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ADAPTING TRADITION TO A CHANGING WORLD: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM AND THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Laura M. Rappaport

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

1988

Referee: Dr. Jakob J. Petuchowski

DIGEST

It is unfortunate that many learned Jews and Christians do not realize how similar some of their religious struggles have been over time. While each religious heritage, in and of itself, offers enough richness for lifelong study, a familiarity with the issues and controversies which characterize the other enriches one's own religious thought. This thesis explores the specific struggles of Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal/Anglican Church in order to demonstrate the similarity between the dilemma of moderate religious movements/denominations.

Conservative Judaism was conceived in late nineteenth-century Germany, primarily as a reaction to the radical Jewish reformers of the time. A number of Jewish leaders desired to bring Judaism into the modern era without changing the basic structure of traditional Judaism. The Anglican Church (the world-wide body with which the Episcopal Church is associated) was also founded during times of radical change in the Church, as an attempt to reform without straying too far from Roman Catholic tradition.

Over time, each of these religious systems has struggled to maintain its role as <u>via media</u> (middle way) in its respective religious tradition. This has proved to be a challenging task, especially when both have been criticized by movements on the right and the left for their lack of

firm doctrine and uniformity. Many within each system, however, defend their position by rooting their particular approach to Judaism/Christianity in tradition.

This thesis also contains a discussion of two recent reforms which have taken place in both systems: liturgical change and the decision to ordain women. These two changes in the systems illustrate the desire to balance modernity and tradition in the present day.

Despite outsider criticism and the controversy resulting from recent reforms, both movements/denominations continue to flourish and attract adherents. Their dedication to moderation appeals to many, despite the increasing polarization of American religious society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As is required by either College halakhah or minhag, the words, "in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination," grace the title page of this thesis. This statement is true in that this work is an extension of interests and ideas gleaned from my tenure at the College; although I don't know if this process has been helped or hindered by the institution per se. I do know that it has brought me in touch with some extraordinary people, and for this I will always be grateful.

There are several individuals who served as invaluable resource people for this thesis; one being my advisor, Dr. Jakob J. Petuchowski, whose own scholarship in this area aided me greatly. I owe him much for suggesting the topic for this work, a topic which has taken on great significance for me and has sparked an interest in Christian-Jewish dialogue that will continue for many years to come. His enthusiasm about my project gave me the continued motivation I needed to bring all my research together into a completed document. This task was rendered as painless as it could have been by Dr. Petuchowski's warm encouragement and thoughtful suggestions.

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As I mentioned above, this thesis cannot be viewed apart from my total H.U.C. experience, and that experience would have been considerably diminished if it were not for my friend and teacher, Angela Graboys. I think we have both grown tremendously from the emotional support and intellectual stimulation we received from our friendship (not to mention the amount of time we spent on less lofty pursuits -- but of course this was minimal (!)) and I know our physical separation will not put an end to our bond.

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My upcoming ordination is an ever-so-special simḥah, not only because it marks the beginning of an exciting and challenging career, but because it marks the beginning of a life to be shared with my beloved Dan. His encouragement, love, and support have made a pressure-filled senior year not only bearable but delightfully memorable. He continues to enrich my life in innumerable ways and I am truly blessed to have him as my partner.

DEDICATION

to POP,
BERNARD KAMMERMAN
(1893 - 1976)

whose intelligence and gentle manner
continue to influence and inspire those
who were blessed enough to know and love him.

He has helped to empower two generations of women
who strive beyond the dictates of society,
and he has touched the lives of more individuals
than he ever could have foreseen.

CONTENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

It could certainly be argued that the one word which best summarizes the American religious scene is 'smorgasbord.' How better to describe a country which celebrates the visit of the Pope, categorizes textbooks which espouse secular humanism as 'religious', grants celebrity status to Christian evangelicals, and contains congregations for Jews ranging from Messianic to Humanistic to a variety of Hasidic sects?

In a country which strives toward the ideal of Church/State separation and allows free competition for adherents among denominations, one would expect to see an equal distribution of "believers" across the theological spectrum. This, however, does not appear to be the contemporary phenomenon. Our society seems to be polarized. On one side is a vast number of people who have almost unqualified faith in human reason. One social commentator has noted, "As man's consciousness of his powers, or at least of his potential has grown, so his reliance on supernatural force has shrunk, or at least has been seen to need a radical readjustment and restatement."[1] In the age-old struggle of "man against nature," modern man, armed with great scientific and technological knowledge, seems to be winning the vast number of battles, despite the fact that the war is far from won.

There is, however, a large group of individuals who believe that the many social, political and economic ills of our day illustrate, all too clearly, the inability of humanity to "go it alone." These people believe that humanity is headed for imminent destruction unless it turns to the true and eternal source of all truth: God. In such systems, individual autonomy must be completely subjugated to scripture and/or tradition in order to open the world to Divine rule. Only in this way, they claim, can our world be ushered into a messianic era.

There do remain, however, those who struggle to reconcile these opposite ends of the spectrum. Their task is extraordinarily difficult and their prospects for success are considered dismal by many critics. Despite the odds, these stubborn and hopeful moderates embrace both belief in human reason and faith in venerated tradition, and refuse to subjugate one to the other.

In this thesis, I will attempt to examine those who adhere to this theological framework through an exploration of two religious systems: Conservative Judaism and the American branch of the Anglican communion, the Protestant Episcopal Church. Each of these systems aspires to preserve a tension between tradition and modernity and acts as a crossroad between religious extremes in Judaism and Christianity, respectively.

In order to perform this 'balancing act,' each must be open to a diversity of ideologies within the whole, and this has served as a strength and a weakness to both groups. Thinkers within both groups have noted that while the openness and tolerance within the system has facilitated intellectual and spiritual growth, it has also led to difficulties such as a lack of firm positions on theological issues and problems with authority.

