about their parents' feelings. Both agreed that their children should have a religion and decided it would be Judaism. Randy said she would "not be able to cope with raising children Catholic."

David was also concerned about the children and what it would be like for them to have parents from different religions. The Gradys plan to celebrate one another's major holidays in their home, by visiting parents and by going to one another's house of worship.

David and Randy described their wedding ceremony as "religious," a rabbi officiated and a priest said a few remarks at the end of the ceremony which was held in a synagogue.

Judy and Kerry O'Brian

Kerry did not feel it was important to marry someone of his own faith. Judy did think it was important when she was younger, but her

feelings changed as she grew older. Judy and Kerry met at college in Judy's sophomore year. Judy was engaged to someone at the time, so she and Kerry were just acquaintances. Judy's engagement did not lead to a marriage, but she and Kerry did not begin dating until after Judy graduated and after her trip to Israel. (At this time, Judy was interested in, but had not yet converted to Judaism.) The couple dated for two years before they were married. Once they were engaged, they discussed their differences in religion. They knew there would be problems, but were not sure of what the precise issues were until they spoke with Judy's rabbi. Kerry and Judy decided to raise their children as Jews. Judy said, "I asked him--it was important to me to raise them Jewish." Judy and Kerry were married in a Jewish ceremony by a rabbi at a supperclub.

Nora and Rudolph Perez

(Only Nora was interviewed. She answered questions about Rudolph.)

Nora would have preferred to marry someone Jewish, but said, "I knew it was impossible if I were to stay in [South America]." Nora explained that there were very, very few eligible Jewish males, and she remained in her native country for her pre-med studies and medical school. In fact, she and Rudolph met in medical school during their pre-med years, when she was 17 and he was 18-1/2. The couple went through the entire program together. They saw each other for 6 years before they were married. "It never occurred to any of us that we would find another partner in life. And we had each other." Their decision to marry was a mutual one, but Rudolph and his parents went through the formal customs as is proper for their culture.

Nora and Rudolph decided that they would not ask each other to convert to the other's religion. Nora explained her feelings and experiences about growing up Jewish in a Catholic country. She felt very different and thought indeed that she was, not only on account of religion, but she was also European. She knew she "would never change religion if it wasn't out of conviction." Regarding children, however, Nora said, "if I had to choose the religion for my kids, I would choose the one for convenience." So, Nora and Rudolph decided that if they stayed in South America, they would raise the children as Catholics. Rudolph did not have very strong feelings, but agreed with Nora, saying, "sure, if we live here, then the kids should be like the rest. They should not feel so different like you [Nora] say you feel."

When the Perezes came to this country, however, the situation changed. Rudolph did not want to "participate in any Catholic religion activities." When the children were very young, he said to Nora, "you have more faith than I do, and you are a religious person. At least you observe something. The kids should have a religion." He added, "I don't have anything to give them. So why don't you raise them Jewish."

Nora and Rudolph were married in a ceremony that, as she explained it, was equivalent to a civil ceremony in the United States. The ceremony was held in Nora's home, and a notary public performed the ceremony.

Linda and Jerry Jackson

Jerry said that it was not of "primary importance" for him to marry within his religion. Linda was emphatic in saying that it was not even thought about, but not because it was not important but because "it was assumed you married a Jew." There was "no questioning," "no options," because "if you didn't date anyone that was non-Jewish, then obviously you're not going to marry anybody that's non-Jewish."

Linda and Jerry met when Linda went to buy a used car Jerry was selling. They dated for six months before they married. Religion did not come up in any discussions about getting married. Linda, however, did insist that they get married by a judge so that she would not "rough any feathers" in Jerry's family. If she wanted a rabbi, however, Jerry would have been "happy" to have one marry them. Thus, a judge did marry Linda and Jerry in a civil ceremony in a restaurant.

Rose and David Lance

David said, "I always figured I would marry a Catholic girl," and, in fact, he did date Catholic girls. But he also dated others whom he did not know their religion. He had "no problem" with marrying a non-Catholic. Rose also thought she would marry a "nice Jewish boy" when she was in high school. She knew she would not meet one where she was growing up, so she chose a university for academics and Jewish population. So, finding a Jewish mate was a priority for Rose, but she found that many of the Jewish men (and women for that matter) had values very different from hers. She supposed it was because of where she grew up--she was different. She explained, "as I got older I guess it became more important for me to find someone who was like me in ways that

affected more of my everyday existence." By her senior year, then, it was no longer so important for Rose to find a Jewish man as it was to find the "right man." "And I stopped searching," she concluded, "when Dave knocked on my door."

David and Rose were "set up" by friends and David's sister-in-law; they began dating casually, then more often, and finally quite seriously. In six months, the subject of "marriage got tossed into the ring," and it was just under a year that the couple decided to marry.

The couple did discuss the difference in religion, and in fact, talked about interfaith marriage with a priest that David knew from his parochial school. They were not yet engaged at the time, and David was concerned about Church policy regarding marrying outside Catholicism. Once they were engaged, the subject of conversion arose. The following exchange took place as David and Rose related the episode.

Rose: There was one time earlier on, March or April, when you asked me if I'd ever consider becoming Catholic and I said no.

David: I was a little taken aback by the finality of that, by her no, period, never, ever. And I was taken aback and it bothered me for at least an hour, and then I started thinking during the week that, "well, if things were on the other hand, and she asked me, would you convert, I'd tell her no, never." Although, I'm not sure that's true, there might be that one, two, three percent chance, but...I'm pretty much set in my religion.

I really didn't want to make the change, neither one of us would make that change for the fact that we were getting married and we should be the same faith. Then religion becomes meaningless. Change for the sake of change and not for a real reason.

The Lances also talked about religion in general, one another's religion and views on God. David was curious about Judaism and asked Rose many questions. Rose told me what her reaction was.

> He forced me to do some thinking, and some questioning and some finding....because I couldn't answer a lot of his questions. His mother still asks a lot of questions, she's very much interested and wants to know. And a lot of times I don't have answers. I know we did use to talk a lot about God.

David added,

> Religion was important, so we did talk about it a lot, largely because neither one of us expected the relationship to develop as quickly as it did and we, I was a little awed by how close we became so quickly, and I think you were too.

Rose and David never formally discussed how they would handle religious observances once they were married because they had already been sharing in one another's religious celebrations and accompanying one another to each other's house of worship before they were married. David said, "There was really nothing to discuss because it had already been passed over." I asked them if they had talked about children and what religion they would raise them in. David said, "prior to our marriage, we decided that any children would be raised Catholic, period. But we also had no great desire to become parents. Children are not necessarily in our plans." I asked if that had anything to do with the fact that they were intermarried, or simply that these are their attitudes on having children. David answered:

> It's just our attitudes about children. We married a little bit older than most people, age is not the big factor, we just don't have that innate desire to have rug rats.

Rose talked at length about this decision, emphasizing the magnitude of the responsibility. She concluded by relating,

> People ask me "how can you teach and not like kids?" It's not that we dislike kids, but I'm very happy with the life we're living now, I don't know if I want to make that change.

Surprisingly enough, David said that if they do have children later,

> I'm ready to rethink the whole thing [religious issue]; I would not be adverse at all to have the child brought up Jewish. She [Rose] doesn't know that because re really haven't discussed children per se, but we really haven't discussed the faith of the child since the time we got married.

David explained that his contact with their synagogue and its rabbi has made him reconsider their earlier decision.

David and Rose were married in a dual religious ceremony which combined Catholic and Jewish customs. A priest and a rabbi officiated at the ceremony which took place in a hotel.

D. Religious Observances and the Home

Meredith and James Abrams

Lighting shabbat candles and a Chanukah menorah were among the first Jewish practices that the Abrams observed in their own home. Currently they "light Shabbat candles, but not regularly." They explained, "In the future we want to make Shabbat a lot more." James and Meredith also attend the family seder. James complained about the difficulty in finding the time to observe the holidays since both he and Meredith work, but he expressed the desire and intention to celebrate Shabbat more.

The Abrams also exchange gifts at Christmas, and Meredith expressed the desire to "have a tree, a small tree, something at Christmas." James commented, "we are still discussing this, it's under discussion."

Chris and Bill Denny

Bill and Chris Denny celebrated Chanukah as one of the first Jewish practices that they observed. Bill recalled using a menorah that Chris's parents had bought for them. They did not "do much before children," but they were "often invited elsewhere for religious celebrations." Bill concluded, "but the very earliest thing I guess we did was to have the rabbi over for a baby naming."

