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CONVERSION AS A PROCESS OF ADULT SOCIALIZATION:
A STUDY OF REFORM JEWISH CONVERTS AND THEIR PARTNERS

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
in Hebrew Letters and Rabbinic Ordination

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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

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DEDICATED to Shirley Kane Lewis,
my wife, without whom dreams
would be unfulfilled and love
unknown - and to Julie Devorah
and Jamie Suzanne, my daughters.

DIGEST

This is a pilot study: It is based on a limited number of responses and interviews and it does not attempt to discover any universal facts of conversion. Our goal here is two-fold: We have designed this study in order to introduce the Reform Jewish convert to the Reform Jew and in order to investigate the concept of conversion as a process of adult socialization. Where possible we have drawn conclusions, suggested alternative interpretations of our data and provided areas for further research.

The entire realm of conversion studies has been virtually untouched by modern Jewish scholarship; yet conversion is an important sociological fact in contemporary American Judaism. No researcher has yet attempted to discover who the converts are and how they feel about themselves, their partners, Judaism and their roles within the Jewish community. This study attempts to find out who the convert is and how he feels. Our data is limited. It is based on written responses from nineteen couples and on in depth interviews from eleven of these couples.

Chapter I is a review of the contemporary sociological and psychological literature dealing with the theme of conversion. Its function is to acquaint the reader with an awareness of the complexities of conversion.

Chapter II reviews Jewish proselytism from its earliest period to the present. A discussion of contemporary American Jewish conversion procedures is offered and some of the problems associated with modern conversion are considered at length.

Chapter III is the main contribution of this pilot study. It is a discussion of the data we received from our respondents. Within this chapter we analyze our data and attempt where possible to suggest alternative interpretations.

Chapter IV is a brief chapter in which we present our conclusions and considerations for further study. It is brief because throughout the study we attempt to draw conclusions from the immediate data. The considerations for further study are important. They suggest areas which need to be researched if we are to truly understand the Reform Jewish convert.

This thesis is the result of two years of research and interpretation. It does not attempt to cover all facets of the conversion problem, but those areas with which it does deal are dealt with in depth. I am indebted to Rabbi Norman Mirsky for his advice, criticism and guidance throughout the preparation of the thesis. I am also grateful to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus for his sincere interest and willingness to listen and challenge my interpretations and data. His friendship has meant much; his advice has meant more.

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CONVERSION AS A PROCESS OF ADULT SOCIALIZATION

INTRODUCTION

In January of 1951, the Central Conference of American Rabbis established the Committee on the Unaffiliated.¹ The resolution which gave the committee its genesis, enabled the committee "to study practical means of extending the influence and acceptance of the Jewish religion."² Before making any suggestions to the C.C.A.R., it was decided by the committee members that a thorough study of "the current status of proselytes and conversions to Judaism in the United States" was required.³ David Max Eichhorn, chairman of the Committee on the Unaffiliated prepared the study and detailed its findings in October, 1954.⁴ Eichhorn polled Reform and Conservative American rabbis and asked them to estimate the number of converts they had brought into Judaism, the reasons for the conversions, the programs of study required for conversion and the role the convert assumed within the Temple structure.⁵ Eichhorn reported "it may be assumed that the membership of the C.C.A.R. is currently converting at least 1,000 persons per year, possibly over 1,200..."⁶ It was further found that marriage was the predominant motive for conversion. "Out of the 9,544 persons...whom 453 Reform rabbis estimate to have converted in their rabbinical careers, 8,966 or 93.9 percent involved marriage to a Jewish person and only 578 or 6.1 percent did not."⁷ Moreover, many of the rabbis indicated that while the majority of the persons con-

verted by them would not have come to Judaism had it not been for marriage, before or after their marriage they realized "that they were emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually attuned to the Jewish religion..."⁸

Motivated by Eichhorn's conclusion that 93.9 percent of the converts to Judaism came as a result of marriage to a Jew, we became interested to learn who these people were. We limited our inquiry to Reform Jewish converts only. The following questions were of particular importance to us:

1. Do those persons involved in marriage to a Reform Jew convert merely for the sake of marriage?
2. Is the conversion a means to an end, or is it a goal in and of itself?
3. Does the conversion really "take" - do they consider themselves to be Jews?
4. What are the religious and educational backgrounds of these persons who become proselytes?
5. Do they feel rejected by their own families because of the conversion?
6. Do they give their children a Jewish education?
7. Do they become involved in the religious and social functions of the Temple?
8. Do they involve themselves in the social and philanthropic organizations within the Jewish community?
9. What are their religious practices?
10. Who are their partners and what is their religious and educational background?
11. Do they feel accepted by the general Jewish community?

In order to obtain the information required to answer our questions, we developed two questionnaires; one for the converted partner and one for the original Jewish partner. The questions were essentially the same for both partners. However, the Jewish partner was asked more questions than was the converted partner. We sought not only the Jewish partner's feelings but also his thoughts about his converted partner's feelings and attitudes. Our purpose in soliciting the feelings and thoughts of the Jewish partner had further motivations. We wanted to determine whether there was basic agreement between the partners on such issues as the religious education of the children, reasons for the conversion, home religious practices and amount of Temple attendance and participation. Was either partner attempting to hide anything and was either trying to embellish anything... Through the questioning of each partner, we also sought to determine whether the more dominant partner - whom we assumed to be the Jewish partner - had imposed his values upon the other or whether the process of the conversion program, ceremony and Jewish living had been more responsible for the thoughts and decisions of the convert. We felt that these areas could be adequately evaluated since the couples were asked not to discuss the questionnaires with each other and because they were to be completed independently.

The social, philanthropic and religious affiliations of the converts were important to us. But we also wanted to

know whether the converts were "joiners" or "on lookers" because of their own interests. Lastly, we were anxious to gather data on the Jewish partners themselves. We wondered if there were any particular set of circumstances such as a lack of religious school and home training or rejections by the Jewish peer group - which influenced Jewish males to marry non - Jewish females.

Dayton, Ohio was selected as the most ideal area in which to randomly select our sampling. (A preliminary test sampling was taken in Cincinnati, Ohio, to determine whether the questions on the questionnaires were understandable. This also afforded us an opportunity to experiment with interviewing techniques.) Dayton has a large Jewish population and only one Reform congregation. This congregation has approximately 1,050 member families. Because Dayton has only one Reform congregation, all prospective Reform proselytes receive instruction from one source, the associate rabbi. Through discussion with the rabbi, it was learned that the conversion program and ceremony were uniform for all converts.

Twenty-nine couples were sent the sets of questionnaires and a letter of introduction. The letter of introduction explained the purpose of the study, assured them that the rabbi was aware of what was proposed and asked for their cooperation. They were also asked to participate in an interview. A postal card was enclosed on which the respondents could place their names and phone numbers if they wished to be interviewed.

Postage was also supplied for the return of the questionnaires. Nineteen couples return the completed questionnaires. Eleven of these couples were also willing to be interviewed. One couple returned the questionnaires and accompanying materials and stated that they did not want to participate. Nine couples made no response. A discussion of the possible reasons for refusing to participate in the study in any way is discussed at length in Chapter III.

Interviewing took place in the homes of the respondents. This afforded us an opportunity to appraise the class level of the couples, to look for objects of Jewish ceremonial significance and to look for Jewish books or periodicals of Jewish interest. However, because many of the interviews were conducted over coffee in dining rooms, we were rarely able to ascertain whether there was any Jewish literature within the home. We did look for *Shabbat* on the front doors of the homes and were often able to see Kiddush cups and candle sticks if there were any in the home. Interviewing in the homes also permitted us to meet the couples on their own home-grounds and to observe limited interaction between various family members.

In addition to the purposes mentioned above, the interviews made it possible for us to delve more deeply into certain questions which required only a "yes" or "no" response on the questionnaires. Secondly, we were able to ask certain attitudinal questions and to observe any affect

displayed by the respondents. One partner was interviewed, while the other was out of the room. Interviews lasted from thirty to sixty minutes, depending on the ability and willingness of the respondents to verbalize their thoughts. They were taped for later transcription. Excerpts of these transcriptions appear in Chapter III of this study. We found that both the proselytes and their partners wanted to talk. Generally, they wanted to share their experiences and seemed open and sincere.

Our goal then is to introduce the Reform Jewish convert to the Reform Jew. We want to learn of his attitudes toward Judaism, the feelings of allegiance and/or alienation, the roles he assumes after conversion, his religious practices and what conversion has meant to his life. We want also to learn about the proselyte's partner and his religious and educational background.

We turn now to a discussion of conversion itself; its social and psychological ramifications.

A REVIEW OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF CONVERSION

Chapter I

It must be made perfectly clear at the onset of this study that any attempt on our part to offer a simplified and concise definition of the phenomenon of conversion would prove misleading, faulty, and fruitless. By standard definition alone, it has been suggested that conversion at least involves some or all of the following characteristics: There may be an act or a rite which the prospective proselyte undergoes; he may experience a change in his character or perceive an alteration in his function in life; he may undergo a spiritual change from sinfulness to righteousness, or a change from one religion or viewpoint to another; there may be attitudinal, emotional and intellectual changes that occur and result in altering a feeling of indifference, disbelief or antagonism to one of acceptance, faith or enthusiastic support.¹ Religious conversion then, much like political and attitudinal thought change is neither an isolated nor a one dimensional experience.² As we shall show, it involves and is inextricably connected with certain sociological and psychological factors. It has in fact been suggested that certain physiological factors too might be given consideration.³

It is necessary at this point to make a distinction between two types of religious conversions - inner conversion and ecclesiastical conversion.⁴ Gordon has suggested that inner

conversion might be characterized as a sudden act enhanced by heightened emotionalism through which one attempts to reunite himself with a lost past and to be 'born again'.⁵ The frenzied outpouring of emotion and resulting physical exhaustion experienced in the snake cults and in certain fundamentalistic Christian revival meetings often produce an inner conversion. On a more intellectual and somewhat less emotional level this may be observed when an individual decides to re-dedicate himself to the church from which he had strayed as a youth. In both instances, however, one does not leave the church but reinvests himself in it so to speak. Ecclesiastical conversion in contra-distinction to inner conversion is seldom a sudden act and is most often the result of a long and gradual process. It is not a return to the past, but a definite break with that past.

It is the formal act of identifying oneself with a religious faith which has a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices other than those originally adhered to. It is a conscious moving from one organized religion to another..."ecclesiastical conversion," involves a complete shift in allegiance to another and different faith...⁶

Commenting further on the characteristics of ecclesiastical conversion Gordon has indicated that:

The change from one religion to another need not...necessarily imply the heightened emotional or psychological experiences that are generally associated with "inner conversion." The convert who moves from one faith to another need not be "twice-born" nor need he now put religious ideas in the central place in his life. His reasons for conversion... may be the consequence of motives that have

little, if anything, to do with strengthened or renewed religious feeling.⁷

Our concern in this study will be with the ecclesiastical convert in general and specifically with the Reform Jewish convert. We address ourselves now to a discussion of the psychological and sociological theories of the role and function of conversion

From the psychological perspective, conversion - religious or otherwise - is not a sudden occurrence devoid of previously conditioned or existent factors.⁸ Brown has suggested that "conversion is based upon mental conflict and a feeling of inadequacy, otherwise there would be no point in changing one's belief."⁹ Thouless has classified these conflicts as being predominantly moral, intellectual or social.¹⁰ Johnson too, states that a genuine religious conversion is the outcome of some type of crisis. It is Johnson's belief that "the event of conversion comes to focus in a crisis of ultimate concern."¹¹ It is also interesting to note that conversion "is likely to have been preceded by some sort of mental conflict since those who are satisfied with themselves are less likely to be converted."¹² Furthermore, religious conversion

...may take the form of filling a vacuum which has caused dissatisfaction with the existing personality in which case it supplies, as it were, the missing piece of the puzzle; or it may take the form of a substitution of one piece for another which may have been lying dormant for years, (as happened in the case of Paul).¹³

Conversion then, may involve a change in overt personality as well as in religious belief. Basing himself on the works of William James, J.A.C. Brown has discussed the concept of the peripheral personality.¹⁴ Essentially, James had suggested that an individual has a basic - a nuclear personality - which is the real self. This nuclear personality manifests itself in diverse guises or peripheral personalities in accordance with the primary and secondary groups with which one has been associated. The peripheral personality is alterable and can change as the group associations change. But the nuclear personality - the real self - remains unaltered.¹⁵

In more contemporary terms we can imagine the peripheral part of the personality as containing many sets of ideas which are often associated with primary or secondary groups to which the individual has once belonged...and the energy of the nuclear personality as expressing itself predominantly through one of these sets of ideas with the potentiality of suddenly switching to another. Yet each of the possible 'personalities' is consistent with the nuclear one which remains relatively unchanged.¹⁶

What has here been suggested then, is that the individual convert does not of a sudden hear a voice, sense a feeling or 'see the light.' The voice has always been there, the sensation in the past had been unrecognized or suppressed. The peripheral personalities had not allowed these sensations to penetrate to the nuclear personality. With a change in group affiliation or association, the peripheral personality may

undergo considerable alteration and become more like the real, the nuclear personality.

An example will help to clarify the concept of peripheral personality. Let us suggest that Mary is a born Catholic, educated through the parochial school system. As a teen she may have belonged to the Catholic Youth Organization and have practiced her religion as her church demanded. Yet during these teen years, Mary began to have doubts about Catholicism; the trinity, Jesus, the worth of the church service, etc. These doubts were never shared with anybody because they would have brought about social ostracism. As an adult Mary met a Jewish man and they began to date occasionally. The relationship became quite serious and it was suggested that Mary convert to Judaism in order that the marriage might take place. After considerable thought Mary did convert and 'became' a Jewess. Judaism had become part of Mary's life. But it did not occur suddenly. In her youth she had had doubts about her religion; her nuclear personality was able to contain these doubts. In her adult years, however, when she was less restrained in the expression of her religious doubts and when her social contacts became more varied, she found occasion for expressing her views and for seeking a solution to her difficulties. Judaism and her future husband provided the occasion she required. Still her nuclear personality had not changed. Mary was still the same basic Mary who had serious doubts about Catholicism and a desire to identify herself with

something more akin to her basic thoughts and emotions. In Judaism she found an answer to her needs.

To the extent that Mary's conversion would have been successful, it would have changed

...the individual's beliefs and actions, but it would not have 'taken' had the new beliefs not been in conformity with his (her) personality. The individual convert, in fact, is the man or woman in search of a system of beliefs which will integrate him more closely with what he regards as reality. They are not forced upon him by anybody...¹⁷

Mary's conversion is an example of what Salzman has distinguished as the progressive or maturational type of conversion.¹⁸

...This type frequently occurs in the course of real maturing; it takes place when the person, after a reasoned, thoughtful search, adopts new values and goals which he has determined to be higher than those he has abandoned. It occurs in reasonably normal persons, and when it is a religious conversion, represents the ultimate in the humanistic religions - the positive fulfillment of one's powers with self awareness, concern for others, and oneness with the world.¹⁹

Albert Gordon, the only contemporary Sociologist to have conducted extensive research with converts has developed a three fold classification of proselytes which is of value in the study of the Reform Jewish convert: (1) Pro Forma converts, (2) Marginal converts and (3) Authentic converts.²⁰

The Pro Forma convert has no real interest in conversion as an end in itself. He has an ulterior motive that is most often associated with the desire to marry a person of another faith. He may be concerned with the establishment of some

degree of religious "unity" within the family. He believes that a formal submission to conversion will, somehow, "satisfy" his partner in marriage and his spouse's family. In order to meet this requirement, he undertakes to convert and meets all the legalistic and ritual requirements that the church or synagogue...demands...He is a nominal convert, a convert in name only.²¹

The Marginal convert is distinguished by a desire to retain ties of some kind with the religion of his origin even though he has converted...He lives in two worlds, with two religious philosophies wherever possible and is not completely "at home" in either.²²

The Authentic convert is a term I have borrowed from Hebraic sources. The Hebrew is "Ger Tzedek" and it means the convert who, for reasons purely intrinsic, has converted to his new religion. Such a convert does not adopt his new faith for reasons either ulterior or negative. He does not convert in order to overcome a personal insecurity, nor does he accept a new and different faith because this may help to assure a happy marriage. This type of convert is concerned only with finding what, to him, is the "true" religion. He is determined to worship God and to serve Him with the fullness of his heart, mind, and soul.²³

It has further been noted that among the influences encouraging one to consider religious conversion, social acceptance or rejection is often of key importance. That is to say "that the rejection of one social group or the rejection by such a group is often followed by acceptance of the mores, including the religious beliefs, of another."²⁴ Social affiliation and group identification are of particular importance when one converts to Judaism; for in becoming a Jew, one ultimately becomes part of a minority group.²⁵ Furthermore, he becomes more than a member of a particular religious persuasion, he

becomes part of an ethnic group.²⁶ The convert's new association, therefore, may well provide him with his religious, cultural and social identifications. As will be demonstrated later through a discussion of Jewish conversion ceremonies, the candidate for conversion cannot accept the religion without also accepting the ethnic heritage of Judaism.²⁷

Thouless has already noted that one of the conflicts leading to conversion could be a predominantly intellectual conflict.²⁸ It has been suggested, however, that:

Intellectual conversions are probably rare in the pure form although intellectual difficulties often form part of the struggle before the conversion actually takes place.²⁹

We find then, that when we discuss religious conversion, a distinction must be made between what has come to be known as inner conversion and ecclesiastical conversion; the former being characterized by heightened emotionalism and psychological manifestations such as seen in the fundamentalistic Christian revivals and certain tribal rites, and the latter being more of a conscious moving from one religious framework to another without the emotionalism and with the possible acceptance of a totally new set of allegiances and beliefs. Both types of conversion however, involve a degree of stress and are the results of attempts to solve some basic personal crisis. In both inner and ecclesiastical conversion the proselyte may expect to participate in some type of conversion rite, achieve a change in character and/or spiritual outlook. A possible change in emotion or previously held attitudes may

also occur. Some converts will also experience a change from feelings of indifference and disbelief to those of belief and support of a particular religious order. A number of converts will note that their basic allegiances will have been altered. In all instances conversion will be the outcome of a crisis, for without such a compelling stimulus there would be no need to convert. Gordon sees this holding true even for those persons who change their church or synagogue affiliation for the sake of marriage.³⁰

We further divided the types of conversion experiences into progressive or maturational conversion and regressive or psychological conversion: the former being an aspect of normal maturation and thoughtful search and closely akin to ecclesiastical conversion and the latter being a form of psychological regression. It was also noted that maturational conversions were often the result of moral, intellectual and/or social conflicts. And, as Gordon has suggested, the converts themselves may be classified as either Pro Forma converts, Marginal converts or Authentic converts.