Additionally, both Conservative Jews and Episcopalians maintain that their religious approach is authentic Judaism/Christianity in terms of their religions' roots and historical development, in spite of outsider criticism to the contrary. Both struggle to defend their position that the tension they preserve between scripture/tradition and modernity/human reason is, and always has been, in the true spirit of their respective heritages.

After presenting historical sketches of both religious systems, I will examine more deeply the conceptual parallels between the two. In later chapters I will present a discussion of two modern-day manifestations of their decision-making processes: prayer book reform and women's ordination.

NOTES

[1] David L. Edwards, Religion and Change (New York: Harper & Row, [1969]), p. 25.

CHAPTER TWO: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Anglican Communion: From England to the United States

According to popular tradition, the Church of England was founded when Henry VIII was unable to secure papal permission to annul his marriage. This debatable point will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, but for the purposes of a general historical sketch, this point of commencement will suffice.

It was 1529 when the King summoned Parliament to extinguish papal authority in England. Four years later the clerical assembly of England declared "that the Roman pontiff had no more authority in England than any other foreign bishop, [but with the assurance] that by none of its statutes was there any intention to decline or vary from the ancient Catholic faith of Christendom."[1]

The king was now the Supreme head of the Church of England, and for the duration of Henry VIII's reign, this would remain the only major theological change in the national church. The death of Henry VIII and the ensuing ascension of Edward VI to the throne, ushered in a new era of weak monarchy and religious anarchy. The door was open to the strong influence of continental reform on all aspects of church life.

The reforming of the Church of England was aided by a combination of factors: theological, political and economic. It is nearly impossible to determine, at this point, the motivations of many of the leading reformers of the time: was it theological purity or political power and church property which was sought? Certainly both greed and religious fervor ran rampant during the mid-sixteenth century in England.

Immediate legislative changes which were enacted upon Henry's death included the repeal of heresy laws, the legalization of the marriage of clergy and the institution of Church services in the vernacular.[2] Two years later, in 1549, the first English Book of Common Prayer was released and declared the official national prayerbook. The book simplified rites, customs, the religious calendar, and the complicated scheme of Daily Office. The major reform, however, was the introduction of prayers and Scriptural readings in the vernacular. As it reads in the book's preface: "All things shall be read and sung in the church in the English tongue, to the end that the congregation may be thereby edified."[3]

These changes, however, were not sufficient for the followers of Huldreich Zwingli, John Calvin and other continental reformers. The official word from Geneva on the 1549 prayer book was that it was far too conservative.[4]

In many parts of England, however, insurrection resulted among those who demanded Mass in Latin, the restoration of old ceremonies and the recall of the English Bible as it tended to encourage heresy.[5]

It became obvious to all that the book which was intended to reconcile opposing points of view and bring Christian unity pleased nobody, and the book was withdrawn after three years. The book of 1552 contained more concessions to the reformers whose influence was spreading rapidly, but was still too 'popish' for many.

During this prayerbook controversy, there were many external 'revisions' in public Church worship. Elaborate altars and medieval wall paints were removed by force or edict and replaced with holy tables and Scriptural texts. The use of ashes, palms and holy water was abolished. Widespread destruction and confiscation of ecclesiastical wealth and property was perpetuated in such a way as to render religious motivations questionable. By the end of Edward VI's reign, nearly all Roman Catholic customs and observances had disappeared.

If the sudden leftward shift of the national church jolted the English in 1547, the quick and violent shift to the right in the earliest days of Mary's reign must have caused an even greater shock. Latin mass was immediately

restored and all religious legislation of Edward's reign was repealed. This shift was due greatly to political factors: Mary's marriage to King Philip of Spain was a tangible symbol of England's alignment with the Catholic powers of Europe. Parliament repealed the anti-papal laws of Henry's time and united with the Queen in acknowledgement of the Pope's supremacy. Medieval legislation for suppressing heresy was revived, and so ruthlessly enforced that during this five-year reign nearly three hundred persons were burnt alive for heresy [6].

Ecclesiastical change again took place with the crowning of Elizabeth in 1558. The change this time, however, was to a position of moderation. Elizabeth desired a return to the religion of her father, Henry, but returned exiles made steps toward Protestantism inevitable. The Queen, therefore, sided with a small, moderate party [7].

The Elizabethan Settlement was "a deliberate compromise, providing the legal setting and secular framework within which Anglicanism could develop as a <u>via media</u>. This characteristic note of Anglicanism was struck early in the Queen's reign by legislation which declared, in effect, that the Church of England was both Catholic and Reformed." [8]

The new tone of reconciliation was most clearly illustrated in the Elizabethan prayerbook of 1559. While the Puritan doctrine of sola scriptura was certainly not incorporated, Scripture was given a more prominent position in the English church. And while Roman Catholic practice was not reinstituted, there was a reintroduction of some of their ceremonies and vestments. Catholics were additionally mollified by the removal of the petition in the litany against "the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities."[9]

A specific example of compromise is in the words recited upon the administering of bread and wine at Communion. The line of the 1549 prayerbook, reflecting a papal understanding of the sacrament reads: "The Body of our Lord, Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." The 1552 prayerbook reflected the reformers' theology: "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart, by faith with thanksgiving." The Elizabethan prayerbook combined these two lines.[10]

The English Church under Elizabeth preserved Roman Catholic elements in spite of pressure from Puritan elements. The historic episcopate was continued through the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons. Many Medieval practices in worship and ritual were also preserved.