Presently, the Dennys still observe Chanukah in their home and exchange "a few presents." They still go elsewhere for High Holiday dinners and Seders. They did have one seder at their home to which they invited Chris's parents.

The Dennys also celebrate Christmas and Easter. They set up a Christmas tree and go to Christmas dinner at Chris's parents' house. Chris said, "we do not get into the religious meaning of Christmas. It is a commercial thing." She added that her oldest daughter is still too young to ask about the meaning of these practices. At Easter, they go to brunch after Mass, color eggs and have an egg hunt at home.

Both Bill and Chris discussed their feelings about their religious practices and how it has affected their thinking on religion and religious belief. Bill commented,

I am very comfortable with Jewish holidays. I've had them all my life. Since I was isolated from non-Jewish things, I felt a little intimidated by the non-Jewish holidays, just as it was Chris's first experience with Jewish holidays. To this day we give 1 or 2 presents at Chanukah and at Christmas there are quite a few. I'm not used to this. Also the Easter observances with the egg hunt and all - I am not used to that; it is so commercial. I am concerned with the large number of presents.

I asked Bill if he had religious objections to celebrating Christmas and Easter, or if it was only an issue about spoiling children.

Oh, yes! Good question. It is a religious issue. I am still protective. All the presents at Christmas make it look like the other religion is happy while Chanukah is Jewish and not as good - only get one or two gifts. I feel a bit wrong in celebrating Christmas, but I am not wrong. I love my wife; I want to be with her and I want to celebrate with her. I am just uneasy about the extravagance.

Chris also shared her feelings.

My holidays do not mean as much as I would want them. But for the children, I do not want to confuse them, so I don't overdo it. But I do want them to be open as we are to seeing other religions, holidays, and not be ignorant like us. The baby naming was very difficult. I am used to a christening and the whole preparation, the dress, the brunch, the church, etc. Here it was at the house, informal. So that was really difficult at the beginning. After a while I started thinking about it. Hard to understand how a child so innocent could be born marred with original sin. How? A newborn! I began questioning my own religion. Babies don't know right from wrong. Once my children were born, I became less involved with my own religion. I seldom go to confession anymore. I kind of feel that if I want to I can do it my own way. I don't need to go through a mediator anymore, no priest. I do not consider myself devout because of these self-doubts. I do not go to Mass as much. I don't feel I will burn in Hell if I miss Sunday Mass.

I asked Chris why she has these "self doubts" and why she is now observing less of her own religious practices.

> Marriage and raising the children Jewish. A home with two religions in it, have to look and see what is important. With Emily's (oldest child) formal education, this really started rousing a lot of different feelings I had about my own upbringing. I began comparing. I had fears and worries. What will kids get out of this? Will they be confused; will they have a strong identity for religion? If their religious identity is not strong, will they join cult groups? But a church is always open if I ever need a place to go. Not so with a synagogue. It is closed many times. This upsets me. What if the kids need a spiritual place to go?

Joy and Jim Cohen

The first Jewish observance that the Cohens did was to celebrate Chanukah. They lit candles, said prayers and exchanged gifts. The next thing they did was to "try a seder." They said that they do not do much, and that the children do a lot in the religious school. Joy commented, "I should get with it." The Cohens also celebrate Christmas and Easter. They set up a tree, exchanged presents, spend the morning at home and then go to Joy's parents' house for Christmas dinner. At Easter the family spends the day at home and has an egg hunt in the yard. They enjoy these celebrations as a time of brotherhood and giving. "Religion does not enter into it."

Diane and Michael Edelstein

Lighting a Chanukah menorah was the first Jewish observance that the Edelsteins did in their home. They had their sons ritually circumcised in the hospital, and family attended. Michael recalled how his mother "dragged chopped liver" to the hospital and how the nuns stood around and stared at the whole procedure.

In terms of current practice, Michael said,

> On a weekly basis we sure don't do anything really Jewish in the home. We go to my mother's house not frequently, but not infrequently either on Friday night. I would say it's more often than not on Friday night.

They also go to Michael's mother's house for other holiday celebrations, and Michael likened this to his family's custom when he was growing up. They would go to his grandparents' house. The couple still observes Chanukah in their own home.

The Edelstein's also celebrate Christmas and Easter in their home. They have a tree and give presents to one another, but Diane pointed out that it is not a religious celebration really and that it is more religious in her parents' home; for example, they have a manger scene, and "we wouldn't have that here." At Easter the family goes to an Easter dinner at Diane's parents' house, and the children receive Easter baskets.

Both Michael and Diane also discussed their plans to re-evaluate their Christmas celebration because their children are getting older, and they do not wish to confuse them. Michael suggested that they might not have a Christmas tree. Michael recalled that his family put up a tree in their home when he was growing up, but that did not confuse him since he knew both his parents were Jewish. Diane considered "isolating" any Christmas celebration to her parents' home, but did not want to "eliminate" Christmas from their children's lives because it is "part of their family."

Susan and Bill Fuller

Susan and Bill Fuller observed some Jewish rituals before they were married, including celebrating Shabbat dinner together. Shortly after they were married, they celebrated Rosh Hashanah with Susan's parents, and they both fasted on Yom Kippur. Susan reported that currently, "we have not done much in our home." They have celebrated Chanukah and had Susan's family over, and they had them over again when they served the Rosh Hashanah dinner. Susan looks forward to celebrating Chanukah with their son and said they plan on giving him a small gift each day and a big one on the 8th day. Bill commented, "I enjoy it, but I don't identify with it." The Fullers do not practice any Christian observances in their own home; they visit Bill's parents on Christian holidays.

Randy and David Grady

Randy and David Grady could not recall what Jewish practice they first observed in their own home. Randy thought it might be Chanukah. Presently, they travel to Randy's mother's house for the Passover Seder.

The Gradys also celebrate Christmas. During their first year of marriage, they put up lights in the shape of a Christmas tree. The following year they set up a real tree. They also invited David's family over for a Christmas dinner, and on Easter they went to his family's church.

They both like the family and festive atmosphere at Christmas, but Randy added that "I think of my father's feelings and downplay what we do at Christmas. We don't tell him everything."

Judy and Kerry O'Brian

(Only Judy was interviewed.)

Judy did not remember the first Jewish practice they observed, but she mentioned that they did go to her mother's house for Passover Seder and also invited friends to their home for the Seder. Judy said that currently,

> We do not do much. I would like to do more. At Purim we went to the religious school with our son. We put up decorations for Chanukah and light candles. We have our own Seder. I feel guilty for not doing more. If I asked Kerry how he felt about doing more I'm sure it would be OK - he wouldn't mind, but I'm afraid; I don't want to stuff religion down his throat.

Judy said she enjoys the Seder very much and that her son "really enjoys the Chanukah decorations and lighting candles."

Judy and Kerry also celebrate Christmas "but not in a religious way." In describing the Christmas celebration, Judy expressed her feelings about it.

> The first time we had a tree was two years ago. Kerry had really missed having a tree at Christmas. But when I converted, I rejected it, Christianity, etc. But my Mom said, it's only a tree, it's no big deal; I should consider Kerry's feelings - he missed it. I enjoyed decorating it after I got over my objections.
>
> The actual celebrations are at Kerry's sister's house or Mother's house. I will not object to doing one, but I would not be thrilled. I would like it if I could just go away in December and just let someone else handle it.

At Easter, the O'Brians go to a country club where their son participates in an Easter egg hunt.

Nora and Rudolph Perez

(Only Nora was interviewed.)

The Perezes do not celebrate any Jewish customs in their own home. They go to someone's home with their children for a Passover Seder. Since many of the couples did mention celebrating Chanukah, I asked Nora if they did. She said, "No, I celebrate Christmas." They have a tree and they exchange gifts. Nora said both she and Rudolph want to celebrate Christmas; she enjoys it and says it is "very easy" for her. She explained,

> It was not difficult for me to accept Christmas or anything. I have no religious connotation to it. It's a very big family tradition. It's something that's cozy, nice, warm, with gifts and you prepare for it. I can view it that way. It never bothered me.

They have a big dinner, and sometimes, they have invited Jewish friends to share in their Christmas celebration. Nora explained that these friends are "sort of deprived of Christmas. They don't feel always comfortable about it." I asked Nora if she felt the same way about the Passover celebration at the Seder as she did about the Christmas celebration. "Is it a warm family get-together? Or is there a difference?"

> There is a difference. There is a difference. It might be less, basically also because it is not a complete family celebration. Even though my husband is there and everything. The two girls already know that their daddy doesn't really participate, so there is a sense of that. But it's still a nice celebration. I like to go to it. And everybody likes matzo anyhow.