The data in this chapter indicate to us that the conversion itself will produce both latent and manifest results; the former being those goals which one has aspired to achieve by means of the conversion, such as intellectual integrity, marriage, emotional satisfaction and social acceptance, and the latter being the unanticipated and unintended results of the conversion, such as rejection by family, minority class

status, ascribed prejudice, and a possible sense of guilt.³¹ We have further noted that the basic personality of the convert is not altered as a result of conversion, only his peripheral personalities will change. But the real self, the nuclear personality, will remain intact. The only change that can take place therefore as a result of conversion will be that change which is in conformity with the convert's basic personality.

As we noted above, Gordon was the only contemporary Sociologist to have conducted extensive research with the converts themselves. In our initial research and in the results presented in this chapter, we were able to find numerous hypotheses about the types of people who were most likely to experience some form of conversion. We have a sufficient amount of material and research dedicated to hypothesizing the "why" and "whens" of conversion, but we find an amazing paucity of research which is able to indicate to us the "who" of conversion; who in reality are these converts? Where are the data that would enable us to test the various hypotheses? Why has such research not been conducted? Undoubtedly one reason for the lack of research stems from the fact that in the United States religious affiliation, identification and attitudes are considered very personal areas and researchers may therefore be hesitant about even attempting the studies we have proposed. But we believe there may be a more basic reason for the lack of conversion studies.

We contend that religious converts are frequently viewed as second class religionists. They enter their particular religious persuasion not by birth or by the normal patterns of child socialization, but rather as the result of some crisis. They may desire to "get right with God" or to establish a home - through marriage - in which only one religion can be permitted. Their motives are suspect initially and many will never be considered as true religionists, but always as converts. (In our own discussions with converts we found that many of them viewed themselves as second class Reform Jews. Some also felt that they were viewed by others as second class Jews).

Gordon's three fold division or ranking of converts is concise and at the same time problematic. Gordon's scheme is arranged in such a way as to place a value judgement on the authenticity of the proselyte's conversion. He fails to see that a proselyte could enter Judaism as a Pro-Forma convert and after a period of time become a sincere Jew or Authentic convert. He also has structured his system of classifications so that the Pro-Forma convert is seen not as a true proselyte but as someone who "believes that a formal submission to conversion will, somehow, 'satisfy' his partner in marriage and his spouse's family."

Eichhorn had indicated that 93.9 percent of the Reform and Conservative conversion cases reported to him came about because of marriage. (Our own limited sampling supports Eich-

horn's statistics.) Furthermore, in a study entitled "Conversion and American Orthodox Judaism," Ehrman and Fenster noted that courtship and marriage were responsible for 68 percent of the Orthodox conversions studied.³² Gordon's classifications would therefore exclude 68 - 93 percent of all Jewish converts from the possibility of being sincere proselytes. His scheme perpetuates the medieval Jewish suspicion of converts and suggests that we had better begin to accept converts to Judaism at face value. Conversion for the sake of marriage must be viewed as being legitimate and of value to the perpetuation of the Jewish group.

Chapter II

JEWISH VIEWS OF PROSELYTISM: PAST AND PRESENT

The origins of Jewish proselytism extend far into the Hebrew past and contemporary scholars suggest that statements reflecting the Jewish (or Hebrew) attitudes toward proselytism can be noted in the literature of the Biblical, Hellenistic, and Medieval periods. This chapter presents a discussion of the data furnished by the literatures of the previously noted historical periods. Following the discussion, consideration is given to the position of the proselyte as formulated by the contemporary American rabbinical assemblies. Particular attention is focused upon the attitudes and goals of Reform Judaism.

Bamberger has suggested that from the time of Jeremiah the hope is expressed that in the not too distant future, the heathen nations will see the folly of their actions, the uselessness of their idol worship, and will desire the worship and allegiance of the one and only God.¹ Though some scholars have indicated that earlier materials, some as early as the Patriarchial period, suggest Jewish proselytism, Bamberger argues that:

It was only as Judaism became a universal and therefore a unique religion-under prophetic influence-that the possibility of conversion in any other sense than naturalization became possible.²

There are a number of Biblical references which are noted by the phrase "those that fear the Lord." Scholars have generally been inclined to believe that this phrase, especially

when it appears in the Psalms, refers to either converts or semi-converts who had become fearers (worshippers) of the Hebrew universal God "without accepting all the legalistic and ritual obligations of Judaism."³ The material available from the Biblical period, however, is not sufficient enough to enable us to determine whether either or both of the mentioned interpretations is correct. We can state with more certainty that during the period of Jeremiah and the Second Isaiah-the Post-Exilic period-the idea of proselytism was well known, and "that many non-Jews were attracted to the Jewish faith..."⁴

In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, reflecting the condition of Palestinian life shortly after the exile, we find that intermarriage had become a significant problem for the Jews and "a real danger to the permanence of the small, struggling Jewish group and its still unsteady religion."⁵ But it is in the book of Ruth, often believed to have been written in protest against the harsh policies of Ezra, that we find "a plea for tolerance and a defense of intermarriage."⁶ Of particular value, however, is the phrase; "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God" illustrating a combining of the national and religious elements.⁷ Equally important is the phrase "to take refuge beneath the wings of the Lord."⁸ At a later date and in a slightly modified form, this phrase becomes almost a technical term for conversion.

Bamberger has cited three Biblical passages which are

important to the theme of conversion. In Isaiah 56: 1-8, we note with Blank that the *גֵּרִים וְנִכְרִים* ^U the foreigners who joined themselves (to the Lord) are addressed. This class of foreigners is assured that fidelity to God and the covenant will given them an established place in the Temple and its worship, "for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."⁹ The foreigner need not fear that the Lord will cut him off from His people. Bamberger suggests that:

This passage plainly indicates that there were a fairly numerous group of converts, whose position in Jewish life was rather uncertain. Apparently they were treated coldly by some of the Jews, whose influence the prophet was trying to overcome.¹⁰

Furthermore, because the Isaiah passage places repeated stress on the observance of the Sabbath, an emphasis which is also found in Nehemiah 13 and in Jeremiah 17:19, it is believed to date from the same period as the books of Nehemiah, Jeremiah and Ruth.¹¹ It is interesting to note that the passage is addressed to those who have allied themselves with the Jewish God and His worship and does not hint of any ulterior motive.

A second passage, found in Esther 8:17, relates that after the Jews had become triumphant "many from among the peoples of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them." The particular value of this passage is found in the usage of the word MITYAHADIM.

We meet here for the first time a term for conversion to Judaism (MITYAHADIM) which probably indicates that when the sentence was written, conversion was a practice sufficiently familiar to have

a regular verb to describe it. Hityahed, however, is not employed to any extent in later Hebrew. The Book of Esther...probably dates from the Maccabean period.¹²

The third phrase which Bamberger cites is found in Ps. 118:10-12. "All nations compass me about; verily in the name of the Lord I will cut them off..." In this phrase the word pnk could be interpreted to mean - "I will force them to be circumcised."¹³ If Bamberger's assertion is correct, it is possible that the Psalm in Maccabean "and refers to the conquest and forcible conversion of the Idumeans and Itureans."¹⁴ But such an interpretation is most uncertain.

What is certain and can be shown in Bamberger's research and exposition is the usage of the word ger "ger."

In the BIBLE the word ger means a foreigner resident in Palestine. It is frequently joined by "and" to the word Toshab, meaning the same thing, and usually translated "sojourner." In Rabbinic Hebrew, the term ger means an actual convert, although sometimes for the sake of accuracy, the convert is referred to as "righteous convert" (ger zedek), "true convert" (ger Emet) or "convert who is a partner to the covenant" (ger ben berit). For the resident alien the Rabbis coin the phrase "ger toshat."¹⁵

In the literature of the Hellenistic period we find considerable information about converts and organized missionary movements.¹⁶ It has been suggested that the following elements may account for the new surge and intensity of Jewish proselytism.

1. "The decay of Jewish nationality lead to greater stress on the notion of the Jewish group as essentially

religious."¹⁷ Thus the shift in orientation from a national grouping to a primarily religious group allowed for conversion of "those who were nationally non-Israelite."¹⁸

2. "The triumph of monotheism in Israel had transformed Judaism into a genuinely universalistic religion."¹⁹ Israel now had the responsibility to bring others to know and accept their God.²⁰

3. "The extending diaspora tended to increase Jewish self-consciousness among the colonists in new places."²¹ Clarification of Judaism's basis and goals became necessary.²²

4. "The contact of Judaism and Hellenism in particular, must have spurred the Jew, first to apologetic, then to missionary activity. The interest of the Greek in ideas, his pursuit of philosophy, must have led him to examine...the writings and teachings of Judaism."²³

5. "It is generally assumed that the success of the Maccabean revolt led to a renaissance of Jewish pride and enthusiasm and directly stimulated the propaganda for Judaism."²⁴

The works of Josephus and Philo and the Book of Tobit relate further accounts of Jewish proselytism. And Jewish proselytes are not infrequently mentioned in the New Testament.²⁵ It is also of value to note that the success of Jewish proselytism has been attested by certain classical authors who found the conversion practices among the Jews very distasteful.²⁶

The traditional Halakah - the Mishnah and Gemara - specify rather clearly the requirements for proselyte admission.

Within the Halakah Weil has found three basic requirements, two of which are important to our study. (1) Unreserved acceptance of the Torah...²⁷ There is a Baraita which states:

A convert who has accepted all the words of the Torah except one is not to be received. R. Jose b. R. Judah says: He is excluded if he rejects even one small word of the scribal minutiae.²⁸

There is also Aggadic evidence which expands the Halakic view that the Rabbis "wisely refused to admit into the Jewish fold any who could not give unreserved adherence to the Torah."²⁹

(2) Sincerity of the motive for conversion...³⁰ Those who convert in order to marry a Jew or Jewess; those who convert because of a dream; "lion converts" (IIK.17:24ff.); those who convert because of the fear of the Jews or their avenging deity; those who convert for the sake of worldly advancement - are all suspect.³¹ Two out of three authorities state that they are not to be accepted as converts.³² The dissenting opinion is followed by a statement of Rab:

The Halakah is: they are converts, and we do not discourage them as we (ordinarily) discourage converts at the start, but accept them. And they require a cordial reception (kerub panim) - perhaps they have converted for the sake of the Name.³³

Rab's view has become the accepted Halakah specifically because there is no way to accurately determine the true motives of conversion.³⁴ There is an extensive literature dealing with the types of people who were not acceptable for conversion because of Biblical and Post - Biblical injunctions.³⁵ This literature need not be duplicated here. What we do find

in the basic Halakic strains, however, is that "no one should be denied the right to convert because of his origin, and the later Halakic writers do not even raise the question."³⁶

Wacholder has written an extensive account dealing with the treatment or the proselytism theme during the Medieval period.³⁷ Discussing the views of the Franco - German school as reflected in the works of Rashi and the Tosafists and the views of the Spanish school, most notably through the works of Alfasi and Maimonides - Wacholder has shown that no single principle or set of guidelines was available during the Medieval period for all of world Jewry.³⁸ He notes, however, that "the Spanish school represented the Halakah under Moslem rule; the Franco - German, that of the Christian world."³⁹ With respect to the Franco - German school, there is in fact no consistent agreement among the spokesmen as far as the proselyte Halakah is concerned.⁴⁰ There can be little doubt that any amount of zeal for proselytism on the part of the Jews and whatever regulations were instituted for the acceptance of converts - was tempered by the reality of the Christian or Moslem world in which the Jews lived. Both schools concerned themselves with the motives behind conversion, the worthwhile nature of the proselytes in general, the idea of proselytizing as a commandment, circumcision and proof of conversion.⁴¹

Wacholder has also noted that "since the Middle Ages it has been customary for proselytes...to change their names upon conversion."⁴² Among the Jews, male converts usually received

the new name of Obadiah or Abraham. Furthermore, it has been shown that in Jewish communities under Moslem control Obadiah was the preferred name and in the Christian countries Abraham was the more preferable.⁴³ Both names can be found in Talmudic lore and there is mention in Sanhedrin 39b. that Obadiah the prophet was a proselyte.⁴⁴

On the basis of this brief survey of Jewish proselytism, it appears reasonable to draw the following conclusions:

1. During the Patriarchal and Early Biblical period conversion to Judaism primarily involved identification with a national group and secondarily with its religious systems.

2. Since the end of the Biblical period, conversion to Judaism has primarily involved the acceptance of a religious and/or cultural-philosophical system.

3. Jewish law has insisted the the prospective convert accept the Torah without reservation and display sincere motives for his desire to convert; males must be circumcised and immersed in the Mikvah. Females must accept the Torah, have pure motives for converting and attend the Mikvah.⁴⁵

4. During the Middle Ages there was an apparent increase in conversions to Judaism and an attempt was made in the literature of the Spanish and Franco-German schools to deal with the acceptance or rejection of these converts.

In contemporary American Judaism, the Orthodox movement has attempted to closely associate itself with the traditionalism of the past. In its stand on the requirements for

conversion, Orthodoxy has turned to the medieval Shulchan Aruch to enunciate its position and requirements.⁴⁶

1. Instruction in the basic doctrines of Judaism, i.e., the unity of God and the prohibition of idol-worship, must be given.
2. If the candidate for conversion has accepted these root ideas, he is further instructed in the "MITZVOT" (Commandments) including the ritual of Jewish life.
3. The ceremony of circumcision, in the case of a male, may then be performed as a sign that the proselyte has entered into the covenant made between God and the children of Israel.
4. The proselyte, male or female, is then required to undergo ritual immersion in a MIKVAH, a pool of water especially designated for the ritual purification as a symbolic act of purification.
5. A tribunal or court consisting of three learned Jews must attest to the fact that each of these acts has been properly performed. They must further testify to the sincerity of the proselyte, as well as to his knowledge of the basic doctrines and ritual of Judaism.
6. The convert is then given a Hebrew name ("_____ son or daughter, of Abraham,") indicating that he is now considered to be a descendant of the first Hebrew, the Patriarch Abraham.⁴⁷

The Conservative Rabbis have spent considerable time clarifying their position and requirements for conversion. In the 1965 edition of the Rabbi's Manual, several pages are devoted to the subject of conversion. Basically, the Conservative Rabbis' position is that of the Orthodox. Gordon, however, has noted a very significant departure.

While acknowledging that many candidates plan to marry a Jew, the Conservative rabbis do not necessarily regard this as sufficient reason for their refusal to prepare such a candidate for conversion.⁴⁸

The Rabbi's Manual attempts to deal with these "Pro-Forma"

converts by suggesting that:

...through judicious guidance by the rabbi, such a prospective convert may gain a deep and sincere appreciation of the Jewish religion, leading to his or her becoming a "Ger Tzedek" in the fullest sense of the term.⁴⁹

The manual also suggests that at least six to eight months of intensive study should be required of the prospective convert.⁵⁰ Following the period of study the candidate may be examined by a Beth Din consisting of three rabbis or one rabbi and two qualified laymen.⁵¹ Males are required to be circumcised and to be immersed in the Mikvah. Females are required to attend the Mikvah, only.⁵²

We are compelled at this juncture to comment further on the problems of the traditional requirements for conversion as they effect contemporary American Judaism. We have noted that those who convert because of marriage were to be held suspect. And we have already produced studies indicating that most of today's converts come into Judaism through marriage. We have also seen that among the Orthodox and Conservative requirements for conversion there are demands for lengthy study, Mikvah, circumcision and examination by a Beth Din. The function of the Beth Din is to certify that the rite of Mikvah and/or circumcision have taken place, to testify to the sincerity of the convert and to attest to his knowledge of Judaism. Even in the Reform group a period of study is urged. But how reality oriented are these requirements and what are their long and short range effects?