One major concession to the reformers was the drafting of the Thirty-nine Articles, a series of statements outlining theological positions for the Church of England. The document retains a Catholic structure but is steeped in Calvinistic doctrine. One notable example in this regard is the Anglican understanding of salvation. "The Church of England declared that righteousness is imputed, or reckoned, to the believer because of the merit of Christ: this contrasted with the claim of the Roman Church that righteousness is infused into the soul. . . . While the Church of England fully commended good works as the fruit of genuine faith, [it rejected the Roman Catholic view which] taught the meritoriousness of good works in gaining ultimate salvation."[11] About ten years after the release of the Articles, Anglican clergy were required to swear allegiance to them in order to serve in the church.

Elizabeth's reign set the tone for Anglicanism until this very day, not only through the legacy of liturgy, the three-fold ordained ministry and the Articles, but through the legacy of the idealogue who systematized the Anglican approach. Richard Hooker, through his magnum opus, Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, established what is sometimes refered to as the "Anglican three-legged stool": the tension between reason, Scripture and tradition.

The main impetus for Hooker's writing of the Laws was the Puritan attacks on the English Church. He concerned himself primarily with their belief in Scripture alone as the only path to God, their contempt of any doctrine or practice of a medieval nature, and their belief in the inherent corruption of a heavily structured ecclesiastical system. His intelligent and pious approach has earned him an esteemed position of respect in the Anglican communion to the present day. Church historian James Addison writes:

> This massive common sense of Hooker, his wealth of scholarship, and his ardent piety are among the reasons why Anglicanism is not merely a political compromise or a straddling of issues but a live organism positive and vigorous. In his intense conservatism, in his predominantly intellectual emphasis, and in his convincing fusion of Protestant and Catholic elements Hooker remains the normative Anglican.[12]

Hooker's primary assumption was that while the only source of truth is God, there are two ways for humans to reach this truth: through reason and through revelation. He agreed with the Puritan notion of Scripture as Divinely-given and containing eternal truths, but he embraced this view cautiously. Scripture's authority is limited in the following ways:

> (1) It presupposes in humanity the operation of or knowledge of the law of nature (i.e. reason).
>
> (2) It presupposes the operation of the legislative power natural to societies of men -- human, positive laws.

(3) It presupposes the activity of human authority and reason for confirmation of Scripture itself.

(4) It presupposes the operation of human authority and reason for the interpretation of Scripture. [13]

Thus, human beings have a "God-given right" to devise laws and doctrines based on the law of reason which governs rational creatures and Divine law which is revealed through Scripture.

This point ties into the Puritan attack on the corrupt nature of the Anglican system. According to Hooker, human laws and structures may be imperfect and may improve over time, but they are guided by God. Despite the fact that we are no longer in a state of original righteousness, God has not forsaken fallen humanity: we have a natural thirst after knowledge which God has engrafted in us. No man except Christ can always be right, but truth will not perish from the earth. [14]

A concrete example of this notion is the episcopacy. Hooker believes that, despite the fact that the structure is not an immutable divine command, it is a Divinely-given right of human beings to establish their own forms of government. [15] Again, the fact that there do exist abuses is indisputable, but this is not due to the inherent corruption of the enterprise.

Hooker additionally disagreed with the Puritans concerning their disdain for ceremonies and rites associated with the Roman Catholics. As he writes, "We are to note that in every graund or maine publique duty, which God requireth at the hand of his Church, there is, besides that matter and forme wherein the essence thereof consisteth, a certaine outward fashion whereby the same is in decent sort administered." [16]

On this point, Hooker is a voice of moderation between the two Christian extremes. He has no problem with outward signs and symbols used to express deeper theological beliefs and sees no need to root them out. He does not, however, believe that these outward signs and symbols are immutable over time: each society can choose to use the external "fashions" that is appropriate for their culture as long as the core of God's truth remains.

The sixteenth-century, due to Elizabeth's political and ecclesiastical policies as well as to Richard Hooker's treatise, was the most crucial period in the shaping of the Anglican communion in England and in the United States. There was much more controversy to come in the ensuing centuries in Britain, but much of the controversy consisted of the playing out of themes already experienced on the English political and theological scene.

According to religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom, the Anglicanism which became normative after the "Glorious Revolution" of the late 17th century was a church which, within strict institutional limits, was broad and undogmatic, open to new currents of Enlightenment thought. As established by the thought of Hooker, it remained anti-Calvinistic and rationalistic. As established by Elizabeth, it retained its ties with a Roman Catholic past through fixed liturgy and a traditional form of ministry and preserved its Reformation heritage through the Thirty-Nine Articles. [17]

At this point, I will make a trans-Atlantic leap and discuss the establishment of the Church of England in America. The problems of the Anglicans in the Colonies did not greatly differ, in the early years, from that of other structured religions attempting to relocate abroad. There was a severe lack of leadership and organization. The church which depended so heavily upon ecclesiastical hierarchy for cohesion was left to flail in relative anarchy.

The old rivalries between Puritans and Anglicans lived on, but this time the Puritans often held the power; religious doctrine aside, the reformers were not so quick to forgive nor to forget. There were colonies in which the Church was considered the established religion, but besides

a certain social prestige, there was little spiritual, financial or organizational benefit.

On the eve of the Revolution, Anglicans faced a more unique handicap: their political ties with the English government. Apparently, the problem of dual-loyalties affected clergy more deeply than lay people. As James Addison notes:

> Though two-thirds of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence were Churchmen, there were good reasons why few of the ministers of the Church espoused the cause of the Revolution. Outside of Virginia and Maryland, most of them were wholly or partly supported by the [English] Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In addition to the fact that their livelihood depended on their loyalty, they had taken, at ordination, an oath of allegiance to their sovereign. [18]

There were, however, clergy who did support the war of independence. According to oral tradition, the Rev. Peter Muhlenberg of Virginia, who served as brigadier-general for the Continental Army, "preached his last sermon in uniform concealed under his ministerial robe. As he quoted the words of the book of Ecclesiastes: 'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time of war. . .' he laid aside the preacher's gown and walked forth a soldier in garb and office, followed by his people." [19]