Nora also refrains from cooking meat on Good Friday since it was "very traditional" not to eat meat on that day in their native South

American country. When Rudolph forgets, in fact, Nora reminds him not to eat meat at lunch, and she will serve fish for dinner.

Linda and Jerry Jackson

The Jacksons light Shabbat candles on Friday nights, observe Chanukah by lighting Chanukah candles and they have a Passover Seder with some of Linda's sons and some friends. They have visited with friends at Sukkot who construct a Sukkah, and observe the Sukkot celebration in that way.

Linda and Jerry found much meaning in their observances. In referring to the Seder, Jerry said, he liked the warmness of having family together and "it's a time to reflect, a time for friends and a time for family, and a time to show that you are a close-knit unit." Linda expressed her feelings that she had never observed the Jewish holidays in her home; she only celebrated at relatives' homes or in religious school. She promised herself that it would be different when she got married and had her own household. Her first husband, however, was "absolutely non-practicing," but Linda observed all the holidays just the same, continues to do so now with her second husband and enjoys it. The Jacksons observe Christian holidays.

Rose and David Lance

The first Jewish ritual that the Lances performed was a large Passover Seder with family and Jewish and non-Jewish friends including the priest who co-officiated at their wedding. Rose does light Shabbat candles, some months more, some less--it sounded like a customary but sporadic practice with them. The Lances also celebrate Chanukah, sometimes combining it with Christmas.

> Last year I think Christmas Eve was the eighth candle. So what we did every night of Hanukkah was we put . . . little stocking gifts in after we lit the Hanukkah candles and we opened them on Christmas. This year we're filling the stockings beforehand.
>
> Sometimes we combine the two [holidays] without disturbing the integrity of either one of the holidays. Which is sometimes difficult. Hanukkah does sometimes get lost in the shuffle.

The Lances have had a Jewish New Year's "party" in September the first two years they were married. They described it as non-religious and more of an excuse to get together. They served "apples and honey and regular party fare."

The Lances also celebrate Christmas. In the living room where we were talking, there was a beautifully decorated Christmas tree and stockings hanging from the mantle piece. Rose and David spend Christmas Eve and Christmas Day with David's family, and they partake of Christmas dinner and exchange gifts. On Easter, Rose and David give one another Easter candy and have Easter dinner with David's parents.

Both David and Rose shared their feelings about celebrating the Passover Seder. David said,

> The Seders are always, the seders are a lot like having a Christmas or Easter dinner, as far as getting people together for a feast and for a reason.
>
> There's a little more to it, to a Seder than to a Christmas dinner, it's a service itself.
>
> A nice part for me too is when we're having a Seder. I'm always thinking Last Supper in a sense. But I participate in a Seder, too, I would not lead one, because I wouldn't feel comfortable doing that. But I participate in it. We have our own hagadah.

Rose stated,

> And the whole thing about "next year in Jerusalem" and all the people being free and it all seems to me, that's always been very special but even more so since half my family is the other half of Jerusalem, a part of Jerusalem.

Rose also explained how her feelings had changed about Passover and what it means for her.

> It's like I said at the beginning, it was a horribly long affair when I was a kid, but as I've grown older I think probably it's the holiday which gives me the strongest Jewish belief, more so, I mean Hanukkah is a nice holiday, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I don't even mind anymore. I like to go, that changed too, but it's Passover which gives me my closest identification with my faith.

David and Rose both said that they enjoy Christmas. Never having been exposed to Christmas, so intimately, Rose said, "I discovered that Christmas just doesn't happen." She learned that it is a big affair, many people get together and it involves much preparation. Easter dinner was at David's mother's, and not elsewhere. Rose related an interesting memory of one dinner.

> It's always been at ... no, it's been at your mother's a couple of times, because I remember that she served ham or something and it was during Passover, and I had to make a decision as to whether to eat it.
>
> That year I think I ate the ham because I don't know, I guess I feel my intention was out of love for her and that was as good a reason to use as any other.

E. Religious Upbringing and Education of Children

Meredith and James Abrams

James and Meredith decided well before they were married to raise their children as Jews, and they are expecting their first child. This state of affairs had no effect in their decision to affiliate with a synagogue, since James had always been a member and once they married, Meredith also became a member of their synagogue. Their decision to raise any children as Jews as based upon the fact that James identified closely with Judaism and Meredith does not identify closely with her religion.

Chris and Bill Denny

The Dennys are raising their children as Jews and are sending their eldest to the Temple's religious school. Bill wants his child to learn values and Jewish holidays, Bible stories and history, but "Not too much Hebrew." Bill and Chris were already members before they had children, and Bill had always been a member of one synagogue or another. Their decision to raise their children as Jews was reached prior to marriage, but Chris is now having very ambivalent feelings about her decision. Bill is aware of her feelings, is sympathetic, and, in fact, brought up this subject before Chris. He said,

> I said it was important to me to raise our children Jewish. Chris said it really did not matter to her. Perhaps she wasn't in touch with her feelings. She thought of my feelings, not her own.

Chris continued along these lines, saying,

> I thought our children should know their origin; after all, my grandmother was Jewish. But I did not think about values, what I was taught. I thought of Bill's life, his stepmother, his childhood was not

> the best. But I did not realize how difficult it would be for me to raise my children Jewish. I did not really stop to think of my feelings.
>
> I recall learning when my grandmother was married both she and my grandfather had to sign an agreement that they would bring up any children as Catholics. Today, only I had to sign. But, as Bill stated, we did decide to raise the children Jewish. But if you wanted to be married in a church, by a priest, you had to sign it. I had wanted a priest to do the ceremony, not that the place mattered, but the priest would only do it in the Church.

Now, Chris seems to feel guilty about her decision, and worried about her own identity and inability to pass it along.

> I felt two faced. I signed an agreement to raise children Catholic and we are raising them Jewish now. When I go to church, I get this feeling - I'm afraid I'll be thrown out as an outcast. My grandmother who was Jewish brought up her daughter Catholic. She never shared her own faith. I am afraid of this.

At the same time, Chris seems supportive of Bill's desire to raise their children as Jews to the point of wanting to help and feelings of remorse in not being able to do more.

> I'm feeling an emptiness about their religious upbringing. I feel I know more now (about Judaism), but not enough to pass along Judaism to the children. A mother is supposed to do this.

Bill responded to Chris's comment sympathetically and then shared his own feelings and plans regarding the religious upbringing of his children.

> I would not expect this - for Chris to express feelings she really did not feel. It is my job to do more. I have to buckle down - not just celebrate holidays and send them to religious school and the life cycle events. I need to study, to portray my feelings to them, and not just on holidays. I have to bring up ideas. I realize I have to do more.

> Chris has the same ideal, but expressed differently, in different ways.

Later, Bill again expressed his intentions about the Jewish education of his children and his feelings for Chris's situation.

> I want the kids to have a strong identity, so that they do not get swayed by cult groups. I want to be involved with the Temple, get Emily there or would like to have a service here. It is hard to do since I am worn out by Friday. Then there is Chris. I see her feeling frustrated and stymied. It is hard to know what to do about my religion, what to do with the kids. Recall my intimidation by her holidays. I recognize the feelings and that they are hard to overcome.

Joy and Jim Cohen

Jim and Joy Cohen chose to bring up their children as Jews. They made this choice before they were married. Jim did not want to raise them "real religiously" in any faith and considered Unitarianism a possibility. Joy, however, had no objections if they raised children Jewish. So, Judaism was the choice they made.

The Cohens now send their children to a religious school, and they joined the Temple when the children became old enough for the school. They added that this move "also motivated us to do more Jewish things at home." Joy shared her feelings on raising the children Jewish,

> I want the children to have some religious training. I understand my husband's feelings about Jesus Christ and Protestantism, and I'm not that religious. Judaism is fine, and I joined [a synagogue] so they could go to a religious school.

Jim wants his children to learn enough about Judaism to know what it is about--the Jewish heritage, the holidays, symbols, the Jewish calendar. He also wants them to learn values, how to deal with people on an equal basis and what it means to lead a productive life. He hopes

they will stay in school at least to the 7th grade, perhaps as far as confirmation, but he will leave it up to them. Jim also felt that the school was emphasizing Hebrew too much, saying "this was not the point when I attended this school." (Jim's mother was a founder of this Temple, and the school was a big factor in her decision to begin a new congregation.) Joy was also concerned about their younger child learning to read Hebrew when he is learning "his own language."

Diane and Michael Edelstein

The Edelsteins settled the issue of religious rearing of children before they were married. Raising children as Jews was very important to Michael; he had connected marrying a Jewish woman with raising his children as Jews. Despite not marrying a Jew, rearing his children in Judaism became no less important. Concerning decision making, Michael remarked that he was "amazed how other couples just wing it. They have more obstacles; nothing is decided."