Ehrman and Fenster have suggested that among the Orthodox converts 68 percent come about as the result of marriage. Are 68 percent of Orthodox converts to be suspect or labeled "insincere"? We have no quarrel with the basic requirements for study, but we wonder how many born Jews - Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform - are as firmly grounded in Jewish knowledge as we would expect our converts to be. Is the purpose of study to give the convert an appreciation and understanding of Judaism and Jewish history, or is the study itself a form of initiation rite? Perhaps both the convert and future spouse should be required to study.

What psychological effects do the Mikvah and circumcision have upon the "Pro-Forma" converts? Traditionally one of the functions of the Mikvah was to wash off the taint of the Gentile past. The "sincere" convert needed to "come clean" before he could become a Jew. If a potential convert is made aware of these reasons, can he help but feel inferior to his born-Jewish partner? Will the circumcision of his adult penis give him a sense of partnership in a "covenantal relationship," or is it more likely to produce feelings of humiliation and loss of masculinity? In fact, how many Jews today are concerned about Gentiles being inferior and impure? How many view circumcision as an indication of fidelity to a "covenantal relationship"? How many Jews believe that every word of Torah is binding and significant?

One can understand and appreciate the medieval distrust and

hatred of the Gentiles who were seen as untutored, illiterate, vicious thugs who delighted in the persecution of the Jews. Unquestionably the suspicions about converts were well founded and necessary. But while the Middle Ages have passed, much of the distrust toward the Gentile converts persists among the Jews and is evident in their attitude toward proselytes who would enter Judaism through marriage.

In our introductory chapter we indicated that Eichhorn made the results of his study available in 1954. Yet a study of the C.C.A.R.'s Rabbi's Manual, published in 1961, gives no indication that the C.C.A.R. has given any attention to the implications of Eichhorn's findings. Nowhere does it inform the rabbi that the majority of proselytes will most likely be seeking to convert for the sake of marriage. It gives no indication of being concerned with the findings of one of its own member rabbis. The manual reminds the rabbi that "Judaism welcomes all sincere converts without regard to racial or national origin or to their former religious faith." However, the Rabbinical Assembly's Rabbi's Manual offers a much more lengthy discussion of the conversion problem and offers the following consideration.

The principal motivation of an overwhelming number of candidates for conversion is the desire to marry a specific Jewish individual, a motive which, per se, is not viewed enthusiastically by Jewish law and tradition. However, through judicious guidance by the rabbi, such a prospective convert may gain a deep and sincere appreciation of the Jewish religion,

leading to his or her becoming a
in the fullest sense of the term.⁵³

The Reform Jewish position has required continual clarification. Repeated attempts have been made to clarify and modernize the requirements for proselytes. One of the early issues focused on the problem of requiring circumcision of the male converts. At the Pittsburgh Conference of 1885, however, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That inasmuch as the so-called Abrahamitic rite is by many of the most competent rabbis no longer considered as a conditio sine qua non of receiving male Gentiles into the fold of Judaism, and inasmuch as a new legislation on this and kindred subjects is one of the most imperative and practical demands of our reform movement, a committee of five, one of them to be the President of the conference, be intrusted with forming a full report, to be submitted for final action to the next Conference.⁵⁴

The next conference was the New York Conference of 1892. Final action was taken on the so called "Initiatory Rites of Proselytes."

Resolved, That the Central Conference of American Rabbis, assembled this day in the city of New York, considers it lawful and proper for any officiating Rabbi, assisted by no less than two associates, and in the name and with the consent of his congregation, to accept into the sacred covenant of Israel and declare fully affiliated to the congregation ^{de facto} any honorable and intelligent person, who desires such affiliation, without any initiatory rite, ceremony or observance whatever; provided, such person be sufficiently acquainted with the faith, doctrine and religious usages of Israel; that nothing derogatory to such person's moral and mental character is suspected; that it is his or her free will and choice to embrace the cause of Judaism, and that he or she declare verbally and in a document signed and sealed before such

officiating Rabbi and his associates his or her intention and firm resolve:

1. To worship the One, Sole and Eternal God, and none besides Him.
2. To be conscientiously governed in his or her doings and omissions in life by God's laws ordained for the child and image of the Maker and Father of all, the sanctified son or daughter of the divine commandment.
3. To adhere in life and death, actively and faithfully, to the sacred cause and mission of Israel, as marked out in Holy Writ. Be it furthermore

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to report to this Conference formulas of the two documents, viz., one to be signed by the proselyte and witnesses, to remain in the hands of the officiating Rabbi, and another to be signed by the officiating Rabbi and his associates, to be delivered to the proselyte.

All of which is respectfully submitted to the honorable body by your committee.

Isaac M. Wise, Chairman.⁵⁵

The Rabbi's Manual (C.C.A.R.) states that "Judaism welcomes all sincere converts without regard to racial or national origin or to their former faith."⁵⁵ It also suggests that a suitable period of instruction be offered by a rabbi or "some other qualified person."⁵⁶ The acceptance by the candidate of the requirement for instruction assures the rabbi that the prospective proselyte has sufficient knowledge of Judaism and "is a person of responsible character who is sincerely desirous of living as a Jew."⁵⁶

Within the Reform movement, there has developed a genuine concern for the proselyte as an individual. In recent years the Central Conference of American Rabbis has expressed a desire to learn about the effects of conversion and of the

conversion ceremony.⁵⁷ Dr. Eugene Mihaly has suggested that attempts be made to find out whether or not the converts are "accepted by the Jewish and the general community."⁵⁸ He has also stated that:

We urgently need studies on the effect of conversion under the emotional stress of courtship, family pressures and premarital tensions. What is the long-range psychological impact of the conversion ceremony? What percentage of converts remain with Judaism and how many raise their children as Jews? Does the convert retain his Jewish status in cases where the marriage is dissolved through death or divorce?⁵⁹

The Reform Jewish conversion ceremony, as outlined in the Rabbi's Manual demands very little of the convert and except for the questions asked of the convert and one or two of the brief readings which it includes, the ceremony seems very much like an abbreviated week day service. The five questions asked of the proselyte are worth consideration.⁶⁰

1. Do you of your own free will seek admittance into the Jewish faith?
2. Have you given up your former faith and severed all other religious affiliations?

These two questions must be answered by a "yes" if the service is to continue. But it is almost impossible at this stage of the conversion preparation for them to be answered otherwise.

3. Do you pledge your loyalty to Judaism and to the Jewish People amid all circumstances and conditions?
4. Do you promise to establish a Jewish home and to participate actively in the life of the Synagogue and of the Jewish

community?

Questions three and four are vague enough and open to such a variety of interpretations that it would be difficult for the potential convert not to answer again in the affirmative.

5. If you should be blessed with children, do you promise to rear them in the Jewish faith?

This question is judiciously placed and worded. It is the last question asked of the proselyte and its ramifications are probably the furthest removed from the situation at the time of conversion. Consequently, the Reform conversion ceremony seems less like an initiatory rite or passage rite and more like a welcoming ceremony with mild religious overtones. It should not be surprising then, that the converts whom we interviewed, some whose conversion ceremony had taken place less than a year before the interview, could remember little about the make-up of the ceremony itself. In fact, it was often felt that the Reform conversion ceremony itself was rather anti-climatic.⁶¹

Because the Reform Jewish conversion service is itself vague, it is difficult to determine whether some or all of its goals have been achieved by the converts whom we studied. What we have attempted to learn, therefore, is whether the conversion program and ceremony facilitated in any way the socialization of the converted partner into the Jewish group. Chapter three is an analysis of the data obtained from our respondents, and Chapter four presents our conclusions and inferences.

Chapter III

DAYTON DATA: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter we are concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the data furnished by the nineteen couples who responded to the questionnaires which were mailed out in the Dayton area. We are also interested in the information supplied by eleven of the nineteen couples who allowed us to come into their homes and to interview them in depth.

As was noted in the introduction, twenty-nine sets of questionnaires were mailed out to the Dayton area and were accompanied by a letter of explanation and a reply card for those who were also willing to be interviewed. Nineteen of the twenty-nine couples responded to the questionnaires in a constructive manner, one sent us a note indicating that they were not interested and nine couples made no response, though sufficient postage was supplied for returning the questionnaire packets. As will be shown by the data received, the nineteen couples who did respond to our inquiry were successfully married couples and had no necessary fears or problems which might have been observable through a careful analysis of the questionnaire data. It is possible that some of the other couples may not have responded due to problems which they had in relation to the marriage itself. It is also possible that the lack of response was due to a desire for privacy, or a misunderstanding of the research purposes.

That the researcher was a rabbinic student who would be ordained within a year, too, may have had some influence on the

decision to respond or not to respond. The researcher may have been seen as an ecclesiastic authority threatening to the validity of the marriage. It is also possible that the last contact some of the non-respondents had with a rabbi was at the conversion ceremony and wedding. Another rabbinic encounter might help to stir up feelings of guilt and anxiety - particularly if the conversion were a token or pure "Pro Forma" conversion.

Section A is an analysis of Basic Background Considerations of the converts and their partners. We were interested in ascertaining the following data:

1. Age of converts at time of conversion and their sex
2. Highest Level of secular education for convert and partner
3. Religious background of converts
 - A. Religion of parents
 - B. Formal religious education
 - C. Church attendance of parents
4. Religious background of Jewish partner
 - A. Religion of parents
 - B. Formal religious education
 - C. Temple or Synagogue attendance of parents

In the nineteen couples studied, it was found that all of the Jewish partners were second or third generation native born Americans and only one of the converted partners was foreign born. The age range for the Jewish partners at the time of marriage was 22 - 44, the mean age being slightly over 28 years. The age range of the converted partners at the time of marriage was 19 - 40, the mean age being 24.5 years. The

length of marriage for the various couples ranged from 3 months - 12 years. Eighteen out of nineteen converts were women. Table I, illustrates the information for each of the nineteen couples.

Table I
Convert's Age at Conversion,
Jewish Partner's Age at Marriage
and Years Married

Couple Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Converts Age At Conversion	22	41	24	30	25	21	25	23	19	19
Partners Age At Marriage	29	40	26	31	26	38	31	23	26	22
Years Married	8	3½	12	10	9m	6m	5	2	9½	6½

Couple Number	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Converts Age At Conversion	25	26	29	22	29	25	28	24	28
Partners Age At Marriage	22	25	27	25	32	32	30	32	31
Years Married	4½	11	4½	5	4	7	3m	8m	12

Ehrman and Fenster have indicated that among the Orthodox converts studied, 61.7 percent were between the ages of 21 - 35 at the time of conversion.¹ Eichhorn, due to the nature of his study, is not able to furnish data relevant to the ages of the converts or partners. Goldstein and Goldscheider have indicated that the age ranges for the converts and Jewish partners considered in our study are the years when conversion

is most likely to occur.²

Goldstein and Goldscheider have also noted that among the 5,140 couples represented in their analysis of the Providence Survey "232 or 4.5 percent were intermarriages, 4.4 percent involving a Jewish male whose wife was not born Jewish and only 0.1 percent representing a Jewish female whose husband was born non-Jewish."³ Furthermore, they suggest "the higher intermarriage rate among Jewish males compared to Jewish females conforms to the pattern observed in almost all other communities."⁴ We have noted that 18 of 19 converts in our sampling were women.

Why is there a greater tendency among Jewish males to marry non-Jewish females than there is for Jewish females to marry non-Jewish males? Because the male is the usual organizer and arranger of dates, he can narrow or widen his field of choice as he so pleases. He is less likely to be influenced by family pressure than is the Jewish female and more willing to experiment in his dating choices. He may have his own stereotype of Jewish girls as being materialistic, snobby, and aggressive - while non-Jewish girls may be viewed as being less materialistic, more easily satisfied, and less demanding. He may have his own doubts about his ability to adequately satisfy the needs and desires of his stereotyped Jewish female. Conversely, it would appear that the Jewish female is less willing to date non-Jewish boys and more influenced by family. Among Jewish families there is a tendency to encourage males to

become professional people and to encourage females to seek professionals for mates. The high percentage of professional men among the Jews could influence Jewish females to remain within the Jewish fold in their choice of mates.

The non-Jewish female may initially find that the Jewish male, purely because he is not Christian, is unique. She may consider her goals in life - marriage, successful family life, financial security, and social status - and decide that her chances are best with a Jewish male. This would be particularly so if she had her own stereotype of Jewish males being successful financial people and good family figures. The non-Jewish male may shy away from the Jewish female because he too fosters a stereotype of her being materialistic, snobby, aggressive, and possibly anti-Christian.

The availability of Jewish contacts is another factor to be considered. But in respect to the Dayton sample such a factor is certainly minimal. We have also not dismissed the possibility of love between a Jew and a non-Jew at first sight or meeting. We are inclined, however, to believe that such a possibility belongs more in the realm of romanticism than in the real of reality as it effects conversion studies. That the majority of the Dayton Jewish males were professional people is not a fact to be taken lightly. It may be that professional people, because of their education and contacts are more lenient in their religious beliefs and less concerned with the religious background of their potential mates.

Among the couples studied it was found that each partner had completed at least a high school education. Table II illustrates the highest level of education completed for each partner in each couple.

Table II

Highest Level of Secular Education
Completed by Each Partner in Each Couple.
(C - College; H - High School; B - Business
School; G - Graduate School)

Couple Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jewish Partner	C	C	C	H	H	G	G	G	G	H
Converted Partner	H	B	C	H	H	C	C	C	H	H
Couple Number	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Jewish Partner	H	G	C	C	C	H	G	C	G	
Converted Partner	C	C	C	C	C	H	C	C	H	

As can be seen in Table II, the Jewish partner's educational background was almost always equal to and in eight couples higher than that of the converted partner. Only in one couple did the Jewish partner have a lower level of education than that of the converted partner. In couple number 11 where this educational difference is noted, the convert was a male. Goldstein and Goldscheider have already shown that the proportion

of Jews who complete college and graduate educational programs is greater than it is among the non-Jews on a national scale.⁵ This holds true for both males and females.⁶ The fact that women in general do not pursue academic studies beyond high school is important in respect to eighteen of our converts being women.

In our inquiries concerned with the religious background of the parents, it was found that the converted partner often came from a family in which one of the parents had experienced a conversion or where there was a mixed marriage between the parents. Table III illustrates our findings.

Table III

PREVIOUS RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OR IDENTIFICATION
OF CONVERTED PARTNERS AND THEIR PARENTS

Methodist	2
Catholic	2
Brethren	1
Lutheran	2
None	1
Both parents originally Catholic but became Presbyterian	1
Unspecified Protestant	5
Woman was originally Southern Baptist, converted to Catholicism as a child and later to Reform Judaism	1
Methodist and Church of Brethern	1
Methodist and Catholic	1
Catholic and Protestant	2

When the Jewish partners were asked what the religion of their parents was, the following responses were obtained:

Orthodox	2
Conservative	1
Jewish	16

As can be seen by the responses, rarely was any distinction

made between the various branches of Judaism. The lack of distinction in the answers may be due to the manner in which the question was asked: "What was the religion of your parents?" We might have been more successful had we asked: "Would you consider your parents' religion to have been Orthodox Judaism - Conservative Judaism - Reform Judaism - Non Practicing Jews - (underline one)." It may also be possible that these Jews who married converts see no need to distinguish between Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism. They may feel that "A Jew is a Jew is a Jew." Such a belief would be beneficial psychologically to the partner of a convert. It would mean that a convert could be considered as much of a Jew as an Orthodox born Jew.

Among the Jewish partners, one came from a home in which the mother was a convert and one came from a family in which a sister had married a convert.

Both partners were asked whether they had had any formal religious education and if so, for how long. Table IV illustrates the data.

Table IV
YEARS OF FORMAL RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Couple Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jewish Partner	3	0	10	12	4	3	5	9	7	7
Converted Partner	2	7	0	6	8	K-C	PK- HS	15	1	5
Couple Number	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Jewish Partner	10	8	4	8	0	9	6	4	0	
Converted Partner	0	8	6	?	0	0	0	2	8	

K-C - Kindergarten through College
PK-HS - Pre-Kindergarten through High School

Table IV clearly shows that the amounts of formal religious education for the converts and their partners often varied considerably. But in only three cases did we find that the Jewish partner had had no formal religious training. And in two of these cases the converted partner had had seven or eight years of religious education. One would have expected that the Jewish partner would have been the one more likely to convert. In one of the three cases neither partner had received any formal religious education. From our limited data, it would appear that length of religious education has little if any effect on one's decision to marry a convert. In our

interview we asked the Jewish partners whether they felt that if they had received more formal religious education they would have been less inclined to marry non-Jews. None felt that their length of religious education did or would have influenced them in their selection of mates.

We also sought to obtain information on the frequency of religious attendance by the parents of the Jewish partners and converts. Our reason for desiring such information was based on the following premise: Attendance at organized communal religious services is an integral part of a child's religious education. If the parents attend such services regularly the children will be more inclined to accept the importance of religion and to integrate it into their pattern of life. Consequently, it was felt that if the parents did not attend religious services with any consistency the children would not view religion as having any serious effects and/or values for them. A religion which seemingly offered little of value would not be difficult to reject in favor of conversion, or would not serve as any form of deterrent in mate choice. Table V presents our findings for the parents.