Whether or not this account bears any relation to fact, it is clear that Church membership did not necessarily mean one was of a loyalist bent. After the revolution, the new American leadership did not harbor any official ill will against the Anglicans. In fact, at the first Continental Congress in 1774, Samuel Adams invited an Anglican priest, Rev. Duche, to open the proceedings with a prayer and a psalm. [20]

The American Church now had an immense task before it. Theirs was to create ecclesiastical order out of chaos. The Rev. William White of Philadelphia was the leading force behind the founding of a national church. His pamphlet, "The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered," contained proposals for "a federal organization of the Church and the principle of lay representation in its governing bodies." [21]

The first official General Convention of this new Church was held in 1785. Seven of the Mid-Atlantic and Southern states were represented at this Philadelphia meeting. It was at this gathering that the name "Protestant Episcopal Church" was officially introduced. [22] The term "Protestant" was used to differentiate the Church from the Roman Catholics, and the term "Episcopal" to illustrate its ties to the Apostolic succession.

At this convention, the groundwork was set for the Ecclesiastical constitution which would guide the Episcopal Church until the present day. Many of the same people who drafted the United States Constitution influenced the Church's constitution as well, so it is no coincidence that the structure is parallel in every respect. The Bicameral legislative body for the national church is composed of the House of Bishops and the House of (Clerical and Lay) Deputies. The deputies are representatives elected by members of each local diocese. These bodies meet on a triennial basis. The local dioceses hold conventions annually and are attended by clerical and lay representatives presided over by the diocesan bishop.

One divisive issue between New England and the other states was the attempt to form a national church without bishops. While national unity was foremost on the mind of Rev. White, clergy in Connecticut thought otherwise. They voted to send Dr. Samuel Seabury to England in order to receive consecration as a bishop.

In 1783, when Seabury arrived in England, he was denied consecration because of his refusal to swear allegiance to the English sovereign. He was therefore forced to go to Scotland to receive consecration from the Scottish non-jurors -- successors of the bishops who had refused in 1688 to take the oath of allegiance to William III. [23]

Upon Seabury's return to the U.S., he immediately began the ordination of clergy and preparations for a new American prayerbook.

The participation of lay people in ecclesiastical decision-making was another key point of contention between the New England states and the remaining ones. Connecticut was insistent that clergy have full power in determining the theological and political course of the Church, while the majority of the country favored a more democratic system of government. Bitter rivalries made schism a serious possibility, and it was therefore important that the Mid-Atlantic and Southern states secure their own bishops. By 1786, English bishops had gained Parliament's permission to consecrate American bishops without an oath of allegiance. This made the process easier and Reverends White and Samuel Provoost were elected for the positions.

It was not until the Convention of 1789 when the national church was united. Compromises were made on both sides, and Seabury was fully accepted as bishop along with White and Provoost. [24] The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America was now officially formed. The constitution, the canons and the first American prayerbook were officially adopted.

The American canons were based on English canon law as embodied in the post-Reformation revision known as The Canons of 1604. [25] Revisions, based on the independence of the American Church, were, of course, necessary. The new Church's ties to England, however, still remained strong. As it reads in the preface to the 1789 prayer book: "This Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship; or further than local circumstances require." [26]

Various religious movements caused the Episcopal Church to swing back and forth between its more Catholic branch and its more Protestant over the next century. The Oxford or "Tractarian" Movement in England had its effect on the American Church. The Oxford Movement was led by John Henry Newman and the Rev. John Keble who wrote a series of "Tracts for the Times." These theologians called for a renewed emphasis on the sacramental life of the Church; they emphasized such subjects as the apostolic succession, baptismal regeneration, purgatory, fasting, and the Holy Eucharist.

The most controversial tract was "Tract Ninety", written by Newman, which attempted to reconcile the Thirty-Nine Articles with Roman Catholic dogma.

> In view of the fact that subscription to the Articles was required of members of the Universities and that they had always been

> regarded as an invincible bulwark against Popery, the outcry aroused by Tract Ninety was loud and long. War was therefore declared against the Oxford Movement by most of the leading authorities in both Universities and by a large majority of the bishops. [27]

The United States Episcopal Church was not as vehemently opposed to the general ideology of the Oxford Movement as its English counterpart. The High-Church party was already strong here and the High-Low Church struggle was not as vigorous. The American publication of Tract Ninety, however, brought greater strife between the two ideological factions.

> A Virginia deputy [at the General Convention of 1844] offered a motion which referred to the Tracts as "Popish poison." . . . Bishop Eastburn of Massachusetts described the Tractarian movement as the work of Satan and its adherents as "advocates of the Dark Ages and followers of the Scarlet Woman." [28]

Most interesting was the reaction of the old High-Church party to the new Tractarians. They upheld the apostolic succession and the sacramental life of the Church but rejected much of the elaborate ceremonials and the "Popish perversions" which they perceived in the new movement. "From 1840 on, then, we find in the American Church not one, but two High Church movements; the one native, conservative, centering largely in the East. . . the other imported, advanced, finding its strongest support in Nashotah and the mid-Western dioceses." [29]

As many mainstream Episcopalian clergy polarized around the two extreme ends of their Church, a third group emerged as a Romantic reaction to rationalist orthodoxy and Episcopalian evangelism. Their leader was William Augustus Muhlenberg who dedicated his life to bringing greater pluralism to the American Church. In 1853, he and others drafted a memorial to the House of Bishops which proposed a more inclusive Episcopal Church. His proposal was to allow Episcopal bishops to ordain other evangelical Protestants who accepted the Scriptures, the Creeds, the two Sacraments, and the Thirty-Nine Articles. He also recommended the relaxation of requirements for the diaconate and greater liturgical freedom.