The Edelsteins were already members of a synagogue before they had children. The children, in fact, are still too young to attend the Temple's religious school, so they send them to Jewishly oriented nursery schools. When they do reach the proper age for religious school, Michael wants his children to learn Jewish history and traditions, "but in a way that will go beyond giving them identity. That will happen without religious school. I want the school to provide more." Diane, on the other hand expressed concern about the Jewish education of her children.

> I don't know what to expect. I am worried that I won't know about a lot of things the kids will be learning in the school. Maybe I'll learn in the

process instead of being afraid to ask questions. The kids might have an identity crisis since I'm not Jewish.

Shortly after this comment, however, I asked her how she feels about being a non-Jew in a Jewish institution and raising her children as Jews.

> I am not a Catholic who is raising her children as Jews. I belong to a Temple, and I am a person who accepts Judaism as a viable religion for me as much as I want religion, because religion is not as significant in my life. I like the traditions, and I am happy for the children to have them. I don't think conversion will make me any more Jewish than I am now.

Susan and Bill Fuller

Prior to their marriage, Bill and Susan decided to raise their children Jewish. According to Bill, "Susan is more religious," and her family is closer. The Fullers joined their temple before their child was born, but said that they were not sure if they would have looked for a temple if their baby was not on the way. When the child is old enough they will enroll him in the religious school. Susan wants her child to have a better Jewish education than the one she had, covering all the basic Jewish traditions. She also said, "I do not want him to learn Hebrew there; that should be kept separate--he should get it elsewhere." Regarding raising a child Jewish and being a non-Jew, Bill said, "the ethics are the same in Judaism as in Christianity, so no trouble with that. Jesus was a Jew; he went through the same things my son will go through."

Randy and David Grady

David and Randy discussed what the religion of their children would be before they married, and decided to raise them as Jews. David was

general in his concerns, and wanted to raise them differently than he had been raised, "no matter what the child would be raised as." Randy, however, felt strongly that she could not raise the children as Catholics.

Randy joined a synagogue before she married David, but she and David do not think they will send their child to religious school. Instead, they said, "we will try to educate him at home, expose him to both sets of holidays, so he'll know what we do."

Judy and Kerry O'Brian

(Only Judy was interviewed.)

Judy said that what religion the children were raised in was a big issue for her before she married Kerry. She asked Kerry if they could raise any children as Jews, saying it was important to her. Kerry had answered that he did not mind. The O'Brians have been members of various synagogues since they were married, and now send their child to their current Temple's religious school. Judy wants their child to learn his Jewish heritage, the holidays and ceremonies, Jewish history, Israel, for him to be familiar with Hebrew, and to supplement the ethics that his parents will teach him at home.

Nora and Rudolph Perez

Rudolph and Nora decided to raise their children as Jews after they married and once they immigrated to the United States. Had they remained in South America, they probably would have raised them as Catholics, so they would be like the rest of the children. But once they came here, Rudolph told Nora that she should raise them as Jews. They joined a synagogue when they decided to give their children a

Jewish education. They sent their two oldest daughters to the religious school, but not the younger son. Nora explained,

> I see that I will have to solve a couple of issues as he grows up, because it's a little bit more difficult for me to really push him into any type of religious education, especially things that I don't think that he'll end up in them.
>
> Since the house has been a little bit loose, in that type--you know--we're not observant at all. So, he's not as easy to say, well, go to religious school as it was with the girls.

Nora added, "he's a different person. He has a different character, different needs and everything."

Nora related her attitudes and feelings about being the parent responsible for bringing up the children Jewishly.

> I had to decide on religious education. For me, it was a big thing, because I--my husband says go ahead and make them Jewish, but I realize it was going to be very difficult for me in my mind. Most of the education in Jewish religion came from the male. How am I going to make them Jewish.
>
> I am not going to push you to go to the synagogue or go and do this or do that. I don't believe in pushing anybody towards something like that. How am I going to do it? How much are we going to try to achieve? I thought in a way that I was just going to take it as it came.

Indeed, when Nora's two daughters reached the age for Bat Mitzvah, she had a "big decision" to make. Nora expressed reasons that she found for having the ceremony, and reasons for not having it. The children had done well in the religious school program and could read Hebrew well. This pleased Nora, since she had not learned to read Hebrew, and she did not want her daughters to feel as she had felt in not "knowing the prayers" or being able "to participate." In addition she knew this

meant a lot to her father, who like Nora, had not expected the children to be Jewish at all. Nora said, I think it was a real gift for him. It wasn't the only thing, but it made us all happy to know that it made him happy."

As it turned out, Nora's father would be visiting during the time the girls would have their Bat Mitzvah. Finally, the girls themselves wanted to become Bat Mitzvah.

Yet, there were reasons against it. Nora felt that her daughters were seeing their friends go through it and so they wanted to do it too. There were also concerns about their youngest child. Nora was vague here, but it seemed that if the girls became Bat Mitzvah, then certainly the boy, also, would have to make his Bar Mitzvah when his turn came. For reasons Nora did not explain, this situation would not be good. Nora said, "How will it be then when [my son] has to follow, who was a boy. And you know, since in a way it might make him--it might hurt him. Is it worth it to go ahead and do it?" (i.e., let the daughters become Bat Mitzvah). Finally, Rudolph was uncomfortable with the idea. Nora, again, was a bit vague, but she said that Rudolph certainly did not oppose the idea, he simply did not like it.

In addition, it seemed that part of Rudolph's discomfort would arise out of the kind of event they would feel pressured into making it. Both Nora and Rudolph have many Jewish friends in the medical community and therefore, they "would have to have a big party." Nora felt, "he would have been very awkward in the sense that he didn't think it was being natural. He would have felt it in a way fake for him." But, Nora said,

> If he would feel very comfortable at the Temple and would be very comfortable by being a Catholic, belonging to a Jewish synagogue, I would have had no problem. Since I sense that for him it's not so easy, I didn't think it was worth it.

The girls did not become Bat Mitzvah.

Linda and Jerry Jackson

Linda and Jerry were both married previously and have grown children; thus, the issue of their children's religious upbringing was irrelevant.

Rose and David Lance

Rose and David Lance do not have children and are not planning on having any. Their decisions and attitudes regarding this issue were discussed in Section C (see pp. 87-88) since it had much to do with decisions prior to getting married. In summary, they decided that if they were to have a child, they would raise it Catholic. They explained (once I asked) how their decision regarding children had nothing to do with the fact that they were intermarried. David was willing to reconsider their decision about what religion they would raise a child if they had one. David and Rose also had some interesting comments on children, faith, and religion.

> Dave: Let me say one more thing. The thing of it is that once, okay you have this little baby, and you take it to the church, you sprinkle it, and that baby in the eyes of the church, in the eyes of God is Catholic, baptized Christian and I would rather see the child brought up Jewish and at some point in time he says, I think I need to be Catholic, I think having seen Dad, I think I believe in Jesus, and I'm going to make the switch, I'd rather see it happen that way than have a baby that has no choice at all, say, you're now Catholic. I think for us, in our situation.

Rose: Religion is a, I think a kid needs something, needs to be brought up something so that they have at least a frame of reference and that's basically why we work so well. We have a pretty strong frame of reference to compare things with. A kid brought up with nothing, has nothing, or a kid who tries to be both. And I think it takes careful illustration and whichever faith a child is raised in formally, the parents, everybody needs to make sure there's nobody who feels like an island, that's why when he said, that if we had kids, we would raise them Catholic, because I think he's the more observant and the more knowledgeable of the two of us, and I think that's more important.

F. Religious Affiliation and Acceptance in the Jewish Community

Meredith and James Abrams

Meredith and James Abrams belong to a large congregation in which James has been quite active all his life. He is currently serving on the board of directors and will eventually serve as President of his congregation one day. Meredith is in the Sisterhood but she is not too active. She remarked that meetings are held during the day while she is at work. Both James and Meredith have participated in discussion groups on intermarriage at the Temple. James is also active in Jewish communal affairs outside the synagogue, working with the American Jewish Committee and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. As noted above, James has always been a member of his synagogue and Meredith became a member once they were married.

James gets a lot out of his involvement with the American Jewish Committee work. He spends a lot of time on "Temple business" and enjoys the worship services. Meredith said that being a non-Jew in a Jewish institution and raising her children as Jews

> is no problem for me. Religion is not that important to me. I know it is important to my husband. I feel I can make a Jewish home for my family, with my family.