Table V

FREQUENCY OF PARENTS RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE

	Jewish Partner	Converted Partner
Frequently	3	8
Occasionally	7	4
Rarely	7	4
Never	2	3

Goldstein and Goldscheider have studied the patterns of attendance at religious services for over 1700 cases of second and third generation Jews (Providence Study) and the results of their data would indicate that our data on the Jewish parents is indicative of the norm in American life. And if such a pattern of attendance is normative, it would seem unlikely that such religious attendance or non-attendance by Jewish parents would have any effect upon a child's decision to remain or to marry Jewish. (If we were to base a study of conversion strictly upon parents religious attendance among Jews, we would have to expect a higher percentage of inter-marriage among their children.)

In order to fully analyze the information received from the converted partners about their parents' frequency of religious attendance, it would be necessary to check our findings against certain national polls. However, many of our converts came from families in which there was a mixed marriage, a history of conversion by the parents or where the religion of the parents was some unspecified form of Protestantism. No statistics are available for all of these cases. Two further points are important. In those cases where the converted partner's parents were part of a mixed marriage one partner may have been more inclined to attend religious services than the other. We have no real way of knowing which parent the convert thought to be the more representative. It is also possible that the converted partner purposely tried to underestimate the religious attend-

ance of the parents in an attempt to justify her conversion and rejection of Christianity.

Section B is an analysis of our Dayton data concerning the Reasons for Conversion to Reform Judaism. We were interested in ascertaining the following data.

1. Reasons for Conversion
 - a. Reasons Offered by Jewish Partner on Questionnaire
 - b. Reasons Offered by Converted Partner on Questionnaire and in Interviews
2. Possible Influences on Decision to Convert
 - a. Influence of Jewish Partner as Seen in Questionnaire Data and in Interviews
 - b. Influence of Family of Jewish Partner
3. Reasons for Converting to Reform Judaism
 - a. Reasons Offered in Interviews with Converted Partners
 - b. Reasons Offered in Interviews with Jewish Partners

Each Jewish partner was asked to indicate whether he felt that his partner had converted to Judaism because of marriage, theology or intellectual considerations. The converted partners were also asked why they converted and were given the same three choices for answers. By means of these questions we sought to determine three facts of conversion: (1) What was the basic reason offered for the conversion by the Jewish partner, (2) What was the basic reason for conversion offered by the converted partner and (3) Was there agreement between Jewish partner and converted partner on the basic reason for conversion. Table VI illustrates the responses of each couple

to the following questions:

JEWISH PARTNER:

Why did your partner convert? Underline appropriate answer

MARRIAGE

THEOLOGY

INTELLECTUAL REASONS

CONVERTED PARTNER:

Why did you convert? Underline appropriate answer.

MARRIAGE

THEOLOGY

INTELLECTUAL REASONS

Table VI

REASONS GIVEN FOR CONVERSION
BY JEWISH AND CONVERTED PARTNERS

Couple Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Converted Partner	M	M	M	T	M	M	M	M	MT	MT
Jewish Partner	T	M	M	TI	TI	I	M	M	M	MTI
Years Married	8	3½	12	10	9m	6m	5	2	9½	6½

M - Marriage

T - Theology

I - Intellectual Reasons

It is possible to indicate a combination of these themes.

Couple Number	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Converted Partner	MT	TI	M	MT	MI	M	TI	MT	M
Jewish Partner	T	T	M	MT	M	M	I	M	M
Years Married	4½	11	4½	5	4	7	3m	8m	12

In Table VI we included the information pertaining to the length of marriage, to indicate that the length of marriage is not necessarily a function of the understanding between partners as to the reasons for conversion. In couple Number 1, married for 8 years, the converted partner offered MARRIAGE as the reason for conversion, while the Jewish partner believed THEOLOGY to have been the major reason. A similar situation can be seen in couples 5 and 6 where they have been married for 9 months and 6 months respectively. Couples 3, 12 and 19 should be given adequate attention. These couples, married 12, 11 and 12 years, have indicated that each partner shares the same reasons for conversion. We wonder whether this was always so or whether some confrontation or discussion after a period of marriage produced this mutual understanding.

To further understand the reasons for conversion, each of the couples whom we interviewed were asked to discuss the reasons for conversion. The converted partner was asked at some point during the interview; "What would you say was your basic reason for converting?" or "If you had to give one reason for converting, what would it be?" The following responses were offered.

1. "To have one religion - something to hold on to..."
2. "Love..."
3. "In order to be married by a man of the cloth...instead of civil."
4. "First of all we found out we couldn't have any children together - so we wanted to adopt, and by now I had known enough about the religion and I thought it was kinda foolish for me not to convert...this is my religion, all my friends are Jewish - my whole life is the Jewish way of life..."

5. "Basic interest...stability of children of future...desire to live with people of this calibre..."
6. "Definitely the stimulus was my husband..."
7. "We discussed it and decided we could be happier, it would be better for our children if I did..."
8. "He said he would not marry me unless I converted...I told him I would take instruction and see whether I felt I could believe in the religion..."
9. "For the (future) children..."
10. "To tie our future relationships or our relationships with each other to make them more closely knot - very concerned with having a child..."

We note that in all of the verbal responses, love or marriage emerges as the dominant reason for the conversion. In comparing the responses by the converted partners on the questionnaires and in the interviews, it appears that some of the converts would like to believe that the conversion was the result of intellectual or theological considerations. However, when asked to give an immediate response to the verbal question, "Why did you convert?" - it becomes clear that the dominant reason was love or MARRIAGE.

In our inquiry concerning the possible influences on the decision to convert, we asked the Jewish partner the following two questions.

JEWISH PARTNER

Did you request that your partner convert to Judaism?

#62	YES	8	NO	11
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Did your family influence you to request that your partner convert to Judaism?

#29	YES	2	NO	15	NO ANSWER	2
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The responses to question number 62 suggest that the families of the Jewish partners had very little direct influence on any

decision of the non-Jewish partner to convert or on the Jewish partner to request conversion. Question number 29 presents an interesting insight into the possible reasons for conversion. Discussion of the responses to this question will be more valuable when considered in conjunction with portions of the interview data. In the interviews we sought to further ascertain whose idea it was to convert and whether the suggestion had really been that of the Jewish partner. Below we have listed the comments offered by the Jewish partners.

We talked it (the possibility of conversion) out ourselves and I told her that I couldn't possibly do it (convert to Christianity) myself...and I believe I told her that I wanted my children brought up Jewish...she had been searching for something herself...we entered (the conversion classes) together with the intent that she was going to learn something about Judaism, but not with the intent of converting before marriage, necessarily...for my part hopefully that she would at some time make a conversion...but again I wanted this to be more of a natural thing...

I wasn't insistent upon the conversion...if it was something she wanted to do, fine...

I guess it was my idea...actually we sat down and talked about it...because I didn't know if she wanted to or not...I told her if she didn't want to she didn't have to...

When I asked her to marry me, the first thing she said was could we get married in the Temple...then I began to think who would marry us and where...she decided to convert...

I think it was a mutual decision...we weighed the pros and cons and decided Judaism would be the best course for us to follow...I think she made the decision, though it was arrived at collectively...

(basic reason for conversion)...marriage...I think now she believes the religious attitudes and the religion...feels Jewish...(I had suggested conversion)...she was a bit doubtful at first...I just told her to think about it...

The basic reason why I wanted her to convert was for the children...she would feel more Jewish...

I wasn't going to push conversion at all...I felt that when he converted, if he converted...it was going to be because he wanted to...

I could say it's me...she's always been searching...she had talked a lot about other religions and been to a lot of churches...so this was her answer to every question she ever had. I think (the decision to convert) hers mostly...she was searching for something and she found it

I think my wife realized that I would never convert to Christianity and it would be better for there to be no religion in the family...I never pushed it...I would say (the decision to convert) it was hers...happier marriage...wanted to satisfy me...

The above interview data illustrates that in seven out of ten cases the Jewish partners indicated the basic reason for conversion was the marriage and the possible children that might issue from it. We also find that in nine out of the ten cases, the Jewish partner had at least been responsible for introducing the possibility of conversion, even if not insistent upon it. The data received from the interviews sheds new light on the interpretation of question Number 29. While eleven of nineteen Jewish partners responded that they did not request their partners to convert to Judaism, they evidently made it known that they had no intentions of converting to Christianity and that they wanted their children to be raised as Jews. It is possible that the prospective spouse then made the decision to convert in order to raise her children as her husband had requested and in order that there be one religion, rather than two or possibly none, in the home. We find then that the Jewish partners need not necessarily have made a direct request for the conversion; some made known certain

requests and feelings which could not be appreciated unless a conversion would take place. Question Number 29 and the interview data also suggest that conversion is sometimes requested, directly or indirectly, for the sake of family peace and unity and the guidance of the future children. In some instances it becomes clear that religion in the family is important because it is socially acceptable and desirable to be religious or at least to be identified with a particular religious persuasion.

As we stated at the beginning of this section, we were interested to learn why Reform Judaism, rather than Orthodox or Conservative Judaism was chosen as the religious identification and affiliation of the convert and spouse. Was this decision arrived at as the result of comparative studying? Was it the easiest form of Judaism? Did the converts just accept the religious affiliation of their Jewish partners? In the questionnaires we asked the converted partners: "What was your reason for deciding to convert to Reform Judaism?" Reform was underlined because we hoped the respondents would express their reasons for selecting Reform as opposed to the Conservative and Orthodox branches of Judaism. The following answers of the converts are taken from the questionnaires and are not edited.

My future husband was Reform and it fulfilled everyday living

My husband and I thought we would understand and enjoy the services more because most of the service is in English

Husband's family were Reform

My husband and his family were and are Reform

At that time my husband was a member of Reform Temple

I thoroughly enjoy the spirit of the community, goals toward charity, justice, sensitivity, and personal development. I appreciate the individuality experienced here as well which provides opportunity for flexibility of thought

My husband was Reform

Twentieth century beliefs in religion and partner's belief

Marriage and belief in Jewish religion

Reform Judaism conforms somewhat with the times and is where my husband belonged

Because of my wife's affiliation and its parallel to my thinking

Having been married five years - knew a lot about the "stomach" religion - desired to know theology

Philosophy and teaching are acceptable to my beliefs

As my husband is a member of a Reform congregation, I naturally appealed to his Rabbi for my instruction and later conversion

Inability to accept Orthodox or Conservative teachings

My husband is Reform

I liked the Temple in Dayton and they had a conversion class

Because my husband is a member of a Reform Temple. Because the theology appealed to me

The statements given by the converted partners reflect four basic considerations involved in the decision to convert to Reform Judaism:

Jewish partner and his or her family were Reform	12
Orthodoxy and Conservatism were unacceptable	1
Reform was intellectually appealing	3
The Reform Temple had a conversion class	1

In the twelve cases where the converts noted that their reason

for converting to Reform Judaism was due to their partner's affiliation or suggestion, it becomes clear that Reform Judaism was not chosen because it was the most suitable or viable expression of Judaism, but rather because it was the religion of the Jewish partner. Thus these twelve converts converted to Reform not because of its liberalism, relevancy or modernity, but because their spouses were Reform. One convert stated that the reason for converting to Reform was because of an "Inability to accept Orthodox and Conservative teachings." This is probably more of a rationalization than a statement of fact, since this convert never seriously studied the other two movements. Four converts found Reform intellectually appealing. It is possible however, that Reform Judaism provided a definite structure and religious framework into which their already formulated religious and philosophical thoughts fit. One convert stated: "I liked the Temple in Dayton and they had a conversion class." In this case the fact that the Dayton Reform Temple conducts a conversion class may have been the decisive factor in deciding to convert to Reform Judaism. This is particularly possible since the husband of this convert is a non-practicing Jew who would not have urged conversion or any particular branch of Judaism.

When we asked the Jewish partner: "What was your partner's reason for deciding to convert to Reform Judaism?" the following responses were made.

Marriage

Because service primarily in English

Had to in order to be married by a Reform Rabbi

To have a common religion under the same roof and also to have a belief in God itself instead of the son

Because I was a member of Temple Israel

She enjoyed the people...was most liberal

To share a common religion - feeling it was best choice

Family and self Reform

Found it rewarding and thought it would make marriage better

I have always been Reform and this was the only segment my husband was exposed to

Marriage ~~was~~ is my religion

Reform Judaism is my religion and after studying she decided it was acceptable to her

Wanted religion in our home

My religion

Belief in Jewish principles and ideals

Marriage

We agreed children would be raised Jewish and children would be raised same. To have Jewish marriage conversion was required.

The statements given by the Jewish partners suggest five possible considerations on the part of the convert with respect to her decision to convert:

Marriage	5
Religion of self and family	7
In order to have religion in home	2
Could understand service	1
Principles and ideals	2

As shown above, in five of the couples the Jewish partner felt that the conversion to Reform was purely for the sake of the marriage, and in seven of the cases it was because Reform just happened to be his religion. In other words, in twelve out of nineteen cases studied, the Jewish partners felt that the converted partner converted to Reform Judaism for the sake of the marriage and/or because it was the religious preference of the Jewish partner. It would seem therefore, that there is basic agreement between the partners in these twelve couples. And it is clear also that the attraction to Reform Judaism was due to its possibilities of facilitating a successful marriage and family life. Those who suggested that Reform Judaism was chosen "in order to have religion in the home," allow for a variety of interpretation:

1. We should have some religion in the home and it may as well be Reform -
2. My husband (wife) is Reform so I will be Reform -

Looking at the five areas which the Jewish partners suggest as possible reasons for the convert's decision to identify with Reform Judaism, it would appear that only two Jewish partners give their converted partners much credit for choosing Reform Judaism for any reason other than family peace or intelligibility of the Temple service. The data suggests to us, therefore, that many of the Jewish partners do not view Reform Judaism as any special or unique expression of Judaism. It just happens to be their religion... The very wording of the question asked the

the Jewish partners is such that it requires the respondent to project his attitudes onto his partner. Consequently, a committed or knowledgeable or serious Reform Jew might see principles and ideals as the reason for selecting Reform Judaism. However, our data indicates that this occurred only twice in all the cases studied. The remaining fifteen responses may be indications of the Jewish partner's lack of concern or knowledge about Reform Judaism. These fifteen responses also suggest that perhaps the Jewish partners are unable to conceive of anyone converting to Reform Judaism, especially someone who is about to be part of a marriage, for any reason other than marriage. Such people would always consider their partners to be converts, while the partners will see themselves as Jews.

Section C is an analysis of our Dayton data concerning the Acceptance, Alienation and Affiliations of the Convert after Conversion. We were interested in ascertaining the following information.

1. Did Conversion Facilitate Acceptance by any Particular Group?
 - A. In-Laws
 - B. Parents
 - C. Jewish Community
2. Did the Conversion Mean More to the Convert's Jewish Friends or Non-Jewish Friends?
3. To Whom did the Conversion Mean the Most?
 - A. Jewish Partner
 - B. Converted Partner
4. Do Converts Feel Acceptance Within the Jewish Community?

5. Do Converts Feel Part of the Jewish Peoplehood?
6. Does Conversion Produce Changes in Attitude or Identity?
7. What Social, Fraternal and Philanthropic Affiliations do the Converts Maintain?

In order to obtain the information we desired on the question of conversion facilitating acceptance we introduced certain questions into the questionnaires and into the interviews. In the questionnaire, we asked the following questions.

Jewish Partner: Do you feel that the ceremony of conversion facilitated your partner's acceptance by - underline answer (s) -

8	Your parents	6	Yourself
3	Friends	12	Jewish community
4	No Answer		

Converted Partner: Do you feel that the ceremony of conversion facilitated your acceptance by - underline answer (s) -

14	Your In-Laws	5	Spouse
3	Friends	6	Jewish community
4	No answer		

We find that while the Jewish partner has already indicated that the conversion was important to him, he sees it as being even more important to the Jewish community and to his parents. The converted partner, however, feels that the ceremony of conversion primarily facilitated her acceptance by her in-laws and only secondarily with the Jewish community (with which she

probably had had very little contact or concern anyway.) It would seem that the convert is more concerned with acceptance by her newly acquired family, while the Jewish partner is very much concerned with the way the existing Jewish community will look upon his wife and ultimately upon him. The sanctions and possible prohibitions of the Jewish community become very important to the Jewish male when he decides to wed a non-Jewish female. Unless he accepts the community's recognized procedure for marrying non-Jews, i.e., conversion, he may find himself psychologically, socially and perhaps financially estranged from that community. The convert on the other hand does not yet know or appreciate this communal structure and wants immediately to lessen any possible family friction. Interestingly, there seems to be rather mutual agreement that the conversion itself was not necessary for acceptance by the Jewish partner.

Acknowledgement by both sets of parents that after the conversion, the convert is a Jew, is another indication of acceptance. To determine whether such acceptance had in fact occurred, we asked the following sets of questions.

Jewish Partner: Do your parents consider your partner to be Jewish? Do your in-laws consider your partner to be Jewish?