Muhlenberg's concrete proposals for Church unity were condemned, but the sentiment behind them was acted upon to a limited extent. Dialogue began between the Episcopal Church and other branches of the Apostolic Church which "accept the Holy Scriptures and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, and which reject the usurpations and innovations of the Bishop of Rome." [30] Muhlenberg did make a lasting contribution to the Church by establishing monastic orders. His ritual innovations at the Church of the Holy Communion in New York were imitated elsewhere. [31]

The Episcopal Church remained relatively unified during the Civil War. The Baptist and Methodist churches suffered

from strife, but the Episcopal clergy, particularly those in the North, attempted to keep the slavery issue out of Church legislation. Perhaps a greater challenge to the Church arose from sociological and intellectual changes in the latter part of the century. The Church needed to adapt to an increasingly urban population and the rise of modern science.

A new liberalism was ushered into the Church: philosophy and science were permeating religious intellectual circles as well as society at large. The American constituency was changing and many believed that a changed Episcopal Church was in order. One such leader was William Reed Huntington who argued that "the church needed a new flexibility and a new appeal to the industrial worker, the foreign immigrant, and to the modern businessman." [32]

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Episcopal Church did make considerable strides toward accommodating societal changes. Among such changes were: calls for improving conditions among industrial workers, a new emphasis on missions and social action, an expanded ministry to Blacks, the formation of women's organizations in the Church and changes toward more democratic leadership selection. [33]

The post-World War II era was that of religious revival. The rising middle class moved to the suburbs and flocked to neighborhood churches. The Episcopal Church grew in proportion to the U.S. population from a 1 in 415.85 ratio in 1830 to a 1 in 86 ratio in 1960. [34] The 1960's brought issues into the Church which were prevalent throughout the country: civil rights, the Vietnam war and women's rights. The issue of women in Church positions will be examined in Chapter Five.

At the present time, the Episcopal Church seems to be experiencing the religious renewal that many religious bodies are encountering. Their numbers are stable and seminaries are flourishing. The need for a <u>via media</u> in Christianity seems to continue, despite the many radical changes which have characterized the modern age.

Positive-Historical Judaism: The Conservative Movement

Analogous to the question of the exact point of origin of the Church of England, is the debatable point of origin of the American Conservative Movement in Judaism. While adherents may disagree that theirs is a modern-day movement, many would claim that it properly begins with Rabbi Zacharias Frankel and the positive-historical school in 19th century Germany.

Frankel initially associated himself with the German Reform movement but withdrew from the Frankfurt Synod of 1845, as a protest against the rabbis' discussion concerning Hebrew as the essential language of Jewish prayer. He believed neither in abolishing a facet of Jewish liturgy which was deeply entrenched in the experience of modern Jews nor in considering the removal of the language which had such power to bind together the Jewish people.

Frankel believed in the preservation of Jewish tradition and custom, but, unlike Samson Raphael Hirsch and the Orthodox school, refused to subscribe strictly to the notion that the Bible was of direct supernatural origin and that halakhah (Jewish law) was immutable over time. Frankel advocated free historical inquiry, and this dedication to modern scholarship was manifested in his Breslau rabbinic school, the Jewish Theological Seminary.

To Frankel, "history . . . was living proof not of the anachronism, but of the endurance of Jewish tradition. The norm for change was this: whatever observance had become deeply embedded in community tradition must not be abrogated. . . . Change, when it came, was permissible not because history proved that a certain ritual or a certain ceremony was a relic of barbaric times; it was permissible because the rite or ceremony had gradually, inevitably, ceased to be meaningful to the Jewish people." [35] This philosophy was termed, by Frankel, the "positive-historical" approach to Judaism: positive, in terms of the importance of Jewish law, and historical, in terms of the evolving nature of Judaism over time.

In the United States, Isaac Leeser, spiritual leader of Congregation Mikveh Israel of Philadelphia, is generally accepted to be the first major advocate of this position. Leeser was a staunch traditionalist but did favor some external, aesthetic changes in order to render Jewish worship more 'modern.' These changes included sermons in the vernacular and a sense of decorum during the service.

He, along with Dr. Sabato Morais, founded the first American rabbinic seminary in 1867: the short-lived Maimonides College. The unity of American Jewry was important to Leeser, and this college was not intended to be a party effort. As Leeser stated:

> Some may object to the movement, that it is not pledged to either reform or orthodoxy. These hateful words are always at hand when anything is done. . . . We belong to no party. We commenced life with a certain conviction. . . . We know only Judaism, and if you call it 'orthodox,' you do so -- not we. [36]

It is clear from Leeser's statements that the American Jewish community, by 1867, had already become factionalized. The burgeoning institutional Jewish community of late 19th century America was on a small enough scale to be a battle of personalities rather than a mass phenomenon. Allegiances shifted, spiritual leaders competed for funds and supporters and clashes over trivialities took on great importance in terms of the historical ramifications.

Jewish moderates fluctuated between the reformers and the orthodox but had no established movement of their own. Two moderates, Marcus Jastrow and Benjamin Szold compiled siddurim (prayerbooks) for their own congregations. There was, at this point, no major difference between the radical and moderate editions except for the greater use of Hebrew in the latter texts. Both deviated from the stringently orthodox by abbreviating the service and eliminating or moderating the concepts of a personal Messiah, resurrection and the return to Zion. In terms of synagogue aesthetics, the family pews, mixed choirs and organs which were the norm in Reform were also the norm in most "Conservative" synagogues. [37]

There were a number of ineffectual attempts at this time to further the goals of the pre-Conservative group. These included the Hebrew Sabbath Association, which was intended to create a network of Shomer Shabbos businessmen, and a Ritual Convention held in New York in which twelve congregations participated. [38]

The watershed event which caused the irreparable split between the reformers and the conservatives was the adoption of the Pittsburgh Platform in 1885. Even before this point, however, the two groups were beginning to polarize. The Cleveland synod of 1855 and its aftermath foreshadowed what was to come.