Meredith also said that "I have not really thought much about conversion, I might think about it somewhere down the road." She also reported that she is quite comfortable in the Jewish community and felt at ease when she first joined. She likes the rabbi very much.

Chris and Bill Denny

The Dennys are members of a small, liberal Reform congregation. They joined before they were married. Bill explained that he was looking for a rabbi who would marry Chris and him. He visited the Temple and liked the rabbi and felt he was "attuned to people, mixed married, converts." At the time, Bill wanted to get more involved and meet other intermarried couples since they knew very few people. Chris felt it was important for Bill to have a place of worship to attend. Earlier, Chris could not understand "how he could call himself a good Jew" because Bill goes to synagogue only two times a year and she goes to church each Sunday. She says, "now I understand." But Bill said he would like to become more involved.

> There really isn't any affiliation with the Jewish community. I would like to be more involved with my current situation - the congregation where I am a member. There are many intermarried couples there and I could share experiences with them. I have been procrastinating. Also I feel uneasy because of the payments to the Temple. I haven't given all that they have asked. So I feel uneasy about taking more without giving more.

Chris said that she has no formal affiliation with any particular church. She attends the church of the parish that she is in. She attends synagogue services with Bill during the High Holidays and he goes to church with Chris at Christmas and Easter.

Bill said that he would want his children's religious school teachers to know that the children came from an intermarriage. He felt that the teachers could help reduce prejudice. They should teach the children that Judaism is their religion and not their mother's religion and "that's okay."

Joy and Jim Cohen

The Cohens joined a small, liberal Reform synagogue when their children became old enough to attend the religious school. They both feel comfortable in their affiliation. Jim enjoys attending synagogue and celebrations that are more festive as well as the High Holiday services. He likes the sermons, saying the rabbi is bright and makes him think. He also said, "But I don't feel I have to go to a certain place to get in touch with my feelings, the universe, my wife, a neighbor. Joy attends services with Jim when he goes, and he said that Joy would probably go with him if he went on a regular basis. Joy likes the sermons, saying they are about life, not religion and the prayers are not "hellfire and brimstone." She also likes the singing. Joy admits that they are not that active but that she does enjoy what they do and she does get something out of it. However, she also said, "I miss the songs from church, but I'm not going to church." Joy is also a member of the United Order of True Sisters--a charitable organization that is not officially Jewish, but one that has a 95% Jewish membership.

Joy has been asked to join the Sisterhood, to get more involved in general and to come to welcoming parties. She considers this a sign that people are making her feel welcome, and she said, "everyone is real

nice." She has felt "a little ignorant about things," but reported, "people tell me what I don't know and I feel comfortable asking."

When I asked this couple if they would want their children's religious school teachers to know that their parents are intermarried, Jim responded that he did not care or find it terribly important. Then he asked me why I even asked the question. While I had not previously or later explained background or rationale to my questions, I did so in this case. I simply said that indeed this was an issue in some congregations. Some parents neither want themselves nor their children singled out and seem to view the practice of identifying intermarried couples and their children as discriminatory. Synagogues, religious schools and other intermarried couples want the school to know so that teachers are sensitive to the backgrounds of their students and do not assume that all have two Jewish parents. This assumption sometimes leads to any number of awkward situations for both the teachers and the students. Jim then responded, "Hey yeah! That might be important" for the teachers to know the children's background.

Diane and Michael Edelstein

Michael and Diane are members at a large Reform Temple where Michael's family were members when he was growing up. They set up their own membership once they were married. Michael also serves on the board of directors at a Jewish Nursing Home, and he enjoys it as his way of contributing to the Jewish community although it requires much of his time. Diane is a member of the National Council of Jewish Women, but she is not too active in that organization. She is active, however, in

the United Order of True Sisters which she says has many Jewish members, and it is active in fundraising for cancer research.

Diane went through a period when she felt unsure of herself in the Jewish community. Now she feels neither particularly welcome nor unwelcome. Michael said that a lot of people think Diane is Jewish. Diane added, "They perceive me as Jewish and I almost perceive myself as such."

The Edelsteins disagree over the issue of the children's religious school teachers knowing that their children come from intermarried parents. Diane said she thought it was fine if the teachers know. "It's not something I want to keep a secret. I don't want the teachers to say, "go home and ask your Mommy." Michael, however, said that he would not want the teachers to know. "Not because we are hiding anything. I don't want my children treated differently by a solicitous teacher."

Susan and Bill Fuller

The Fullers joined a moderately sized more traditional Reform synagogue when Susan was pregnant with their first child. As mentioned, earlier, they might not have looked for a synagogue if Susan was not pregnant. However, they reported that "no parents said we ought to do it. We felt the need so we looked and found a place." In fact, they visited all the area synagogues and interviewed all the rabbis in order to make their decision.

Susan and Bill have attended High Holiday services but have gone to very few services since then. They do plan to attend more often. They have also attended a few functions at the temple in order to meet some

other young couples but have not been too successful in this regard. They did attend one Friday evening Shabbat service when there was a program about intermarriage.

Susan reported that she is not active in the Temple's Sisterhood, but she is active and holds a minor office in Women's American ORT. The Fullers are also members of the Jewish Community Center. Bill has not joined an area church, but he had not dropped his membership at his hometown church.

When looking for a synagogue to join, Susan was concerned about Bill's participation in anything regarding their child. Both Susan and Bill did not want him to be left out of anything involving their child. They were told that Bill could not receive an aliyah even at a Bar Mitzvah, but he was permitted on the bimah. This satisfied their concerns.

Susan is getting comfortable in her new Jewish community, but said it takes time; she had been and still is comfortable in her hometown congregation. But she was "real excited" about establishing herself in the Jewish community. Bill is not totally comfortable. He said, "it's a bit alien. I am getting over being suspicious, wondering how people are accepting me, but having no reasons to believe they are suspicious of me." Bill did not feel "excited" when they joined the temple, but felt that they were "moving in the right direction," that they "made the right decision as a family" and "were pleased that they were doing the right thing." Bill also related some instances where he has felt awkward and uncomfortable. He recalled being with Susan and some Jewish friends when "they did a progressive prayer thing, and I am the only

non-Jew." He added, "I am also a bit more bothered when a group of Jewish friends get together and someone makes an anti-non-Jewish crack." Bill also related a bad experience at a Conservative synagogue. He saw other men putting on tallesim, and he did not want to be disrespectful, so he put one on. An usher asked Bill if he were Jewish and then grabbed it off Bill's shoulders, managing to get some fringes caught in one of Bill's jacket buttons. "It was quite embarrassing," according to Bill, "and we had quite a time getting it off. He could have asked nicely for me to take it off and explained that only Jews must wear one." Bill does like their Reform Temple where he can understand the services more easily and does not have to wear a kippah. Both Susan and Bill have found the people to be friendly at all the functions they have attended and have made them feel welcome. They also noted that the rabbi has gone out of his way to talk with them.

Susan and Bill agreed that they did not want teachers to know that their child has intermarried parents. If a teacher did know, they would not want an issue made of it.

David and Randy Grady

David and Randy Grady are members of a small, liberal Reform congregation and a Catholic Church. They joined the synagogue just before they were married and said the rabbi had encouraged them. They accompany one another to synagogue and church, attending High Holidays at the synagogue and Christmas and Easter Mass at the church. Randy said, "neither of us goes [to synagogue] on Shabbat, and I don't have enough nerve to go by myself." David, on the other hand, attends church two times a month by himself. Like the other couples, the Gradys

told me how they felt in the Jewish community and what it was like to join as new members. Randy said,

> We are comfortable that there are many other mixed marrieds in the congregation. [Our choise of a synagogue] was a compromise. It is not what I would have chosen. But it is good for us. No one is looking to see if David is Jewish.
>
> It is very different from what I grew up with which was Conservative. Jewish men wore a kippah. But I am used to it now. But since I did not go to Hebrew School, I like the English, even though I don't get the feeling it is like praying.

David commented,

> A place like [our synagogue] is easier to go to. People socialize before the service. It is different than a church. You don't talk to people before Mass. You walk in quietly and sit down. People are praying. At [our synagogue], even during the service there is neck craning to see who's here. There is more English and I like that.

Judy and Kerry O'Brian

Judy and Kerry were members of several Reform synagogues in various cities before they moved to the Cincinnati area and joined a small, liberal Reform congregation. The O'Brians attend services together, but Judy says, "I am not there enough . . . I would enjoy getting involved in other activities if I could." Judy is also very active in ORT, and she is a member of Hadassah. Judy's feelings on joining the synagogue are related to her concerns for her husband and son.