PARENTS:		IN-LAWS:	
17	YES	16	YES
1	NO	2	NO
1	No Answer	1	No Answer

Converted Partner: Do your parents consider you Jewish?
Do your in-laws consider you Jewish?

PARENTS:		IN-LAWS:	
15	YES	17	YES
4	NO	1	NO
		1	No Answer

As can be observed from the responses, both the converts and Jewish partners, in seventeen of the couples, agree that the converted partner is accepted as a Jew by the parents of the Jewish partner. In sixteen cases the Jewish partner expressed the feeling that his in-laws accepted his wife as a Jew, while the converted partners felt they were accepted by their own parents in fifteen of the cases. The lack of complete agreement may be due to the convert's more realistic appraisal of her parents' true feelings. From a statistical standpoint, however, it is clear that the converts are accepted as Jews by both sets of parents.

A third set of questions was asked each partner to determine whether the conversion meant more to their Jewish or non-Jewish friends. We were interested to learn whether or not the couples would agree about which friend the conversion meant the most to. We also sought to determine whether the conversion had any particular significance to the convert's non-Jewish friends. If it were found that the conversion meant more to the non-Jewish friends we would expect peer group rejection and possibly alienation by the former non-Jewish friends.

Jewish Partner: Whom do you think the conversion meant more to, your partner's Jewish friends or non-Jewish friends?

- 13 Jewish Friends
- 2 Non-Jewish Friends
- 4 No Answer

Converted Partner: To whom do you think your conversion meant the most, to your Jewish friends or Non-Jewish friends?

- 14 Jewish Friends
- 1 Non-Jewish Friends
- 4 No Answer

We find that there is basic agreement among the partners that the conversion meant the most to the convert's Jewish friends and that in fact it was of very little importance to the non-Jewish friends. A number of possible interpretations present themselves. It is possible that by the time of conversion the prospective convert no longer maintained a significant relationship with any group of non-Jewish friends. If such a group did exist, its members may not recognize the conversion as anything more than a prerequisite formality for marrying a Jew. Consequently, they may still think of the convert as a Christian who happened to marry a Jew. It is also possible that ^{at} the time of the conversion the convert had very few Jewish friends, but after marriage acquired a certain number. The fact that the conversion was so much more important to the Jewish friends suggests that they might view

the conversion as an indication of sincerity and the convert as a worthy fellow Jew and friend. In fact, marriage without conversion could be viewed negatively and may preclude any possibility of having many Jewish friends.

Whether the conversion meant more to the convert or to the Jewish partner is a question of central importance. If both partners agreed that the conversion meant most to the Jewish partner, we would have to conclude that we were dealing with a basically Pro-Forma conversion. If, however, the partners agree that the conversion meant more to the converted partner, it would be possible to conclude that we were dealing with Authentic Converts and perhaps uncommitted Jewish partners.

In the eleven interviews we asked both partners whom they felt the conversion meant most to. In six of the cases the partners agreed that the conversion meant most to the converted partner and in two cases they agreed that it meant most to the Jewish partner. In the remaining three cases the partners felt that the conversion meant most to the opposite partner. We find therefore that in six out of eleven cases the converts might be classified as Authentic Converts, even though the major stimulus leading to conversion was the marriage itself. In the interviews, in fact, a number of converts remarked that they would not have converted had they not been able to honestly commit themselves to the principles and ideals of Reform Judaism. These converts also indicated that many of the ideas central to Reform had formed the basis of their own

religious thinking prior to conversion and that Reform therefore afforded them a definite and acceptable religious structure in which these ideas might be expanded and practiced. In the two cases where it was reported that the conversion meant the most to the Jewish partners, we suggest that conversion was purely for the sake of marriage. In the remaining three cases the lack of any agreement may be because the Jewish partner felt that the conversion was motivated by purely intrinsic reasons of the convert and the convert felt that the conversion took place because of the desire of the Jewish partner. It is also possible that the conversion had no particular meaning to either partner.

Acceptance within the Jewish community would indicate that conversion as a process of adult socialization had been successful. In the questionnaires we sought to determine if such acceptance had in fact taken place. We asked the Jewish partner - "Do you feel that your partner was helped in gaining acceptance in Jewish circles because he (she) converted?" Thirteen Jewish partners responded in the affirmative. Six felt that the conversion had no effect on acceptance within the Jewish community. However, we also found when we asked the Jewish partners whether they felt their partners would have been accepted in Jewish circles without conversion that thirteen responded in the affirmative. The Jewish partners seem to indicate that conversion does facilitate acceptance by the Jewish community but that one can gain that acceptance

without conversion, too. It may well be that the conversion did not really facilitate the acceptance of the non-Jewish partner, but rather facilitated the acceptance or re-admission of the Jewish partner. The Jewish community may view the conversion as an indication of the Jewish partner's intent to remain part of the Jewish community and to raise his children as Jews. The convert is then viewed as the wife of a Jew and is acceptable to the community. Without conversion the wife would be unacceptable. Her unacceptable status however, is primarily due to her husband's rejection of or withdrawal from the Jewish community and only secondarily due to her being non-Jewish. Conversion then becomes a process of adult socialization not only for the convert but for the Jewish partner who was considered an uncommitted or peripheral Jew. In thirteen cases the converts felt that they would have been accepted without conversion. In the interviews we asked the converts about feelings of acceptance or rejection in the Jewish community and the reasons for the feelings. We found that they unanimously expressed feelings of acceptance. When asked to explain why they felt the acceptance, the following responses were offered:

...probably because I participate and volunteer

...(from a Jewish partner)...As far as her acceptance...she's involved herself quite thoroughly, well received personality...

I don't really think it's conversion, I felt that I was accepted before...I think it's everyone's own personality...

The conversion itself has a great deal to do with it...I think they feel flattered that I decided to become Jewish...to be like them...

We have much in common and they would probably accept me anyway

(from a Jewish partner)...I think they would say she's a better Jew than most...

Yes, I think so...(Is it because you are a convert?) No, most of them don't know

(from a Jewish partner)...I think she's accepted - because she's so involved in Jewish functions...

The unanimous feelings of acceptance and the almost unanimous tendency to minimize the effect of the conversion ceremony itself are points requiring further elaboration. Many of the converts felt that their acceptances were due to their personalities, willingness to become involved in Jewish activities and due to the fact that they shared common interests with other Jews. However, they neglected to note that had it not been for the conversion they would not have been afforded the opportunity to become involved in Jewish activities and their contacts with Jews would have been rather limited. Among many of these converts there was an attempt to give the conversion ceremony the appearance of a mere formality with very little psychological impact or value. Thus, when they state that their acceptance by the Jewish community was due to personality and common interest factors, they may have been attempting to hide the fact that the conversion ceremony, with all its ritualism and religious solemnity, may actually have effected a religious experience for them. Such an experience was not expected and could only be appreciated by one who had experienced it.

Acceptance or rejection by the local Jewish community is one aspect of the desirable socialization process. But to feel a share in the Jewish peoplehood, is another. We were interested to learn whether the converted partners felt part of K'lal Yisroel. In the interviews we asked: "Do you feel part of what we call the peoplehood of Israel?" "Peoplehood of Israel" was explained to mean that all Jews have a common bond and sense of mutual relationship. No attempt was made to more precisely define the term because we also wanted to see if the converts were at all familiar with the concept. The four responses below are indicative of the answers and understanding offered by the converts.

Yes, except that I realize I am not accepted in Israel...as far as the rest of the world, yes...I guess because I feel so proud to be one...

I feel that Jews are related throughout the world because the world never lets us forget we are Jews...

Yes, I really do...when I decided to convert I really made this my way of life and I consider myself Jewish and feel very strong about it...

I feel a...kinship, there is something there but it has never been tested

The comments of the converts which we have noted above, as well as others which we did not include at this point, indicate that the concept of the Jewish peoplehood is not really understood. The comments point out another very interesting aspect of the converts' views of acceptance. The first comment indicates an awareness of not being recognized by Israeli Jewish standards. But a number of converts also mentioned that though

they felt accepted within their own Reform Jewish community, they doubted that they would be acceptable to the Orthodox and Conservative communities. They expressed the idea that they felt acceptance and a possible sense of peoplehood within the national and international Reform Jewish community only. In terms of acceptance, they felt excluded from the Orthodox and Conservative Jewish community by reason of design rather than choice.

Self perception of attitude or identity changes as a result of conversion would be a further indication that some form of socialization had occurred. We asked the converts whether they viewed their conversion as a change in attitude or as a change in identity. The results are noted below.

ATTITUDINAL CHANGE 5

I am still what I am but my beliefs are of course different

I have changed a great many of my viewpoints of religion...
I don't think my basics have changed

Would say that I am the same person as before except that I have taken a little direction which was not there before

IDENTITY CHANGE 2

I didn't feel like I was making a major change in beliefs. I guess I would say it changed my identity more than anything else...I do feel like a Jew now and I associate myself with Jews and I take things harder on the shoulder...

I feel I belong in the Jewish community more than I felt I belonged in any other group

BOTH (Attitude and Identity) 2

SAME AS BEFORE 2

As can be seen by the data reproduced above, nine of the eleven converts felt that they had experienced attitudinal and/or identity changes as a result of the conversion experience. In only two cases did the converts respond that they felt no such changes. These two respondents, however, remarked that the lack of attitudinal or identify alterations was due to the fact that Judaism didn't give them a new set of ideas, ideals or goals, but gave them a formalized structure into which their own ideas, etc., which basically paralleled those of Reform Judaism - could fit and constitute a religion. It appears therefore, that out of the eleven converts interviewed at least two were searching for some form of religious expression and affiliation akin to Reform Judaism and that the occasion of marriage provided them with such a religious affiliation.

Another means of determining the effectiveness of conversion as a socialization process is to investigate what social, fraternal and charitable organizations the convert belongs to. In order to determine this, we asked the converted partner two questions on the questionnaire:

1. To what Jewish organizations, other than a Temple, do you belong?
2. Do you participate in the activities of the general Jewish community, such as: Israel Bond Drives - Jewish Center - Israel Emergency Fund - B'nai B'rith - Hadassah - OTHER.....?

From our discussions with Rabbi W. and with the converts we learned that converted women are given automatic bridal membership in the Temple Sisterhood, enabling them to immediately

become part of the organized Jewish community. An analysis of the nineteen questionnaires provided the following data as regards the affiliation of converts with Jewish institutions other than Temple membership; all were Temple members. Over half of the converts indicated that they belonged to the organizations listed or to others which they wrote in the blank space provided. The Israeli Emergency Fund and the United Jewish Appeal were not considered to be organizations as such, since they are most often a once a year consideration. Three respondents indicated that they belonged to only one organization; four that they belonged to two; one that she belonged to three; two that they belonged to four; one that she belonged to five; and eight that they did not belong to any organizations (sisterhood included). We find then that 42 percent of the converts do not have any affiliation other than Temple membership which may be only a nominal and financial consideration. But we also find that 58 percent of the converts do belong to at least one organization and perhaps as many as five.

At present there are no studies available by means of which we might compare the organizational involvement of our converts to that of born Jewesses. On the basis of all the previously presented data, it is our belief that the converts involve themselves not because of a need to prove their sincerity or 'Jewishness,' but rather because they are gregarious, affluent and interested individuals. They join Jewish organizations because they are Jews and committed to the principles and

perpetuation of Judaism and its philanthropies. Those who had no organizational affiliations had small children at home and were therefore unable to attend many of the organizational meetings which were most often conducted during the day. There is a trend to become more involved as the children become older and the demands upon the mother become fewer.

The fact that over half of the female converts do involve themselves in some capacity within the Jewish community suggests that conversion has been successful as a process of socialization. It is highly unlikely that born Jewesses involve themselves any more so than do converts and it is doubtful that there are any congregations in major cities which can boast that their sisterhood has attracted over half of the female Temple membership. Converts may be more committed and more involved because they are more aware of Reform Judaism as a way of life and of the worthwhile nature of the institutions and organizations to which they belong.

Section D is an analysis of the Daton data concerned with Basic Home Practices and Religious Celebrations. We were interested in ascertaining the following information.

1. Is the Passovered Seder Celebrated?
2. Do the Converts and Their Partners Regularly Attend Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur Services?
3. Is the Sabbath Celebrated in any way in the Home?
4. Are the Jewish Holidays Celebrated with the Lighting of Candles and with the Kiddush?
5. Are any of the Christian Holidays Celebrated?

It was our feeling that if the converts had made a significant effort to incorporate the observance and practice of Jewish ceremonies and practices into their homes, the conversion as a process of adult socialization would have shown itself to be further effective. The Sabbath, Passover and the High Holydays were considered as important indicators of religious practice. Similarly, Jewish art and ceremonial objects as well as Jewish literature were considered desirable parts of a Jewish household and we looked for these things when we interviewed. In the questionnaires we asked four questions concerned with religious practices.

1. Do you celebrate the Passover Seder?

17 YES 2 NO

2. Since your conversion, have you regularly attended Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur services?

16 YES 1 NO

2 Married less than a year and had not yet had an opportunity to celebrate these holidays.

3. Do you celebrate the Sabbath in your home?

8 YES 11 NO

I say the prayer by lighting the candles...then our two daughters say it in Hebrew...Then my husband reads...also we have wine for the four of us...

Lighting candles...special meal...I bake Challah

Light candles...no work that night...

4. Do you celebrate the Jewish holidays in your home with the lighting of candles and the Kiddush?

14 YES 5 NO

An analysis of questions 1, 2 and 4 suggests that the ritual and ceremonial observances of the converts and their Jewish partners is as much a regular and integral part of their lives as it is for intramarried third generation American Jews. The statistics offered by Goldstein and Goldscheider suggest that the converts in fact, might be somewhat more observant.⁷ However, the limited number of couples studied in this research must be considered too small to conclude that converts definitely are more observant than born Jews.

In question number 3, we note that the majority of converts responded they did not celebrate the Sabbath in their homes. Though our sampling is small its findings are very much like those of Goldstein and Goldscheider in their discussion of second and third generation Reform Jewish Sabbath observances.⁸ It appears to us that the conversion process has been successful in producing Jews who are no less observant than born Jews. Furthermore, though our sampling is limited, there is evidence to suggest that converts may tend to be somewhat more observant. As among Reform Jews, the tendency to introduce Sabbath observance with candles and Kiddush is very much a function of the understanding of the children within the home. Couples with no children or very young children were most inclined not to celebrate Sabbath in any way. While those with older children were more likely to celebrate the Sabbath in some way. In all questions dealing with home practices and religious celebrations both partners in each

couple offered the same answers.

Gordon has noted that in the case of a Marginal convert there is a tendency to celebrate both Christian and Jewish holidays, a desire to be part of both the Christian and Jewish religious realms and an unwillingness to totally reject the religious past. In our research we were interested to determine whether any of the converts did celebrate the Christian holidays. We asked the converted partners the following question:

Converted Partner: Do you celebrate any of the Christian holidays in your home?

15	NO	0	EASTER
4	CHRISTMAS	0	LENT

As the data indicates, four of the converted partners still celebrated Christmas in their homes in some way. The converts who responded that they celebrated Christmas also stated that they considered themselves Jews and that the reason for the Christmas celebration was strictly because it was such a beautiful and joyous seasonal occasion. They saw no problem of conflicting religious education or principles as far as their children were concerned and denied any acceptance, as far as they were concerned, with Christmas celebrating the birth of Christ the Messiah. The four converts who indicated that they celebrate Christmas in their homes had been married 10, 9½, 4 and 12 years respectively. The fact that these converts have been married for such a length of time suggests

to us that while the Pro-Forma convert may eventually become an Authentic convert, the Marginal convert may never fully reject her Christian past and may always remain marginal. The husbands of three of these converts also indicated that Christmas was celebrated in their homes. They made no attempt to contradict the statements of their partners. In one case the husband denied that Christmas was celebrated. In our interview with this husband he repeatedly emphasized how proud he was to be a Jew, how the Jews were superior to Christians, and how proud he was that his wife had converted. For reasons of self esteem it was necessary that he deny any celebration of Christmas within his home.

Section E is concerned with our analysis of the Dayton data reflecting the Religious Education of the Children; Short Range and Long Range. We were interested in ascertaining the following information.

1. Do the children of the converts attend a Jewish religious school?
 - a. Is it a Reform Jewish school?
 - b. What do the converts hope their children will gain from their Jewish education?
2. Do the converts feel that they will be able to convey the significance of the Jewish ceremonies, holidays and "values" to their children as well as a born Jew might?
3. Do the Jewish partners feel that the converted partner will be able to convey the significance of the Jewish ceremonies, holidays and "values" to their children as well as born Jews might?
4. How would the converts and their partners feel if their children were to marry non-Jews.

a. Jewish partners' feelings

b. Converted partners' feelings

In our questionnaires we asked the converts and their partners whether or not their children attended a Jewish religious school. The responses from both partners were in agreement and produced the following data.

Jewish Partner and Converted Partner: Do your children attend a Jewish religious school - Reform - Conservative - Orthodox - Day School.

7	Reform	1	Day School
0	Conservative	4	No Children
0	Orthodox	7	Children too young

As can be noted from the data, these eight couples who had children of religious school age were sending them to some type of religious school. The one couple who responded that their child was going to a "Day School" had arranged for their son to attend the local Hillel Academy. However, it was the quality of education which was available at the academy, rather than its Orthodox indoctrination which was the determining factor in the choice of religious schools.