The synod passed a set of resolutions which, interestingly enough, were drawn up by a group including both traditionalist Leeser and Isaac Meyer Wise, the foremost advocate of reform. The resolutions were passed as a sign of unity among American Jews and the following statements were given as unanimously accepted beliefs:

> 1. The Bible, as delivered to us by our fathers, and as now in our possession, is of immediate divine origin, and is the standard of our religion.
>
> 2. The Talmud contains the traditional, legal, and logical exposition of the Biblical laws which must be expounded and practiced according to the comments of the Talmud.
>
> 3. The resolutions of the Synod, in accordance with the above principles, are legally valid.

4. Statutes and ordinances, contrary to the laws of the land, are invalid. [39]

Isaac M. Wise was harshly criticized for his signing of this document by his contemporary reformers. His concern for unity was, according to many, bought at too high a price. The literal Divine origin of Torah and the binding nature of Talmud were ideas too traditional for his German reform colleagues and it became clear that this unity was on paper alone. Wise then alienated Leeser upon the publication of his Minhag America prayerbook, and permanent division became imminent.

The ideas in the Pittsburgh Platform stood in direct opposition to those of the 1855 synod. Those most offensive to the traditionalists were the rejection of all but the moral and ethical laws of the written and oral traditions, and the rejection of Zion as central to modern Jewry. Sabato Morais, who had up until this point been an ardent supporter of the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College and Union of American Hebrew Congregations, reacted strongly against this document. As he stated, the resolutions "revealed unwarranted antagonism to the five Holy Books, a denunciation of the general character of the Pentateuch, a serious charge against Mosism as teaching imperfect ideas of the providence and justice of God." [40]

Response to the Platform was immediate. Morais was joined by Dr. Pereira Mendes, Alexander Kohut, Marcus Jastrow and Benjamin Szold, among others, to form a rabbinic seminary which would uphold the traditions which the reformers rejected. As it reads in the preamble to the Constitution of the Seminary Association:

> The necessity has been made manifest for. . . the establishment of a Seminary where the Bible shall be impartially taught and rabbinic literature faithfully expounded, and more especially, where youth, desirous of entering the ministry, may be thoroughly grounded in Jewish knowledge and inspired . . . with the love of the Hebrew language, and a spirit of fidelity and devotion to the Jewish law. [41]

The newly founded Jewish Theological Seminary of America was clearly established to fight the growing Reform movement. As Joseph Blumenthal, lay leader of the Seminary declared, "The sober thought of the people has come to correct the eccentricities of extremists." [42] This was to be accomplished through the training of rabbis who would be well-versed in both secular and Jewish studies.

Their goals were commendable, yet unrealistic. Opposition to Reform did not provide a sufficient ideology for a heterogeneous body of congregations to sustain such an institution. In addition, the predominantly German Jewry who comprised most of the lay support for the Seminary were in the process of embracing Reform; the few Sephardic congregations, more traditionally-inclined, were not

experiencing growth and could not supply the necessary financial support. By the turn of the century, the institution had virtually folded.

There was one major reason, however, why the few remaining moderates did not fade into oblivion: the composition of the American Jewish community in 1900 was already radically different from that of 1886, when the Seminary was founded. During this period of time, the number of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe rose dramatically. Pogroms and harsh anti-Jewish laws provided the impetus for Jews to leave Russia and neighboring lands and head for the land of opportunity.

German Jews, now established in the United States and proud of their assimilation into the majority culture, felt great disdain for, but also kinship with, these new arrivals. It is difficult to determine whether a fear of lowered social status or a sense of group solidarity served as the main motivator for the assistance which the Americanized Jews offered the immigrants. Funds were established to offer the relocated Jews occupational training and social services.

On the religious scene, these masses represented potential adherents: and that is exactly what the traditionalists needed. The conservatives, at this point,

were in competition with the Orthodox Union which had been founded in 1898. Mendes had hoped that the Union would ultimately save the Jewish Theological Seminary, but by 1900 the Union was publicly criticizing it. Dr. Moshe Davis cites the following reasons for the split between the Orthodox and those of the Historical School:

1. Esthetics: A sense of decorum had become extremely important to the Historical School.

2. Cultural Differences: The Sephardim looked down on the Germans who looked down on the Russian and Polish Jews. Any attempt to integrate these groups at such an early stage was bound to fail.

3. Isolationism: The Orthodox were composed of Jews accustomed to European segregation. Despite the fact that this was no longer enforced by decree, isolation was comfortable to them and it was preserved voluntarily.

4. English: Those of the Historical School desired to be a part of America, and therefore they strongly believed in the use of the vernacular in the home and in public. The Orthodox desired to retain the use of Yiddish. [43]

Many believe that these differences in language and culture were more responsible for the Orthodox-conservative rift than were ideological differences. Despite them all, Dr. Cyrus Adler refused to relinquish his hopes for the Seminary. Adler mentioned to financier Jacob Schiff at a party that he was disappointed about the closing of the only institution of higher Jewish learning in New York.

Schiff took action and quickly raised half a million dollars to infuse new life into the Seminary. A personality was needed, however, to draw in students. They needed

someone who could appeal to traditional Eastern European Jewry, but who was also a well-rounded scholar, comfortable in the world of modern thought. The man they sought and gained was Solomon Schechter.

Solomon Schechter was born in Rumania in 1848. He was schooled in customary Yeshivah style, but his fascination with western thought drew him to Vienna as a young adult. There he studied Judaism in the Wissenschaft style that was prevalent in Germany: the historical and scientific method of reading and understanding Jewish text.