> The Temple we joined is the most Reform, looser. I want Kerry to feel comfortable. There are other intermarried couples and the rabbi's views tend to be more liberal. That's what we needed as a family. Personally maybe, I need something different. But this felt comfortable. I am always concerned for Kerry's feelings and here he's OK, not self-conscious.

The religious school for her son was also an important factor in Judy's affiliation with a synagogue. Both Judy and Kerry attend the Purim event because it is part of the religious school program. Judy also felt that people have never made Kerry or her feel unwelcome. Regarding the issue of whether or not religious school teachers should know which children come from intermarried couples, Judy said,

> I think it helps to know that, in case some questions come up on the part of the child. If the child says something outside of Jewish practice, the teacher knows where it is coming from.

Nora and Rudolph Perez

Nora and Rudolph joined a small, liberal Reform congregation when they decided to give their children a Jewish education. The Perezes go to an occasional service, attend fund raisers for the Jewish community, and go to Sukkot parties and Purim Carnivals. They used to go more often on account of their daughter's activities.

Nora explained how it came about that they chose the synagogue they did and why.

> I knew the rabbi before. He officiated at the wedding of a cousin. I also went to Yom Kippur services where he was leading. Also we live where the Temple is located and we knew of children going to religious school there. We went to see the rabbi and he understood well the situation of an intermarriage. I felt there was no criticism from him, like in our native country. I thought this could never happen, it was quite a relief.

When they first joined, Nora was "scared," but her feelings had nothing to do with fear of not being accepted, but rather of her responsibility to raise her children as Jews. She knew that formal membership made formal her commitment to bring up Jewish children. Once

she made the decision to join, however, she felt much better. Nora is comfortable in her affiliation but wishes she were more involved, but noted that her lack of involvement is not on account of not feeling welcomed. Later on during our talk, she said,

> From the very beginning, people offering to carpool. Everything . . . participating in Oneg Shabbats. All know each other, it is a small congregation, all live in the same area, so we come into contact with people (i.e., congregants) through children in the local schools and at swim meets. Also through professional relationships at Jewish Hospital. I have felt welcome.

At other times, Nora had these comments about her membership in her synagogue. "I feel like I belong there. I like the rabbi, and I don't feel awkward going there." Nora's comfort went beyond just the fact that there were other intermarried couples in the synagogue. It seems Nora's theological, religious orientation is in consonance with her synagogue.

> Maybe, but it wouldn't be--even if there wouldn't be intermarriages. The way that they feel about Judaism is more--it's not so much observing one little thing or the other. It's a bigger, fuller concept. Supposed to--you don't eat pork meat and you stay Kosher. And you--which are just the outside, the base.
>
> So, in that sense, I guess I already feel more comfortable with a place like [the synagogue we attend].
>
> I feel I have a little bit more need towards being a religious person because I believe in God. And even if I don't believe in many other things. But I have still a profound need for religion, so I feel comfortable.

Linda and Jerry Jackson

The Jacksons are members of a small humanistic congregation. They joined shortly after they were married and attend High Holiday services.

They also participated in the adult education program at the synagogue each Sunday. Linda enjoyed the good speakers that came each week. They went to this program more last year, but now they are attending an Introduction to Judaism class each Thursday evening at Hebrew Union College. Since they have their own business, they no longer have the time for the Sunday morning education program at the synagogue. Linda is also an active member of Hadassah, and Jerry studies with the rabbi of their synagogue for a total of three hours each month. Jerry has decided to convert to Judaism. He said, "it seems like a natural decision. The religion seems natural to me."

Jerry and Linda told me why they joined the Humanistic synagogue and how they feel being a part of that congregation.

Jerry: I think primarily the reason we chose this synagogue was because of me. She felt that I felt comfortable there, which I do.

It's a small congregation, liberal. It's a very thinking congregation, a lot of free thinking. I mean, not just from a religious standpoint. Free thinkers, period. And that appealed to me.

Linda: I'm glad that Jerry is comfortable there. To me that's fine. Personally, I have some problems with it because it's very different from my background. It bothers me a great deal that I go to services and they don't say the Shema. A part of--the services are not finished for me. There are things that I miss in a service that they don't do.

I'm not uncomfortable there. But it doesn't fulfill my needs from a religious standpoint simply because I miss some of the prayers. I miss the songs.

Linda, however, is pleased with their choice.

And before he really was thinking more of learning about Judaism. And I think it was a real cultural

> shock for him. I took him to another temple and there was a lot of Hebrew and it was a very formal type of service. And he really didn't understand what was going on.
>
> Where, at our synagogue, he can participate and be comfortable in participating. So, to me, that's the most important thing.

Since Jerry is studying Judaism (and converting), Linda has plans for some field trips.

> I'm thinking that maybe after Jerry is more comfortable with more of the religion, that maybe we will go to a few other places for him to kind of experience different kinds of services.

Aside from being the right kind of synagogue for Jerry, both Jerry and Linda are very comfortable at their synagogue and find the people there "very hospitable," and the environment very "homey."

Rose and David Lance

The Lances are affiliated with the Jewish community and with the Catholic community. They accompany one another to synagogue and church on major holidays. David will go to High Holidays with Rose and Rose will go to Christmas and Easter Mass with David. David recalled that they also went to a Purim celebration at the Temple. Rose added that the rabbi "really makes it a wild event," and she suggested that if I "haven't experienced there, [I] ought to try it--it's indescribable."

David attends Sunday Mass fairly regularly. He is not "registered officially with any one parish"; he has not "pledged," but the Lances are part of the "St. _____'s family," and they are on the mailing list. They both enjoy going to this particular church. They like the priest there; he was the one who co-officiated at their wedding. David described it as "more an exercise in community sharing than attending a

mass." David says that's why they enjoy it, but feel they should go more often since they have not done so this year.

Rose and David are also members at a moderately sized, fairly traditional Reform synagogue. Before they were married, Rose had belonged to a very large Reform synagogue but was very unhappy. She said, "I thought if I didn't feel comfortable, how was my husband, so I went Temple shopping." They "experimented" with a humanistic synagogue, but neither of them liked it. Both felt there was "not enough God" and "not enough religion." Rose commented "how can you be a Jew without God; that's like ham without eggs."

The Lances are now very happy with the Reform synagogue that they have chosen. David is so pleased with the congregation and its rabbi that he is now willing to change their decision to raise the children Catholic (if they have any). "I have no problem at all with being the only Catholic and having two Jews in the family."

Chapter 4

Significance and Evaluation of the Findings and Conclusions

A qualitative study such as this aims to relate the detail and richness of its findings available only in the case study method. This chapter will now condense the findings together by offering a brief overall summary of each set of findings and then going beyond the findings to point to their significance. The evaluations will directly follow each summary. Any conclusions drawn from the findings, are an evaluation of what the findings mean for these and only these intermarried, Jewishly affiliated couples.

A. The Couples

With only a sample of ten couples, there was a wide scale for number of years married. The number of years married ranged from one year to eighteen years. In numerical order the scale ran thus: 1, 2, 2-1/2, 3-1/2, 4, 5, 9-1/2, 10, 11, and 18 years married. The ages when the respondents married ranged from 23 to 44, but most of the respondents were between 25 and 32 years of age when they married. For most respondents (15), this marriage was their first, four were married for a second time and only one was married for a third time. Seven of the ten couples had children from their present marriages; one couple was expecting, another couple was not currently planning on having any children and the oldest couple had children but from previous marriages.

Three couples had one child, two couples had two children, and two couples had three children. Four of the marriages were between a Jewish male and non-Jewish female; six of the marriages were between a Jewish female and a non-Jewish male. Of the non-Jews there were seven Catholics, four male and three female; and there were three Protestants, two males and one female. Finally, in their Jewish affiliations, these couples represent all of the Reform congregations in Cincinnati except one.

For only ten couples, this study had an excellent variety of respondents. Yet, the small number makes it unwise to point to similarities or differences, and account for them with numbers or gender differences. For example, it might seem that respondents who were marrying for a second time received no complaints from their parents about their marital choice. Yet, this was also true of most of the respondents who were marrying for the first time. This dynamic might be unusual, but we cannot know based on so few respondents.

Forming conclusions based upon such basic data, therefore, would require many couples for any pattern to seem significant. For a qualitative study, then, a sampling of different kinds of couples reveals subtle differences. It also provides an intimate appreciation of the accommodation in two religious cultures. If, moreover, any generalizations can be drawn, we can point to the varied kinds of couples as support. If, for example, all the Jews were men and non-Jews women, and of those non-Jews all were Catholic, we would have little variety, and there would be no surprises if there were similarities. Aside from comparison, then, the basic data do afford us the opportunity

to see where each individual couple is coming from, to view them in their own context. For example, it was helpful to know that one couple had three children or another was married for only a year. Our approach, then, is the case study technique.