When we asked the converts what they expected their children to gain from their religious school education, we received the following answers:

More of how it began; more than what I could tell them...I want them to go to Hebrew School...

To grow up to be a good man like his father...to meet the right people...

Understanding of Jewish history, understand Jewish holidays and why they are celebrated...a feeling of Jewish identity...

To learn their religious background...

To know about Judaism as much as possible...

Sensativity...feeling of what it's like to be oppressed... can't really understand people unless you can understand oppression...know how Negro feels...what Jews believe and what others believe...

I want them to know everything possible about Judaism and then I want them last of all to feel it's a good way of life...that it can be applied...it's just a way of life... to live it...

Background, history of their people, the troubles they've gone through...how to be a good person...

I hope they would learn a lot about the religion itself... stay with it...celebrate holidays and Sabbath...

To learn that he's a Jew; to be proud that he's a Jew and to get more education than I got...to learn everything that he can...

Greater understanding or identity of place in the Jewish community...

Even a casual glance at the responses of the converts gives one the impression that they want their children to gain a sense of security, understanding and involvement which they have not been able to feel as converts. If they realized the full import of their desires, they would have to admit that they wanted their children to become socially acceptable Orthodox halachists with a Reform Jewish outlook. Some converts see the study of Judaism in light/^{of} their own Christian studies and therefore they cannot fully appreciate the complexity of such an education. Underlying the entire series of responses,

however, is the usually unspoken desire of the convert for her child to know who he is. The importance of this knowledge is probably a further reflection of the convert's own insecurity with respect to religious and possibly ethnic identity.

The convert's feelings of adequacy or inadequacy with regard to her functioning as a Jewish parent-teacher to her children were important to us. If the convert felt adequately prepared to convey the various Jewish values, etc., then it would seem that the educational aspect of the conversion program had been successful and that the converts had gained a certain sense of security. It would also seem that the children would be more likely to receive religious reinforcement in a home where the parents, especially the mother, felt prepared to give such reinforcement. We asked the following questions.

Converted Partner: Do you feel that you are (will be) able to convey the significance of the Jewish ceremonies, holidays and "values" to your children as well as a born Jew might?

15 As Well As

1 Better Than

2 Not As Well As 1 No Answer

Jewish Partner: Do you feel that your partner is able (will be) to convey the significance of the Jewish ceremonies, holidays and "values" to your children as well as a born Jew might?

11	As Well As
5	Better Than
3	Not As Well As

When we analyze the responses from the husband and wife we see that the husbands selected "better than" five times more than did the wives. There are a number of possible reasons for this divergence in responses. (1) The Jewish partner may believe that the converted partner, because she has actually gone through the preparatory course of instruction leading to conversion may have a better understanding and/or appreciation of Judaism than would a girl who was only born Jewish. (2) The husband may prefer to feel that his wife will be better prepared in order to somehow legitimize his having married a convert. (3) The converted partner, because of her studies, may actually be better prepared to teach the values, etc. of Judaism.

If conversion is successful as a process of socialization, the convert will eventually feel accepted within the Jewish community and will also develop some feelings of identity. She will be concerned about her children's acceptance and role within that community. One measure of the success of the socialization process, therefore, may be found in the convert's feelings about her children marrying non-Jews. If

the convert is very concerned that her children marry Jews, it will be an indication of her having accepted and become part of Judaism and the Jewish people. If her feelings are uncertain or if she seems opposed to her children marrying Jews we may conclude that she herself has not fully become part of the Jewish group and/or that she has doubts about the conversion she has made. We were interested to learn how the converts and their partners thought they would feel if their children were to marry non-Jews. In the interviews we discussed the question with the couples and below we have noted their responses. In each couple the first response is that of the Jewish partner.

1. To me it wouldn't be the biggest problem. I think it might hurt a little. I wouldn't go against it...but the wife would be very much against it...She's really taken to it all...
If they would be happy this would be fine...I hope to teach them the right way and they won't want to...they would have a hard time...
2. In the event the circumstances are similar to ours, I would have no objection (married at age 39)...If he is mature enough to face the problem and make the necessary decision, what can I do?
No thoughts
3. I guess I would have to accept it...I would feel more comfortable if they married a Jew...I would not accept it without some feelings...
Well, I'd kinda like my children to marry Jews...I don't think I can give them any kind of battle if they decide to marry a non-Jew...I think I might take it as something I hadn't accomplished in instilling in them any feeling for Judaism...
4. If that's what he wanted, that's alright with me...
I would be very disappointed because of the aggravation it causes - there is no doubt about it, there's a tremendous obstacle...

5. I don't think I would feel bad about it...I know I wouldn't want my parents to tell me that I could only date a Jewish girl...and I don't think I could bring my children up that way...
Would accept it...probably would feel a little strange about it...I feel that I want my children to be Jewish and to live very Jewish...
6. I would think that they were amiss if they got tied up in a different religion per se because of the authoritarian...if it were a religious issue I would be concerned...if it were someone who adhered to no religious...just so long as there was no mysticism and that type of garbage...I am concerned for the intellectual aspects...
Prefer that they marry Jews...definitely no Catholic or Baptist...they will have to make that decision...
7. I don't really have strong feelings right now...I think I would certainly like them to marry nice Jewish girls...
I don't want it to happen...Already I don't want it to happen...I would take it personally...on the other hand I would try to be as understanding as possible...it can happen...
8. Really can't honestly answer...I think it would depend more or less on the situation and the people involved...
If it's their belief, it doesn't bother me...
9. (convert only responding)...I hope that I would have the same understanding my parents had...rather they marry a Jew...
10. I would prefer that they marry a Jewish girl...but I couldn't object too much, I mean, look at me...I married a non Jewish girl...
(Jewish partner only responding)
11. I would probably feel...like my mother did...but because I did, I couldn't take as strong a stand as my mother did...would point out problems...
It would bother me...hope to raise my child as my in-laws hoped they had raised my wife - to reinforce thoughts about marrying out of religion - would be a shock...would hope that this wouldn't happen...

We find that seven out of ten converts who were asked the above question stated that they would feel very negatively if their children were to marry non-Jews. They would accept the situation because they really would have no other

alternative. Some even see such a marriage as a reflection of their own inadequacies. For such people, the conversion process has been most effective as a means of socialization. It has, with the aid of the Jewish community and the Jewish partner's family, produced feelings of guilt. These guilt feelings, or the desire to avoid them, will encourage the convert's to remain overtly Jewish and to raise their children as Jews. The Jewish partners did not feel quite as strongly as did the converts, perhaps because they did not experience the trauma of conversion as readily as did their partners; perhaps because they feel more secure in their Judaism and are more able to cope with its attempts to instill guilt feelings. At any rate, we can see that the majority of converts interviewed did have a genuine concern that their children should marry Jews. This is certainly one of the best indications of the success of conversion as a process of socialization.

Section F is an analysis of our data concerned with the Feelings about the Conversion Ceremony and the Requirements for Conversion. We were here concerned to ascertain the following information.

1. What did the Converts Remember About their Conversion Ceremonies and What Were their Feelings During the Ceremony?
2. Did the Convert Feel that the Rabbi was Right in Making Certain demands before he would perform the Conversion?

3. If the Convert or Jewish Partner had a Serious Problem Would They turn to the Rabbi?
 - A. Converted Partner
 - B. Jewish Partner
4. Is Conversion Viewed as a Means of Passing From one Religious Group into Another or as a Means of Passing From one Ethnic Group into Another?
 - A. Jewish Partner
 - B. Converted Partner

All converts were asked to describe their recollections of the conversion ceremony and to express their feelings as much as was possible. Below are the written statements of the converts who responded.

1. ...I felt like a new bride about to take the big step. It was a very quiet but impressive ceremony with the two rabbis, my future husband and my dear friend (also a convert). I certainly felt I knew what I was doing and some problems that would confront me now that I had taken for granted...Reform Judaism has certainly fulfilled my religious needs and great sense of belonging. After the ceremony was over my eyes filled with tears of joy and happiness - I was deeply touched!
2. I was very impressed with my conversion ceremony but it was what I expected...
3. I remember little or nothing about my conversion ceremony other than standing on the Bimah at...I guess you might say my feelings at that time were hypocritical. I knew that I wanted to marry...; and also that I wanted a religious ceremony. Since I had long since fallen away from the Catholic Church and was never particularly interested in Protestantism, I had agreed to be married by a rabbi and raise the children as Jews. Imagine my surprise when I found that in order to be married I, too, must accept a religion I had little knowledge or feeling for! I explained this to the rabbi I wanted to marry us Cleveland, but he told me that, although he understood my feelings, he was bound by resolution...I attended conversion classes - the holidays swam meaninglessly in my head and I accepted Judaism. I don't regret it. I'm comfortable in the faith: I'm proud to be part of it and raise my children as Jews..

I think it is best that both of their parents are of the same faith. However, it took living, not the ceremony of conversion to make me feel this way. I had become a Catholic after attending catechism classes and church regularly with Catholic friends over a period of several years. In accepting Judaism, I became a Jewess and then lived with the religion. I didn't respect myself very much at the time because I promised to believe in something I didn't know enough about to believe in! Although I don't remember the words of the ceremony now, I remember listening very closely at the time to make sure that I wasn't agreeing to something that I couldn't accept; but somehow the ceremony was general enough - but meaningful, no...

4. It was the most beautiful ceremony of my life. I was very happy, elated and relieved that what I had chosen to become was finally happening. But when I walked to the Bimah, I was scared to death. My only regret in my conversion is that I had to do it. I would rather been born a Jew.
5. First, understand that I feel that a ceremony is not necessary because if you're going to believe and live a certain way, a ceremony of a few moments will not confirm it. Needless to say, I am aware of the necessity of ceremony in life. At the time of the act of conversion I was unaware of the actual proceedings of the ceremony. Previous to that time I had renounced all other religious attachments and believed and still believe that I am Jewish. In honesty, I cannot say that I was awed or overcome. I felt no specific closeness to God. At that particular time my main thoughts were on how badly I would speak the prayer I was to say in Hebrew...
6. I was delighted, proud, grateful and loved. The conversion ceremony was extremely personal and my rabbi was certainly a great source of my pleasure. He welcomed me with a sincere and warmest tribute and I shall always love him. Jewish friends of my husband's and mine surprised me by their presence and took us to their home for a small celebration. It meant very much to me, but particularly because I expected a very short, impersonal, routine rite. I was truly pleased to be able to voice my desires to be part of Jewish life and to share a lovely experience with people whom I like. Feelings are actually all I can remember: My nervousness at first, great liking for the man who performed both conversion and (later) wedding ceremonies, a comfortableness, pride in my being acceptable and accepted, gratefulness for the good and exceptional man which a truly marvelous Jewish couple gave me.

7. I was very impressed by the rabbi's personal little address to me, and really thrilled to be part of my future husband's people and faith...very happy we were to begin our married life together.
8. I was extremely nervous - only because I felt I did not know Hebrew well enough to answer our Rabbi. After the short ceremony...I felt suddenly "full of years" elated, and very happy. At the same time I was filled with sadness knowing my relatives were not as pleased with my convictions. As the rabbi was speaking, the recurring thought in my mind was "I am still _____. I have not changed."
9. I do not recall a ceremony, but all my life I felt I was looking for something in religion that I had not previously been able to find. I never really felt at peace with God nor any religion until I began taking instructions and converted to the Jewish faith. It's as if a whole new world opened up for me and I began to have a whole new outlook, not just in religion but life itself. I do believe it's difficult to convey to you...the peace and love of life and faith; and believe me, there have been many, many times that if it weren't for my faith life wouldn't have had much meaning.
10. My conversion ceremony was in the chapel after Friday night services as I was the only convert at that time. My parents, sisters, in-laws, a few of their relatives, and a few of their friends attended. I was very pleased indeed. I was excited and a little anxious about the ceremony which was brief but very beautiful. However, I feel it was quite a while before I was really a part of the Jewish way of life.
11. I recall the ceremony as being very short, religious and emotional. I felt an immediate closeness to my wife and realized the new strength which our relationship had taken. I was also very pleased to find complete acceptance from my parents.
12. I lit the candles at the Temple service and was converted the same night. What would I do for an encore?
13. A morning ceremony in the presence of my husband and two witnesses. A climax to a long period of study...
14. As I recall my conversion ceremony I realize that my feelings were a mixture of many things. I was extremely proud and happy about my decision to convert to Judaism and was thoroughly convinced that I had

made the correct choice for myself and husband to be. In addition I was very nervous as I was not prepared and had not asked questions concerning the ceremony itself. The fact that I had to learn even a few words of Hebrew made me quiver. The rabbi did manage to relieve my anxieties and the memory of the ceremony is a very happy one. My parents and in-laws were both with me at the time which was extremely important to me as I was further reassured that my decision was the right one and that it would not cause a break in my relationship with my family.

15. Short, cold, impersonal^{al} Course of study - marvelous!
16. I was quite excited so therefore I remember very little of the ceremony itself. I do remember my thoughts, however. I was glad to be accepted in something I believed in completely. Because, or in spite of my upbringing, I had never had a religious affiliation in which I believed. I felt that I was starting on a new life and that that life would somehow have a new meaning. In most respects, I was right.
17. The ceremony was dignified, but casual and informal. I tried to remember the vows but forgot most of them, though I think I remember the essence.
18. My conversion ceremony consisted of going to the Mikvah (my own decision) in the afternoon, and the conversion ceremony following the Friday night services. My thoughts about the Mikvah -...I do not feel that the Mikvah is necessary for conversion, but I personally wanted to go. I feel it is a beautiful ceremony, and it certainly did me no harm. The conversion ceremony for Reform Judaism took place in the small chapel following services Friday night. I was extremely nervous, mostly because of the Hebrew I had to recite. I felt I could answer the five questions honestly. I thought the rabbi's comments were of a personal use to me. I also relaxed at this point. When it was finished, I felt a wave of relief and excitement almost simultaneously.
19. The conversion took place immediately before the marriage ceremony. It was a very short ceremony and as far as I remember I was kind of frightened by the whole thing, including the marriage ceremony.

As the written responses of the converts indicate, very few had any recollections about the ceremony itself; its structure and content. Yet, most converts were able to describe their

feelings and attitudes they experienced during their conversion. In Chapter II we discussed the Reform conversion ceremony and noted its rather uninspiring and unemotional make-up. The convert's inability to remember the ceremony itself may be due to the fact that there is nothing particularly impressive about the ceremony to be remembered. Some converts may have chosen not to remember the ceremony; for by means of the conversion ceremony they swore that they would sever all ties with their Christian past and would become true and sincere Jews. Undoubtedly, for some, the service was anti-climactic; they had already made their personal decision to convert and the conversion service was merely the public act required by the Jewish community. In some ways the conversion ceremony is similar to a rite of entrance into the adult or established community. Entrance necessitated a private period of preparation and a public act of commitment. It is possible, however, for a convert to be committed and yet prefer that there be no public display of such commitment. A convert may view the conversion ceremony as the Jewish community's attempt to announce: "Look who finally decided to join us..." The ceremony thus becomes not a rite to celebrate the achievement of the convert but one to celebrate the success of the Jewish community.

We were interested to learn how the convert felt about the demands the rabbi had made of them before he would agree to convert them.

Converted Partner: Do you feel that the rabbi was right in making certain demands of you before he would perform the conversion?

19 YES

0 NO

It becomes clear from the data that all of the converts expected and perhaps even desired some form of initiatory or preparatory requirements to precede their conversion. They wanted to feel that they were experiencing conversion in its fullest terms, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Consequently, when they were told that they would be required to read certain texts dealing with Jewish history, customs and ceremonies, theology - they accepted these requirements as part of a process leading them to an alteration or conversion of peripheral personality. If no requirements had been stipulated, the converts would not have felt that they had undergone an authentic conversion. There would have been no need for thought, attitude or identity changes. The only change would have been a change in religious labeling.

In this section we have included two questions which do not deal directly with the convert's feelings about the conversion ceremony, but which reflect important attitude changes resulting from the conversion itself. We were interested, for example, to learn who the convert would turn to if she had a serious problem.

Converted Partner: If you had a serious problem and would like to discuss it with a person who might give you some guidance or help, which of the following would you be most inclined to seek out?

- 3 Relative (other than husband or wife)
- 13 Rabbi
- 3 Friend
- 0 Minister or Priest

The data from this question become important when compared to the answer which the Jewish partners gave to the same question.

Jewish Partner: If you had a serious problem and would like to discuss it with a person who might give you some guidance or help, which of the following would you be most inclined to seek out?

- 5 Relative (other than husband or wife)
- 5 Rabbi
- 0 Minister or Priest
- 7 Friend

We note that the converted partners responded almost three times as often as did the Jewish partners that they would talk to the rabbi or seek his aid. It is possible that this reaction on the part of the convert is due to her Christian upbringing in which it was the minister or priest who was seen as the shepard or friend in time of need - the one to whom one turns in a time of trouble. Though no longer Christians, the converts may have projected the role of the minister onto their new religious functionary, the rabbi.