After securing a position as lecturer in Rabbinics at Cambridge, he made the discovery which brought him world-wide fame: the Cairo Genizah. The rabbinic texts which it contained proved invaluable to future researchers. His scholarly reputation and charismatic presence made him highly desirable to the founders of the newly organized Seminary and in 1901, he accepted the position.

Several months after his arrival in New York in 1902, Schechter began his duties as President of the Faculty. He chose as the emblem for the Seminary the Burning Bush, and as its motto the Biblical phrase: "And the bush was not consumed." (Exodus 3:2) "This symbolized his conviction that Judaism was a growing plant, and that the tradition never ceases to develop. The Seminary was, as the word

literally implies, to be a seed from which the living tree would grow." [44]

In a passage of his Studies in Judaism, Schechter analyzed the outlook of the Historical school as "an enlightened scepticism combined with a staunch conservatism, which is not wholly devoid of a certain mystical touch." [45] This description could easily fit his personal approach to Judaism. His rare ability to mesh a love for the tradition and a dedication to critical scholarship set the tone for Conservative Judaism until the present day.

The term "Conservative Judaism" had now become common parlance. Its use served two purposes: to differentiate it from the radical reformers and to illustrate their desire to 'conserve' Jewish tradition. Schechter, however, was uncomfortable with the notion that the Seminary should cater only to one strand of American Jewry. As he stated,

> The Directors of the Institution, by terming it The Jewish Theological Seminary of America have distinctly shown their intention of avoiding sectarianism, for it is an especial American feature that no preference is given to any denomination or sect or theological Richtung. They are all alike welcome." [46]

In 1913, Schechter and other Conservative leaders named the congregational organization which would associate itself with the Seminary, "The United Synagogue of America." This

name clearly depicts an organization which intended to strive for the inclusion of all Jews committed to perpetuating Jewish tradition. As Schechter stated, "[It would be] broad enough to admit the cooperation of all synagogues that are devoted to the conservation of traditional Judaism whether they call themselves Conservative or Orthodox." [47]

The byword with which Schechter is most commonly associated is "catholic Israel." This phrase, borrowed from, interestingly enough, the Church of England, summarizes his position on Judaism as a living, developing entity. He elaborates on this concept in his Studies in Judaism:

> It is not the mere revealed Bible that is of first importance to the Jew, but the Bible as it repeats itself in history, in other words, as it is interpreted by Tradition. . . . Since, then, the interpretation of Scripture or the Secondary Meaning, is mainly a product of changing historical influences, it follows that the center of authority is actually removed from the Bible and placed in some living body, which, by reason of its being in touch with the ideal aspirations and the religious needs of the age, is best able to determine the nature of the Secondary Meaning. This living body, however, is not represented by any section of the nation, or any corporate priesthood or Rabbihood, but by the collective conscience of Catholic Israel as embodied in the Universal Synagogue. [48]

Schechter's historical understanding of Judaism and his emphasis on this viewpoint needs to be understood in its own historical setting. While his statements may be viewed as a firm stand against strict orthodoxy, it is more likely that

they are a condemnation of the radical reformers. Their revolutionary break from the tradition could not be justified in a 'Judaism as evolutionary' framework. Schechter did, however, recognize that the Reform Movement was well-intentioned and was established with the welfare of the Jewish people in mind. In an address at the Hebrew Union College, he referred to his movement as "His Majesty's Government" and the Reformers as "His Majesty's Opposition"; the differences in question were of doctrine and practice but not of dedication to God and Israel. [49]

Additionally, Schechter's New York Jewish constituency was, at this point in time, composed of Eastern European traditionalists. Therefore, the "living body" to which Schechter refered, consisted of halakhic Jews. The catholic Israel concept would come to cause great difficulties for Conservative Jewish leaders as time progressed and their constituency underwent considerable changes.

It is impossible to determine how the Jewish community would have developed if it were not for the large influx of Eastern European Jews during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is certainly fair to speculate that their presence gave the Orthodox camp greater confidence in retaining hard-line policies. Dr. Mendes, president of the Orthodox Union, rebuffed Schechter's proposal to unite under one banner. As Mendes wrote, "The word 'conservative' had

the flavor of temporizing and an odor of compromise -- it was sometimes called fifty-fifty Judaism." [50] The optimistic intentions behind the "United Synanagogue" were not to be realized. The Orthodox Union and the United Synagogue separated permanently.

Solomon Schechter had come to embody Conservative Judaism, and his death in 1915 left a great void in the movement. The era from 1915 to 1940 has been called "the consolidation period." It consisted of the movement's building up of institutions, finding an identity and cultivating leadership. [51]

Dr. Cyrus Adler, who had been instrumental in the second founding of J.T.S. and the election of Schechter to its presidency, now became president himself: he was to serve in that capacity until his death in 1940.

Adler's ties with all aspects of American Jewish leadership were quite extensive. As Mordecai Waxman notes,

> He was the civil servant par excellence of American Jewish life. He was involved not only in the direction of the Seminary and the United Synagogue, but also in Dropsie College, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Publication Society, The Jewish Agency, Gratz College, and many other important organizations. . . . Indeed, he held so many presidencies that it is reported that a member of his family, when questioned about his occupation, replied that it was 'being president.' [52]

Although Adler sided with the religious right-wing of the movement, his liberal attitude toward a range of theological viewpoints attracted great scholars to his cause. Professor Max Margolis and Dr. Henry Malter, who were forced to leave the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College because of their Zionist philosophies, were asked to join Adler's Dropsie College, in spite of Adler's opposition to Zionism. Leftist Mordecai Kaplan was persuaded to decline the offer to take on the presidency at the Jewish Institute of Religion and remain at the Seminary, despite his radical views. [53]

Adler's first priority was scholarship. He was concerned, first and foremost, with the Jewish intellectual elite and had almost no interaction with the Jewish masses. There are those who believe, therefore, that Adler was partly responsible for the beginning of the leadership-laypeople schism which grew more visible in the movement over time.