B. Religious Background and Upbringing of the Respondents

Of most the respondents, whether Jewish or non-Jewish, male or female, religion played a noticeable role in their childhood. Nineteen out of twenty respondents came from families who belonged to a church or synagogue. Jerry Jackson, the Southern Protestant, did not belong to a church. He is also the only non-Jew who is converting to Judaism. All of the respondents came from families where religious practices and celebrations were observed in the home. In the case of Nora Perez, only a Seder was observed at home and Jerry Jackson also celebrated few rituals in his home. Linda Jackson's home celebrations were actually observed in a relative's home.

In all the other families, however, home observances were a significant part of their family life while growing up. In general, the Jewish respondents practiced more home observances than their Christian counterparts. The vast majority of the respondents attended religious services. The Christian respondents went to church when they were children much more than the Jewish children. Most of the Christians, in fact, went each week. These findings may reflect more a difference in religion than in the couples. The center of Jewish ritual is in the home, and the center of Christian observance is at church. We should not jump to any major conclusions, therefore, if the Jews performed more

rituals at home, and the Christians attended services more often. Rudolph Perez and Jerry Jackson were notable exceptions, yet Rudolph grew up in a very Catholic society. His culture was inseparable from Catholicism in much the same way Israeli society is inseparable from Judaism.

The great majority of the respondents received religious education. All of the Catholics went to parochial school, but Meredith Abrams only attended until junior high school. Bill Fuller attended a Lutheran school. Only Jerry Jackson had very little formal religious instruction. Most of the Jews received a significant amount of religious school education. Only Randy Grady and Nora Perez received little religious training.

These descriptions of religious upbringing, even in summary form, would not seem to indicate that these individuals are intermarried. Yet this observation is based on the assumption that people who have little religious background are more likely to intermarry than those with significant religious background. For 18 of these respondents, at least, this assumption is incorrect. Only Nora Perez and Jerry Jackson had little religious background overall. Jerry, a non-Jew, is converting to Judaism, and Nora, a Jew, almost raised her children as Catholics. Yet other findings suggest that Nora has a strong Jewish identity because of her minority status in a Catholic culture and the fact that many of her relatives were killed in the Holocaust. In short, as interesting as family background was, it did not seem to relate in any causal way to these individuals growing up and marrying outside their religions. Judy O'Brian, perhaps, serves as our best example.

She was raised as a Protestant whose parents were raised as Protestants. The family belonged to a church, sent her to Sunday school and then took her to church each Sunday. Then Judy converted to Judaism. (So did her mother.) Then Judy married a Protestant. Seemingly, Judy's upbringing caused her to marry someone similar to her regardless of her formal status. Yet a closer look at the findings show that Judy had indeed rejected Christianity. What she did not reject, however, was a non-Jewish husband.

C. Interfaith Attitudes of Parents and Children

With one exception, the Jewish parents all conveyed (through some means or another) that they were against intermarriage or that they at least advised their children to marry a Jew. Only Jim Cohen's father was so liberal that he emphasized not caring about a person's religion, class or race. Like other parents he would point out difficulties, but only if his son wanted to marry a very religious person or a black person. But if Jim still wanted to marry, his father would support him. Jim adopted his father's attitude since he said that it was only important for him to find someone that was not too religious. Since Jim married someone who was not very religious, his father never had to have that discussion with his son, and he reacted to the marriage in accordance with his philosophy.

With two exceptions, the Jewish children adopted the attitudes of their parents. Just as most of the parents wanted their children to marry Jews or at least said they preferred it, the children thought it was important or at least preferred and expected to marry a Jew. Susan

Fuller, however, said that she did not think it was important for her to marry a Jew. But her parents preferred that she marry a Jew, although they were not against intermarriage.

The reactions of the Jewish parents to the marriage with one exception, ranged from happiness, to not being surprised, to expressing concern for the happiness of the marriage because of the difficulties the couple will face as a result of coming from two different religious backgrounds. Only Randy Grady said her mother was not too happy and her father was very upset. He said "it was the worst day in his life."

The Christian parents were far more liberal on the issue of intermarriage than were the Jewish parents. In most of the cases, these parents never even brought up the subject of intermarriage as an issue and the children never knew their attitudes. Most of the children had similar outlooks as their parents. In Chris Denny's case, her parents, who were the least liberal, wanted her to marry a Catholic but she too felt it was important to marry a Catholic. Among the Christian respondents, Chris thought it was important to marry within her faith more than any others. The reactions of the parents to the marriage were very mild. Most were happy, few were surprised, one even encouraged their son to ask his non-Jewish girlfriend to marry him. Some expressed concerns for the welfare of the couple.

If we looked only at the attitudes of the Christian parents and children, it would seem that they could explain why intermarriages occurred. But it takes two to marry, and the Jewish attitudes of both parents and children were very different on the issue of intermarriage. Obviously, the Jews intermarried and their less liberal attitudes did

not prevent them from doing so. For these couples, therefore we cannot look to interfaith attitudes to account for intermarriage. Nonetheless, these attitudes may be helpful in explaining a different phenomenon as we shall see.

D. Living in Two Faiths

All the couples interviewed were chosen because they had at least one Jewish affiliation, and of course, were also intermarried. Therefore, that they do have a Jewish affiliation is not properly speaking a "finding," but rather it is a "given."*

Significantly, however, there was an appreciable amount of Christian affiliation, observance and identification. Overall, the Jewish ingredient was dominant, but the Christian element was also present in pre-marital decision making, wedding plans, religious observances, and religious affiliations. The only area where the Christian side did not enter was in the formal upbringing of the child. In other areas, these couples were indeed "living in two faiths," but there seemed to be a recognition that whatever else could be split in two, the child was not one of them.

All but one of the ten couples discussed religious issues before they were married; some talked about their different religious backgrounds even before engagement. Only the Jacksons said that they

*The information in Chapter 3 about those Jewish affiliations are, however, findings, since qualitatively there is a wide range of involvement with the Jewish community. That is, Jewish affiliation is the given, but which affiliations, how many what kinds and how active and welcomed they are in them are findings.

did not discuss the issue, but in this case, Jerry was, perhaps, the least identifed of the Christian spouses. It seemed as if it was understood that Judaism would be practiced. Moreover, Jerry is now converting to Judaism, but it is not clear whether his interest in even studying Judaism goes antedated the wedding.

One religious issue was discussed and settled prior to every couple's wedding--the religion of the children. The Jacksons are excluded from this group since they both had grown children from previous marriages and had no plans to have a child. The Perezes decided to raise their children Catholic if they stayed in South America because of the dominance of the surrounding culture. But if they moved to the United States, they decided to raise them Jewish since Nora identified more closely with Judaism than Rudolph did with Catholicism.

Rose and David Lance are not planning to have children, and they reached this decision before marriage. If they did have a child, however, they originally decided to raise them Catholic, but David (the Catholic partner) announced at the interview that he was willing to reconsider the original decision, as a result of his positive encounters with the Jewish community. The remaining seven couples all decided that the children would be raised as Jews. No couples decided that they would let their children choose.

Other issues were discussed by the couples prior to marriage and they varied from couple to couple. Some couples already made decisions about holiday observances, but, of course, in all cases, a decision as to the kind of wedding they would have was made.

There were four Jewish ceremonies in which a rabbi officiated, two of which were in synagogues. Two ceremonies were dual religious in nature in which a rabbi and a priest officiated; one ceremony was in a church, the other, in a hotel. Four other couples chose to have civil ceremonies; one had a Protestant minister officiate, another obtained a judge, yet another found a Jewish judge and the Perezes had a strictly legal ceremony performed by a notary public.

Most of the couples celebrated a combination of Jewish and Christian holidays in their home. We note two exceptions: the Fullers did celebrate Christian holidays, but only at Bill's parents' home. The Perezes observed Jewish celebrations, but always did so at the Temple or with friends in their homes. They did, however, celebrate Christmas in their own home. The rest of the couples observed both sets of holidays in varying degree. Nine couples celebrate Chanukah and seven of them remember it as the first Jewish ritual that they observed in their own home. Many observed the Passover Seder, sometimes going to one, other times conducting it in their own homes. Four couples observed Shabbat in some way, but only one couple did so with any regularity. Christmas and Easter were the Christian holidays observed by the couples. Each couple devised their own ways of observing the holidays and the rich variety of their practices are recorded in Chapter 3.