It is also possible that the response is due to a certain degree of intimacy which developed between the convert and the rabbi as a result of the semi-private conversion sessions. (Most converts who were interviewed found the rabbi to be physically, intellectually and socially attractive). The Jewish partners are perhaps somewhat more aware of the fallibility of the rabbi and more inclined to keep their problems within their small circle of friends and family. It is also possible that the Jewish partners do not choose to go to the rabbi with their problems because he, better than anyone else, knows that they married converts. Unintentionally, he may stir up guilt feelings within the Jewish partners who could have found suitable Jewish mates in the Dayton area.

Sociologically, the American Jews constitute a religious and ethnic minority within the American culture. Most converts were aware that by means of their conversion they had been ascribed minority status. However, we were interested to learn whether they also felt that they had now become part of a new ethnic grouping. We asked the following question.

Jewish Partner: Do you view the conversion procedure as a means of passing from one religious group into another or as a means of passing from one ethnic group into another?

- 6 One religious group to another
- 0 One ethnic group to another
- 11 Both
- 2 No answer

Converted Partner: Do you view the conversion procedure as a means of passing from one religious group into another or as a means of passing from one ethnic group into another?

- 11 One religious group to another
- 2 One ethnic group to another
- 6 Both

We find that the Jewish partners view the conversion procedure largely as a means of passing from one religious and ethnic group into another. The converts, however, view the conversion procedure primarily as a means of passing from one religious group into another. The converts probably did not realize that as white Anglo-Saxon Protestants many of them had been part of an ethnic grouping, WASP, and the conversion actually changed their ethnic and religious group identification. It is also important to note that one cannot simply absorb a culture, such as the American Jewish culture, and therefore before one can feel part of this ethnic grouping one must have lived within the group for some time.

Chapter IV

CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Adult socialization may be defined as that process of integration through which the adult becomes a recognized and accepted member of his adult society or culture. Recognition may be accorded on the basis of approved affiliations, associations, religious and secular institutions, economic status and the performance and acceptance of certain rites and responsibilities. Thus, marriage, church membership, a college education and support of certain charitable and political organizations may be viewed as indications of socialization within a given community. Each community, religious, secular or political will determine its own requirements for admission.

Within the Reform Jewish community, we have suggested that socialization is possible through the normal channels of birth, childhood rites and marriage. We have also suggested that socialization for an outsider is possible through conversion and involvement within the Jewish community. As we have discussed in previous chapters, conversion has its own system of preparatory requirements and rites. The prospective convert is required to study and to denounce, publicly or privately, any ties with his past. Among the Orthodox and Conservative the convert is also required to submit to the Mikvah or circumcision and to thereby further humble himself before he is accepted into Judaism. Humiliation then be-

comes part of the conversion procedure.

We have also noted that conversion can produce certain manifest and latent results. Marriage, intellectual integrity, emotional satisfaction and social acceptance were aspects of the manifest functions of conversion. According to our limited data, all of these goals have been achieved by the converts studied. Rejection by one's family, minority class status, ascribed prejudice and a sense of guilt were considered as latent functions of conversion. Our data does not indicate that any of the converts has yet sensed any of these latent aspects of conversion.

From our discussion of the Reform Jewish conversion service, it would seem that there are five basic goals which the conversion process seeks to achieve.

1. Rejection of past religious affiliations and beliefs.
2. Identification with the Jewish people and their history.
3. Fulfillment of private and communal religious responsibilities.
4. Religious education of the children.
5. Acceptance of Jewish philanthropic and social responsibilities.

The degree to which these goals have been achieved would indicate the degree to which the conversion as a process of adult socialization has been successful. Again, though our sampling was limited, it appears that all of these goals have been achieved. We find that in areas of religious education of the young, home and Temple religious practices,

Jewish communal involvement and Jewish philanthropic causes, the converts accept and fulfill their responsibilities as well as, and often better than, born Jews.

In Chapter I of this thesis we discussed and reviewed the available literature concerned with the sociological and psychological ramifications of conversion. Underlying all of this material was the constant reminder that conversion will always be preceded by some crisis of ultimate concern, such as a basic dissatisfaction with one's self or the need to make a decision of lasting significance. Our own data has suggested that the crisis involved in religious conversion is the decision to marry a particular Jewish male or to face the possibility of remaining single and unfulfilled. Those women whom we have studied admitted that their basic consideration in conversion was the fact that it would facilitate marriage and eventuate family unity. According to Gordon's schema, therefore, we were here dealing with Pro Forma converts. However, our data has also suggested that it is possible for an initially Pro Forma convert to become an Authentic convert after a period of study and Jewish living. We have also seen evidence to suggest that some converts actually viewed the conversion procedure as a matter of formalizing pre-existing attitudes into a concrete religious expression; i.e., Reform Judaism did not offer them a new religion but a religious framework in which their previous ideas and ideals could constitute a recognized religious ex-

pression. These people were formally Reform Jews in their thinking and the conversion experience facilitated their becoming Reform Jews in their affiliation, also. Some converts were not able to fully make the transition from Christianity to Judaism and thus were considered Marginal converts. Our data has suggested that while it is possible for a Pro Forma convert to become an Authentic convert, rarely will a Marginal Convert alter her status. Consequently, in terms of socialization, the conversion ceremony and program will be only mildly effective on the Marginal convert.

The typical Reform Jewish convert will be a female who will experience conversion at some period in her mid-twenties. She will come from a home in which the parents were only occasional church goers and she may in fact be the child of a mixed Christian marriage. It is also possible that one of her parents may have converted from one form of Christianity to another. She will have received some formal religious education and will have completed at least a high school secular education. It is not unusual for her to have received more formal religious education than did her Jewish partner. Though she will indicate in writing that her reasons for conversion were intellectual or theological, it is more often the case that her true motive was marriage. Unless she was one of the individuals for whom Reform Judaism provided a structure for the formalization of pre-existing attitudes, her reason for deciding to convert to Reform

Judaism will be because it just happened to be the religious affiliation of her spouse.

The typical Reform Jewish convert will feel that she is accepted within the Reform Jewish community but will express doubts as to whether this acceptance extends to the Conservative and Orthodox communities. She will feel also that her in-laws accept her as a Jew and that her own parents feel likewise. For reasons of genuine interest rather than for reasons of acceptance, she will involve herself in the social and philanthropic organizations of the Jewish community. She will tend to deny that her conversion facilitated her acceptance within that Jewish community and will prefer to believe that her acceptance was due to her personality or due to mutual interests.

The converted female will be more inclined to celebrate the Sabbath and Passover in her home than will the third generation Reform Jewess, though the frequency of these celebrations will be dependent upon the ages of her children. She will be very concerned to see that her children receive as much Jewish religious education as is possible and will find much value in such life-cycle rites as baby namings, Bar Mitzvah and confirmation. She will want her children to know and appreciate all the aspects and events of Judaism which she is unable to convey to them because she is a convert. Most often she will be the one to suggest Temple service attendance and participation. The convert will be

very concerned that her children marry Jews. She will view their failure to marry Jews as a reflection of her own inadequacies.

The typical convert will remember little about the conversion ceremony itself, either because it was basically unimpressive or because she would prefer to play down the mystical aspect of her conversion and thereby prefer to emphasize the intellectual experience.

In our introductory chapter we introduced eleven questions which we sought to answer through the utilization of our questionnaires and interviews. In Chapter III we analyzed our data and answered these questions. We stated that we wanted to introduce the Reform Jewish convert to the Reform Jew. We feel that we have accomplished this goal, too.

As a result of our research and interpretations we feel that we are now able to make the following statements:

1. Within Judaism conversion functions to legitimize intermarriage. Conversion thus enables the Jewish community to deal with the problem of intermarriage on its own terms. The non-Jewish partner is offered an opportunity to become a Jew; a new Jewish member is admitted to the community rather than one leaving it.
2. Our limited data and our own inferences suggest that if a male Jew marries a non-Jewish female and there is no conversion, he will definitely lose status within the Jewish community. He will no longer be considered a Jew by the general Jewish community and his children will probably be thought of as mamzers - even by the Reform community.
3. While conversion functions as a means of socialization for the adult convert, it also serves as a vehicle of readmission for the Jewish partner to the Jewish community.

4. The fact that the converts are seldom able to remember the details or even outlines of the Reform conversion ceremony indicates that (1) the ceremony itself is unimpressive and (2) that it is rather anti-climactic.
5. Our data, like that of Eichhorn, has suggested that while many converts enter Judaism because of marriage, many of them find that they are intellectually and emotionally attuned to Reform Judaism.
6. Though most converts to Reform Judaism are to be considered Pro Forma converts, our data suggests that after a period of time and exposure to Judaism they may become Sincere converts. Rarely, however, will the marginal convert alter her position after marriage.
7. Our data does not indicate that there is any correlation between years of formal Jewish religious education and the likelihood of intermarriage.

As we noted earlier, the entire field of conversion studies has been virtually unexplored. We consider such research important and valuable to the Reform Jewish community - especially if we are to consider seriously the suggestion that we begin to actively, yet selectively proselytize. We make the following recommendations.

1. Studies should be conducted to determine what happens to the children of converts. Do they remain Jews? Do they marry Jews? Are they more or less observant than their parents? Do they assume an active role within the Jewish community? Do they consider themselves Jews or the "children of converts?"
2. The Reform Rabbinate must develop a consistent and reasonable conversion program. Lengthy conversion programs have not proven to be any more valuable than the shorter programs. Converts must be introduced to the Judaism of the past and present; but there is no reason to expect them to be as concerned about Judaism as are its ministers nor that they should be as steeped in its tradition as are its rabbis. Once they have declared a desire to convert and once that declaration has been judged to be sincere, they must be encouraged to convert and to live as Jews.

3. Research concerned with the mores and sanctions of the contemporary Jewish community should be initiated. Does the Jewish community, in general, have an opinion on males and females who marry out? Do they look upon the convert as a Jew or as "the wife of a Jew?" Do they fear that the admittance of too many converts will mongrelize Judaism?
4. Research should be conducted on Reform Rabbis, community lay leaders and congregants to ascertain what each group expects of a convert.
5. Consideration should be given to the application of T group methods for conversion classes. Such T groups would be composed of prospective converts and Jews, and would give each an opportunity to be exposed to each other, to discuss issues and feelings, etc.

We initiated this study as a follow-up to the work begun by Eichhorn. We have maintained that this is a pilot study; our goal has not been to discover universals but rather to digest and analyze limited material and to provide interpretations and discussions worthy of further research. We feel that we have accomplished these goals.

June 24, 1968

One of the requirements for ordination from the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion is a senior thesis. The thesis is expected to illustrate an in depth study of a problem or area which is of vital interest to contemporary Reform Judaism. Under the direction of Dr. Jacob R. Marcus and Rabbi Norman Mirsky, I have elected to do a study of the Reform Jewish Convert. I am particularly interested to learn how the converted individual and his or her partner feel about the conversion process and how it affects their Jewish lives.

Recently I spoke with Rabbi Joseph Weizenbaum who is also vitally interested in this area of study. He has made available to me a listing of people whom he feels would be willing to aid me in my research. I have explained my goals to Rabbi Weizenbaum and he has assured me of his cooperation. I am now seeking your cooperation.

Enclosed you will find two questionnaires. One is marked CONVERTED PARTNER and the other is marked PARTNER. I would appreciate it if the converted partner would fill out the one questionnaire and if the partner whom the convert married would fill out the other. I only ask that you do not discuss the questions with each other. I am interested in your personal reactions only. All questionnaires will be kept strictly confidential and at no time will it be possible to use the respondents' names. I will be the only person to read and analyze the material. All questionnaires must be returned by Saturday, July 27th. I am enclosing a stamped and addressed return envelope in which you may return the completed questionnaires.

I would also like to interview as many of the respondents as possible. I will be in Dayton after the 12th of August and would be able to meet with you at your convenience. If you would be interested in cooperating in this aspect of the research, please return the enclosed postal card at your earliest convenience. Should you desire not to participate in any aspect of this study, please return all the materials to me in the envelope provided.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation, I am

Sincerely yours,

Albert M. Lewis
9500 Given Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243

1. Are you a native born American? Yes ☐ No ☐
If answer is NO, where were you born? _____
2. How long have you resided in the Cincinnati-Dayton Area? _____
3. How long married? _____
4. What is your age _____
5. What is your educational background? Please underline highest level of education completed. Grade school High school College Graduate school
6. What is your occupation? _____
7. Were your parents separated or divorced? Yes ☐ No ☐
8. How many children were there in your parents' family? _____
Are you the only, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth
Underline the appropriate answer.
9. What was the religion of your parents? _____
10. How often did your parents attend church? Underline the appropriate answer.
Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
11. As a child, did you attend a religious school? Yes ☐ No ☐
For how many years _____
12. Do you have any children? Yes ☐ No ☐
If YES, please write age sex ; age sex ; age sex ; age sex
13. Do your children attend a Jewish religious school? Yes ☐ No ☐
Underline appropriate answer. Reform Conservative Orthodox Day school
14. What was your age when you seriously considered conversion? _____
15. At what age did you convert? _____
16. Why did you convert? Underline appropriate answer.
Marriage Theology Intellectual reasons
17. Did you study a formal conversion program? Yes ☐ No ☐
18. What was your reason for deciding to convert to Reform Judaism? _____

Yes ☐ No ☐
19. Do you belong to a Temple?
20. To what Jewish organizations, other than a Temple, do you belong?

Yes ☐ No ☐
21. Do you give financial support to religious institutions?
If YES, please state which ones _____

22. Do you participate in the activities of the general Jewish Community, such as:
 Israel Bond Drives Jewish Center Israel Emergency Drive B'nai B'rith
 Hadassah OTHER _____ Please underline and/or write in those
 which apply.
23. Do you understand or speak Yiddish? UNDERSTAND: Yes ___ No ___; SPEAK: Yes ___ No ___
24. Would you like to learn Yiddish? Yes ___ No ___
25. Do you read or understand Hebrew? READ: Yes ___ No ___; UNDERSTAND: Yes ___ No ___
 Would you like to learn Hebrew? Yes ___ No ___
26. Do you celebrate the Jewish holidays in your home with the lighting of candles
 and the Kiddush? Yes ___ No ___
27. Do you celebrate the Sabbath in your home? Yes ___ No ___
 If YES, please describe _____
-
28. Do you celebrate the Passover Seder? Yes ___ No ___
29. How do you celebrate the Passover Seder? Please underline appropriate answers.
 In your home at a relative's home at a friend's home with your children and
 spouse with your children, spouse and in-laws with your children, spouse,
 in-laws and parents with your children, spouse, in-laws, parents and friends.
30. Have you ever invited your parents to join with you in the Temple celebration
 of the Jewish holidays or festivals? Yes ___ No ___
31. Have you ever invited your parents to join you in your home celebration of the
 Jewish holidays or festivals? Yes ___ No ___
32. Do you participate in Temple services? Underline appropriate answer.
 Frequently occasionally Rarely Never
33. Do you participate in Temple social functions? Underline appropriate answer.
 Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
34. Do you feel that you were helped in gaining acceptance in the Jewish circles
 because you had converted? Yes ___ No ___
35. Who was invited to your wedding?
 Immediate families only _____
 Immediate families and friends _____
 Immediate families and other relatives _____
 Immediate families and other relatives and friends _____
 Were you married in the rabbi's study? Yes ___ No ___
36. Since your conversion, have you regularly attended Rosh Hashanah and Yom
 Kippur services? Underline appropriate answer. Yes ___ No ___
37. Have you spoken to your minister since your conversion? Yes ___ No ___
 Did you feel at all uncomfortable? Yes ___ No ___

38. Have you spoken with your Rabbi since your conversion? Yes ☐ No ☐
39. Since your conversion, have you participated in the religious services - other than weddings or funerals - of your original Church? Yes ☐ No ☐
If YES, please state how often _____
40. Since your conversion, have you participated in the social activities - other than weddings - of your original Church? Yes ☐ No ☐
If YES, please state how often _____
41. Do you feel that you would have had acceptance in Jewish circles without conversion? Yes ☐ No ☐
42. Are you planning to have your children learn the Hebrew Language? Yes ☐ No ☐
43. How many of your friends have mixed marriages? Please underline most appropriate percentage range. 0% 1-10% 11-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%
44. Do you plan to have your son Bar Mitzvah Yes ☐ No ☐ or your daughter Bas Mitzvah? Yes ☐ No ☐
45. Do you view your conversion as something you did to please others, or something you would have done anyway? Underline appropriate answer.
To please others _____ Done anyway _____
46. Do you think that it is easy to be a Jew? Yes ☐ No ☐
47. Do you celebrate any of the Christian holidays in your home? Underline appropriate answer. No Christmas Easter Lent
48. Do you view the conversion procedure as a means of passing from one religious group into another or as a means of passing from one ethnic group into another? Please underline the most appropriate answer. One religious group to another One ethnic group to another Both
49. Are most of your friends Jewish? Yes ☐ No ☐
50. Do you think that there are any definitely Jewish facial characteristics? Yes ☐ No ☐
If YES, which of these would you think is (are) most characteristic? Please underline those characteristics which you feel are Jewish. Hooked nose Big lips Dark eyes Heavy beard
51. Do you believe in a physical life after death? Yes ☐ No ☐
52. Have you any particular desire to visit Israel? Yes ☐ No ☐
53. Do your children know that you are a convert? Yes ☐ No ☐
If YES, how did they react when told? _____