Two more observations regarding holiday observance should be made. Often the couple's home was treated as a "neutral zone" with important holiday observances being celebrated at the homes of the appropriate set of parents depending on the holiday. This practice included Jewish holidays, but especially Christian holidays. If a couple did have a

Christmas tree, for example, Christmas dinner was still served elsewhere. Not too much significance, perhaps, should be drawn from this observation, for even among in-married couples, the large holiday dinner is at the parents' home. Moreover, one couple did have Christmas dinner for the Christian side of the family. In addition, although there was no overwhelming outpouring of Jewish expression in any of the homes, several of the couples spoke of consciously limiting (or planning to limit) Christian holiday observance in their home or removing religious elements from these observances in order not to confuse the children. At the same time, some couples spoke about the importance of exposing their Jewish children to the Christian side of the family and its ways.

Of all the couples who decided to raise their children Jewish, all were or were still planning to act on their decision. Those with children old enough were sending them to religious school and were aware that what they practiced or did not practice at home had an impact upon their children. Only the Gradys were not sending their child to religious school. Only the Perezes had children old enough for Bat Mitzvah, and they chose not to have their daughters go through this life cycle event. All the Christian spouses expressed support for their Jewish counterpart's efforts to raise the children as Jews. Some felt very good about it. Chris Denny had ambivalent feelings; she supported Bill's efforts and even worried about her inability to help out (seeing it as a mother's responsibility). But she had feelings of regret over not being able to share her own religion for which she would be well

qualified. Other Christian spouses felt indecisive about not being able to help teach the children Judaism.

Three of the Jewish spouses and one Christian spouse (married to one of these three) expressed dismay over Hebrew being taught in the religious schools. Only Judy O'Brian wanted her child to learn Hebrew and learn about Israel.

Of course all of the couples had formal affiliation with a synagogue. Many of the Jews and their Christian spouses were active either in the synagogue or with another Jewish organization. None of the couples, however, attended worship services regularly, but all went for at least some services as well as other programs. Many of the Jewish spouses selected a synagogue with their Christian spouse's needs and feelings in mind.

Seven of the couples had no church affiliation whatsoever. The Dennys, Gradys, and Lances were the only couples to be affiliated with a church; in all these cases, it was a Catholic church. The Catholic spouses in these couples attended church regularly. The Jewish spouses would attend church with their Christian spouses usually on major holidays like Christmas and Easter. <u>All</u> the Christian spouses, in turn, would usually accompany their Jewish spouses when the Jewish spouse chose to attend a service which was usually on a holiday. (Evaluation of this section is included in the Conclusion.)

E. <u>Conclusion</u>

The religious lifestyles of these ten couples form a complex mosaic of religious practices. Even the previous, extensive summary only touches upon the main issues, yielding a stark outline of the mosaic.

For each couple (even with all the similarities and basic differences noted) has its own unique approach to living in two faiths. The subtle shadings and delicate lines are seen in their feelings and attitudes about what they do and why they have made certain choices. Yet our summary is helpful in gaining an overview from which to draw what we hope are significant insights.

As we mentioned in the Methodology chapter, these couples agreed to speak about themselves and share their feelings on a personal and emotional subject. We assumed, therefore, that these marriages were happy, stable and mature. We are not surprised therefore, to learn that all but one couple discussed the issue of religion and religious differences before their marriages. (The reasons why one couple that did not were outlined above.) One respondent shared his surprise that so many couples just "wing it." None of these couples seemed to be "winging it." Decisions were made with the conscious effort to bring about some desired result. The respondents were able to express their own feelings and seemed to understand how those feelings influenced their choices.

Further questions and decisions, however, lie on the horizon. Life does not remain still; their young children will grow and new decisions must be made. For example, these couples will need to decide the issue of the Bar Mitzvah or not to Bar Mitzvah and if so, how so. Only one couple in this study had older children. Nora Perez struggled with her decision as she weighed the pros and the cons. So too will these couples confront this question. Again, church attendance on the part of both spouses will need re-evaluation. If they are raising the children

Jewish, should the whole family go to church? In general, despite the fact that most of the couples are raising their children as Jews, they are certainly exposed close-up to much that is Christian. The commitment to raise them Jewish will undergo challenges and underscore the need to make more decisions.

Fortunately, these couples seem to have in place their priorities and goals that will help them make decisions. For example, as some of their young children were just reaching schooling age, many couples spoke of the need to reconsider their religious practices at home. The flexibility needed to change custom when circumstances change is vital to any marriage, so certainly to intermarriages. The challenge, however, is to make changes without alienating either one of the spouses. One Catholic husband said he would not mind if he were the only Catholic in a family of Jews. He might, and certainly others do mind.

The above example is a fitting one for most of our couples. Despite the combination of Jewish and Christian practices, the dominant religion in most of the marriages was Judaism. This fact is reflected in the couples' decision to raise their children as Jews. As the children grow older, to meet their needs religiously, the scales may tilt even further toward Judaism. But we should ask why Judaism became the dominant religion in these marriages. After all, most of the respondents came from families where religion played at some role in their lives. The answer may lie in the interfaith attitudes of the respondents' parents and of the respondents themselves. The Jewish parents were generally far more concerned about intermarriage than their

Christian counterparts. The Jewish parents communicated their attitudes much more to their children and the children generally adopted their parents' concerns despite the fact that they did intermarry. Moreover, the Christian respondents adopted their parents' liberal attitudes or general lack of concern. It is these attitudes that may explain why Judaism is the dominant religion in these marriages. The Christians may have felt less pressure upon entering the intermarriage than their Jewish spouses. The Jews, on the other hand, entered with the baggage of their own attitudes on intermarriage, their parents' attitudes, the Jewish community's position on the issue, and thousands of years of Jewish suffering. They may not have entered the marriage, then, with a stronger religious identity than the Christians, but they may have entered with a strong need to live Jewishly and pass their Jewishness onto their children. Some Jewish spouses, in fact, seemed more determined to do so as a result of their intermarriage. They commented that it was all up to them to raise their children Jewish. Of course, it was they who insisted that the children be raised as Jews in the first place. This insistence led to Jewish affiliation and observance, and therefore made Judaism the dominant religion in most of these marriages.

Despite the dominance of Judaism in these marriages, sometimes this dominance was not overwhelming. Moreover, as mentioned, in many of the marriages there was much of a Christian element in their observance, affiliation and their attitudes. Jewish children are being raised, but they are being raised in an environment that is sometimes Christian. And often, the environment has no religious content at all. True enough

that many other Jewish families do not lead a rich Jewish lifestyle each and every day, but then again, they do not visit the grandparents on Christmas for Christmas dinner, or attend Easter Mass.

No value judgments are implied here, nor should any be made. This description is simply that--a description of a phenomenon that was observed in ten marriages. This phenomenon is one of a new Jewish identity. It is an identity that shares much in common with the Jewish identities of countless other Jews. But this Jewish identity is one with Christian shadings. In an interview with Moment magazine Steven M. Cohen said,

> because of intermarriage there are more Chanukah candles being lit across America today, because there are more homes where at least that level of Jewish involvement is taking place than there would have been if the Jews had married each other. There may also be more Jews who are living in homes with Christmas trees, but there are probably more Jews with Chanukah candles and with what they regard as a Passover seder because of intermarriage.[1]

Cohen cited this phenomenon to say that intermarriage may increase Jews and decrease Jewishness. I believe my findings regarding ten couples reinforce Cohen's observation. But I interpret this phenomenon to mean that a new Jewish identity is being forged. This identity is not necessarily less Jewish, it is simply different and more complex. I believe other Jewish affiliated families with intermarried parents have similar Jewish identities as well.

This Jewish identity can only be nurtured in a community willing to accept it. Indeed, the fact that elements within the Jewish community are accepting intermarriage, intermarried couples and their children may be the very reason that this Jewish identity is existing at all. No more

than Jews could remain Jewish without the Jewish community can Jews married to non-Jews remain Jewish without the community. Years ago when intermarriers were shunned from society, they ceased being Jewish or raising Jewish children. Now the communal response is changing from one of rejection to acceptance and even welcome. Intermarried couples are responding because if the Jewish partner cared about Judaism, the Jewish people and their own identity, that caring never stopped when they met, fell in love with and married a non-Jewish person.

The course for the future must remain on this track. If only self-interest drove the community to open its doors to the intermarried, so be it. But compassion and decency should keep those doors open and open them wider.

Notes

[1]Steven M. Cohen and Calvin Goldscheider, "Jews More or Less," Moment, 9, no. 8 (September 1984), 43.

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