If NO, how do you think they would react? _____

54. Do your own parents consider you Jewish? Yes ☐ No ☐

55. Do your in-laws consider you Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
56. Do you feel that you are truly accepted in Jewish circles? Yes ___ No ___
57. Do you feel that you are (will be) able to convey the significance of the Jewish ceremonies, holidays and "values" to your children as well as a born Jew might? Underline appropriate answer. As well as better than not as well as
58. When the time comes, would you expect to be buried in a Jewish cemetery? Underline appropriate answer. Yes No Uncertain
59. Before you learned the Jewish procedure for conversion, what did you imagine conversion to be? _____
-
60. Do you ever feel awkward in your parents' home when a religious matter comes up? Yes ___ No ___
61. Is there a time when you most regret being Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, when is that time? _____
-
62. Do you feel that the separation between parent and child has been widened because you married out of the faith? Yes ___ No ___
63. Do you feel that the separation between parent and child has been widened because you converted to Judaism? Yes ___ No ___
64. Do you know what the terms "Schicksa" and "Goy" mean? Yes ___ No ___
65. Since your conversion has anyone ever referred to you as the "Schicksa" or "Schaketz" or "Goy"? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, what was your reaction? Underline appropriate answer.
anger disgust amusement passivity
66. Did you convert because it was the only way a Rabbi would have agreed to perform the wedding ceremony? Yes ___ No ___
67. Do you think your Rabbi accepts you as a Jew? Yes ___ No ___
68. Do you think your Jewish friends regard you as Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
69. Do you think your non-Jewish friends regard you as Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
70. As you look back at the experience, do you consider the conversion procedure to have been: traumatic ineffective inconsequential beneficial
desirable. Under line appropriate answer.
71. Whom do you think your conversion meant more to, your Jewish friends or your non-Jewish friends? Underline appropriate answer. To my Jewish friends
to my non-Jewish friends

72. Do you feel that the training and ceremony of conversion have made you more of a Jew than you would have been merely by marriage and participation in Jewish religious and communal affairs? Yes No
73. Do you think that you look Jewish? Yes No
74. Do your children know that one set of their grandparents are not Jewish? Yes No
75. If you had a serious problem and would like to discuss it with a person who might give you some guidance or help, which of the following would you be most inclined to seek out? Please underline only one. Relative (other than husband), Rabbi, Friend, Minister or Priest.
76. Do you feel that the ceremony of conversion facilitated your acceptance by - (Underline appropriate answers) your in-laws spouse friends the Jewish community
77. Do you feel that the Rabbi was right in making certain demands of you before he would perform the conversion - such as study? Yes No
78. In the space remaining, please describe your recollections of your conversion ceremony. Describe your feelings as much as possible.

[illegible]

1. Are you a native born American Yes ___ No ___
If answer is NO, where were you born? _____
2. How long have you resided in the Cincinnati Dayton Area? _____
3. What is your age? _____
4. How long married? _____
5. What was your age when you married? _____
6. What is your educational background? Please underline highest level of
education completed. Grade school High school College Graduate school
7. What is your occupation? _____
8. What was the religion of your parents? _____
9. Were they separated or divorced? Separated: Yes ___ No ___ Divorced: Yes ___ No ___
10. How many children were there in your parents' family? _____. Are you the
only, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth? Underline the appropriate
answer.
11. How often did your parents attend Religious Services? Underline appropriate
answer. Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
12. As a child, did you attend a religious school? Yes ___ No ___
For how many years _____
13. Do you have any children? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, please write age ___ sex ___, age ___ sex ___, age ___ sex ___, age ___ sex ___
14. What was your age when you began to date your partner? _____
15. What was your partner's reason for deciding to convert to Reform Judaism?

16. Did you participate in your partner's formal conversion studies? Yes ___ No ___
17. Do you belong to a Temple? Yes ___ No ___
18. To what Jewish organizations, other than a Temple, do you belong? _____

19. Do you give financial support to religious institutions? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, please state which ones _____

20. Do you participate in the activities of the general Jewish Community, such as:
 Israel Bond Drives Jewish Center Israel Emergency Drives Yiddish or
 Jewish Theater B'nai B'rith Other _____ Please underline and/or
 write in appropriate answers.
21. Do you understand or speak Yiddish? UNDERSTAND: Yes ___ No ___; SPEAK: Yes ___ No ___
22. Do you read or understand Hebrew? READ: Yes ___ No ___; UNDERSTAND: Yes ___ No ___
 Would you like to learn Hebrew? Yes ___ No ___
23. Do you celebrate the Jewish holidays in your home with the lighting
 of candles and the Kiddush? Yes ___ No ___
24. Do you celebrate the Sabbath in your home? Yes ___ No ___
 If YES, please describe _____

25. Do you celebrate the Passover Seder? Yes ___ No ___
26. How do you celebrate the Passover Seder? Please underline appropriate answers.
 In your home at a relative's home at a friend's home with your children
 and spouse with your children, spouse and in-laws with your children, spouse,
 in-laws and parents with your children, spouse, in-laws, parents and friends.
27. Where did you and your partner meet? _____
28. Have you any particular desire to visit Israel? Yes ___ No ___
29. Did you request that your partner convert to Judaism? Yes ___ No ___
30. Do you subscribe to any Jewish papers or magazines? Yes ___ No ___
 If YES, which of these: (Underline appropriate answer) American Judaism
 Dimensions Congress bi-Weekly Jewish Heritage Jewish Frontier Jewish Digest
 Conservative Judaism Tradition Jewish Spectator Reconstructionist
 Midstream The Jewish Quarterly Commentary American Israelite
 OTHERS _____
31. Since your marriage, have you regularly attended Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
 services? Yes ___ No ___
32. Why did your partner convert? Underline appropriate answer. Marriage
 Theology Intellectual reasons
33. Who was invited to your wedding?
 Immediate families only _____
 Immediate families and friends _____
 Immediate families and other relatives _____
 Immediate families and other relatives and friends _____
 Were you married in the rabbi's study? Yes ___ No ___
34. Do you participate in Temple services? Underline appropriate answer.
 Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never
35. Do you participate in Temple social functions? Underline appropriate answer.
 Frequently Occasionally Rarely Never

36. Do your children attend a Jewish religious school? Underline appropriate answer.
 No Reform Conservative Orthodox Day School
37. Do you think that it is easy to be a Jew? Yes ___ No ___
38. Do you feel that your partner will want to be buried in a Jewish cemetery?
 Yes ___ No ___
39. Do you ever feel awkward in your in-laws' home when a religious matter comes up? Yes ___ No ___
40. How many of your friends have mixed marriages? Underline most appropriate percentage range. 0% 1-10% 11-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%
41. Do you have any Christian friends? Yes ___ No ___
42. Do you think your Jewish friends regard your partner as being Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
 Do you think your Christian friends regard your partner as being Jewish?
 Yes ___ No ___
43. Are most of your friends Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
 Are most of your partner's friends Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
44. Do you feel that the ceremony of conversion facilitated your partner's acceptance by (Underline appropriate answer(s)). Your parents Yourself
 Friends The Jewish community
45. Do you think that there are any definitely Jewish facial characteristics? Yes ___ No ___
 If YES, which of these: Hooked Nose Thick lips Dark eyes Heavy beard
 Please underline appropriate answers.
46. Do you think it is easy for your partner to be a Jew? Yes ___ No ___
47. Do your children know that your partner is a convert? Yes ___ No ___
 If YES, how did they react when told _____

 If NO, how do you think they would react _____

48. Do you believe in a physical life after death? Yes ___ No ___
49. Do you think there might be a time when your partner regrets being Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
 If YES, when _____

50. Do you view the conversion procedure as a means of passing from one religious group into another or as a means of passing from one ethnic group into another? Please underline the most appropriate answer. One religious group to another
 One ethnic group to another Both

151. Do you think your Jewish friends regard you as Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
152. Do you feel that you are truly accepted in Jewish circles? Yes ___ No ___
153. Do your own parents consider you Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
154. Are you planning to have your children learn the Hebrew Language? Yes ___ No ___
155. Do your in-laws consider you Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
156. Do you think your non-Jewish friends regard you as Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
157. Since your partner's conversion, have you participated with her (him) in the religious services - other than weddings and funerals - of his (her) former church? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, how often _____
158. Do you plan to have your son Bar Mitzvah or your daughter Bas Mitzvah? Yes ___ No ___
159. Have you ever invited your in-laws to join with you in the Temple celebration of the Jewish holidays or Festivals? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, did they accept? Yes ___ No ___
160. Do you feel that the separation between parent and child has been made wider because your partner married out of her parents' faith? Yes ___ No ___
161. Do you feel that the separation between parent and child has been made wider because your partner converted to Judaism? Yes ___ No ___
162. Did your family influence you to request that your partner convert to Judaism? Yes ___ No ___
163. Do your children know that one set of their grandparents are not Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
164. Have you ever invited your in-laws to join you in your home celebration of the Jewish holidays or Festivals? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, did they accept? Yes ___ No ___
165. Do you feel that you are less acceptable to the Jewish Community because you married a convert? Yes ___ No ___
166. As you look back on the experience, do you think your partner considered the conversion procedure to have been - traumatic Ineffective Inconsequential Beneficial Desirable Please underline most appropriate answers.
167. Do your parents consider your partner to be Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
Do your partner's parents consider your partner to be Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
168. Do you know what the terms "Schicksa" and "Goy" mean? Yes ___ No ___
169. Since your partner's conversion, has anyone ever referred to him (her) as the "Schicksa" or "Schaketz."? Yes ___ No ___
If YES, what was your reaction? Underline most appropriate one.
Anger Disgust Amusement Passivity

70. If you had a serious problem and would like to discuss it with a person who might give you some guidance or help, which of the following would you be most inclined to seek out? Please underline only one. Relative (other than husband)
 Rabbi Friend Minister or Priest
71. Do you ever feel awkward in your parents' home when a religious matter comes up? Yes No
72. Do you think that you look Jewish? Yes No
73. Do you view your partner's conversion as something which was done to please others or as something which he (she) would have done anyway?
 To please others Would have done anyway Underline appropriate answer.
74. Do you celebrate any of the Christian holidays in your home? Underline appropriate answer. No Christmas Easter Lent
75. When the time comes, would expect to be buried in a Jewish cemetery? Yes No
 Uncertain
76. Since your partner's conversion, have you participated in the social activities of her (his) former church? Yes No
77. Do you feel that your partner was helped in gaining acceptance in the Jewish circles because she (he) converted? Yes No
78. Do you feel your partner would have been accepted in Jewish circles without conversion? Yes No
79. Do you think your Rabbi accepts you as a Jew? Yes No
80. Do you think that your non-Jewish friends regard you as being Jewish? Yes No
81. Do you think that your rabbi really accepts your partner as a Jew? Yes No
82. Do you feel that you are more accepted by the Jewish Community because your partner converted rather than married without conversion? Yes No
83. Did your partner convert because it was the only way a rabbi would marry you? Yes No
84. Do you feel that you would have been more acceptable to the Jewish Community if you had married a born Jew(ess)? Yes No
85. Do you feel that your partner is (will be) able to convey the significance of the Jewish ceremonies, holidays and "values" to your children as well as a born Jew(ess) might? Underline appropriate answer. As well as better than not as well as
86. Do you feel that your partner is really accepted in Jewish circles? Yes No

87. Whom do you think the conversion meant more to, Your Jewish friends or your non-Jewish friends? Underline appropriate answer. Jewish friends non-Jewish friends
88. Whom do you think the conversion meant more to, your partner's Jewish friends or non-Jewish friends? Underline appropriate answer. Jewish friends non-Jewish friends
89. Do your in-laws consider your partner to be Jewish? Yes ___ No ___
90. Do you feel that the training and ceremony of conversion have made your partner more of a Jew than he (she) would have been merely by marriage and participation in Jewish Community events? Yes ___ No ___
91. Do you feel that the rabbi was right in making certain demands of your partner before he would agree to perform the conversion? Yes ___ No ___
92. In the remaining space, please describe your feelings about the entire conversion procedure including study program, conversion ceremony, etc.

Footnotes to Introduction

1. David Max Eichhorn, "Conversions To Judaism By Reform and Conservative Rabbis," Jewish Social Studies, XVI (October, 1954), p. 300.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 299ff.
5. Ibid., pp. 301ff.
6. Ibid., pp. 300-301.
7. Ibid., p. 310.
8. Ibid., p. 311.

Footnotes to Chapter I

1. Jess Stein (ed.), The Random House Dictionary of The English Language (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 320.
2. Gordon Stanley, "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Religious Conversion," Journal For The Scientific Study of Religion, IV (October, 1964), 60.
3. William Sargant, Battle For The Mind: The Mechanics of Indoctrination, Brain Washing and Thought Control (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1957), pp. 73-74.
4. Albert J. Gordon, The Nature of Conversion: A Study of Forty-Five Men and Women Who Changed Their Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 1.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 2.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 3.
9. J.A.C. Brown, Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brain Washing (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 224.
10. Ibid.
11. Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Religion (New York: Adingdon Press, 1959), p. 60.
12. Brown, op. cit., p. 238.
13. Brown, op. cit., p. 242.
14. Brown, op. cit., pp. 227-228.
15. William James, Varities of Religious Experience (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), p. 197.
16. Brown, op. cit.
17. Brown, op. cit., p. 242.
18. Leon Salzman, "Types of Religious Conversion," Pastoral Psychology, XVII (September, 1966), 12.
19. Ibid.

20. Gordon, op. cit., pp. 218-225.
21. Gordon, op. cit., p. 218.
22. Gordon, op. cit., p. 222.
23. Gordon, op. cit., p. 225.
24. Brown, op. cit., p. 229.
25. J. Milton Ginger, Religion, Society and The Individual (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 460.
26. See below: Chapter III, Section F.
27. See below: Chapter II.
28. Brown, op. cit., p. 224.
29. Brown, op. cit., p. 229.
30. Gordon, op. cit., p. 218.
31. Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: The Free Press, 1957), p. 63.
32. Albert Ehrman and C. Abraham Fenster, "Conversion and American Orthodox Judaism: A Research Note," Jewish Journal of Sociology, X (June, 1968), p. 51.

Footnotes to Chapter II

1. Bernard J. Bamberger, Proselytism in the Talmudic Period (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1959), p. 13.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 14.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Sheldon H. Blank, Prophetic Faith In Isaiah (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 159.
10. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 15.
11. Bamberger, op. cit.
12. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 16.
13. Bamberger, op. cit.
14. Bamberger, op. cit.
15. Bamberger, op. cit.
16. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 17.
17. Bamberger, op. cit.
18. Bamberger, op. cit.
19. Bamberger, op. cit.
20. Bamberger, op. cit.
21. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 18.
22. Bamberger, op. cit.
23. Bamberger, op. cit.
24. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 19.

25. Bamberger, op. cit., pp. 21-23.
26. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 23.
27. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 31.
28. Bamberger, op. cit.
29. Bamberger, op. cit.
30. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 32.
31. Bamberger, op. cit.
32. Bamberger, op. cit.
33. Bamberger, op. cit.
34. Bamberger, op. cit.
35. Bamberger, op. cit., pp. 33-36.
36. Bamberger, op. cit., p. 36.
37. Ben Zion Wacholder, "Attitudes Towards Proselytizing in the Classical Halakah," Historia Judaica, XX (October, 1958), 77-96.
38. Ibid., pp. 77-79.
39. Ibid., p. 79.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., pp. 80-90.
42. Ibid., p. 91.
43. Ibid., p. 92.
44. Talmud Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 39b.
45. Wacholder, loc. cit., p. 87.
46. Shulchan Aruch, Orech Hayyim.
47. Albert I. Gordon, The Nature of Conversion: A Study of Forty-Five Men and Women Who Changed Their Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 17.
48. Ibid.

49. Jules Harlow (ed.), A Rabbi's Manual (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1965), p. 67.
50. Ibid., p. 68.
51. Ibid., p. 69.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 67.
54. Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook, 1890-1894 (Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing and Printing Company, ----), p. 122.
55. Ibid., p. 36.
56. Central Conference of American Rabbis (ed.) Rabbi's Manual (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1961), pp. 116-117.
57. Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yearbook. Vol. LXXIII, 1963. Edited for the Central Conference of American Rabbis by Sidney L. Regner. Philadelphia: Maurice Jacobs, Inc., 1964.
58. Ibid., p. 76.
59. Ibid.
60. Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi's Manual,
61. See below: Chapter III.

Footnotes to Chapter III

1. Albert Ehrman and C. Abraham Fenster, "Conversion and American Orthodox Judaism: A Research Note," The Jewish Journal of Sociology, X (June, 1968), 50.
2. Sidney Goldstein and Calvin Goldscheider, Jewish Americans: Three Generations in a Jewish Community (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), pp. 157-161.
3. Ibid., p. 155.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., pp. 64-67.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., pp. 171-205.
8. Ibid., pp. 195-205.
9. Albert I. Gordon, The Nature of Conversion: A Study of Forty-Five Men and Women Who Changed Their Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 222.

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