In spite of Adler's commitment to academic freedom, a long-lived controversy was born during his tenure: the ideological dispute between Mordecai Kaplan and the many other faculty members who subscribed to traditional Jewish beliefs. Kaplan's rejection of a supernatural God and his repudiation of Israel's "chosenness" drew much criticism from his colleagues. While Kaplan felt a strong loyalty to

the Seminary and the Conservative movement, he was oftentimes alone and vulnerable, a tiny leftist craft amidst a sea of strong traditionalism.

Kaplan was a staunch rationalist who believed in shaking the complacency which often characterized Seminary faculty and students. He carried the "living body" idea of Schechter's to its logical extreme and created a nation/community-oriented Judaism. His notion of a Jewish synagogue-center, appealing to the whole person (serving religious, cultural, aesthetic and social needs), has today become the norm in Jewish institutional life. At the time, however, this notion, along with his theology, caused quite a stir among lay leaders and Seminary faculty.

Kaplan defined Judaism as the "evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people." [54] This idea was fully worked out in his 1935 book, Judaism as a Civilization. It was after the publication of this book that the Reconstructionist movement formally asserted itself as a separate entity within the Conservative Movement. The Society for the Advancement of Judaism, which was then its organizational body, did, however, retain its affiliation with the United Synagogue until the opening of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1968.

Kaplan continued to believe in the 'brotherhood of Conservative Jewry', even though several of the J.T.S. faculty had attacked him publicly in the Hebrew weekly Hadoar after the release of his 1945 prayerbook. Their open letter to him concluded: "What have you to do with the Law? Turn to homiletics." [55]

This incident illustrates the true basis of Kaplan's difficulties at the Seminary and with the movement's leaders. Kaplan was not content to merely teach his ideology in the classroom: this would have contradicted his belief in the merging of Jewish teaching and Jewish life. Kaplan was intent upon putting his beliefs into practice; the publication of Reconstructionist prayerbooks and the establishment of Jewish community centers were among his works. Through his actions, Kaplan broke two cardinal but tacit rules that guided the Conservative movement until very recent times: 'Keep all controversy behind closed doors.' and 'Change, if necessary, needs to be incorporated slowly and cautiously.'

The process of change in the movement has indeed been gradual and has been effected through interactions among the Seminary, the Law and Standards Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly and the pragmatic concerns of congregational rabbis and their congregants. The Seminary is still the movement's major power base in terms of official change, but the United

Synagogue and the R.A. have become more influential in recent decades. The fact that the Seminary faculty have been predominantly right-wing explains much of the "conservatism" in Conservative Judaism.

Until 1948, the Law Committee of the R.A. was composed of traditionalists who made decisions solely on the basis of halakhah. The committee's structure and decision-making process was reviewed at the 1948 convention of the R.A. and several major revisions were made. The Executive Council appointed 23 men "representative of the diversity of opinion with regard to Jewish law prevailing in the Assembly to constitute the Committee." [56] In this way, the Committee would contain a more representative sample of the movement's leadership.

Another major revision was the decision to include extra-halakhic material into consideration when designing movement policy. "Immediate significant consequences followed. The two historic responsa on the Sabbath utilized halakhic hermeneutics and precedents as well as psychological insights and social values to justify their conclusions." [57]

It was also determined at this convention that all unanimous decisions of the Law committee would be considered binding on the entire R.A., but all decisions involving both

majority and minority opinions would be left to the discretion of each individual rabbi.

One concrete example of the effect of pragmatic concerns on R.A. decisions is the organ controversy written up in a 1963 issue of Conservative Judaism. A statement of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards reads: "United Synagogue congregations show a variety of practice with reference to the use of the organ. . . . Under the circumstances, the use of the organ must be regarded as legitimate within Conservative Judaism." [58] This decision clearly takes into account extra-halakhic considerations along the lines of Schechter's "living body" model.

The Conservative Movement continues to attract adherents to its fold and claims approximately 1.2 million members. [59] It trains rabbis at campuses in Israel and Los Angeles although its Seminary's powerbase is still the New York facility. Its modern-day struggles are illustrated in the succeeding chapters.

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[24] Apparently, this decision was reached primarily due to the absense of Provoost, who was ill. Provoost and Seabury were bitter enemies who never reconciled.

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CHAPTER THREE

The Challenge of Moderation: Parallels Between the Two Religious Systems

There is much truth revealed through humor. The following are some light-hearted statements by outsiders concerning the Episcopal Church and Conservative Judaism:

"Calvinist in theology, Pelagian in modus operandi and Catholic in haberdashery"

"One who acts Orthodox in synagogue, Reform everywhere else"

"Not milchig, not fleishig, just parveh"

"The bland leading the bland"

The first three statements can be easily attributed to one of the religions only through the language that is used; the attitudes behind them could be used as outsider criticism of either. The preservation of tension between extremes is unnerving for adherents of those extremes, and those adherents often dismiss the middle position with the attitude: "One who stands for everything, stands for nothing."

In this chapter I will focus on the four major parallels between these two religious systems, incorporating their arguments against such "strawman" critics as portrayed above.

I. The Episcopal Church and Conservative Judaism as 'bridge' Denominations/Movements

One similarity between the two is their role as 'bridge' within their larger religious bodies: the Conservative movement serves to bridge the Reform and Orthodox wings and the Episcopalians act as a bridge between the Protestants and the Catholics. Some thinkers from both groups have eschewed this concept for several reasons. One Anglican clergyman summed it up in this way:

> "The Bridge Church": that is a tempting metaphor, but only partly true. It is also a dangerously flattering metaphor. It gives us the comfortable assurance that we Anglicans are <u>the</u> people of God, indispensable to the divine strategy of reunion. But a bridge is a very static thing. it does not live; it cannot move. It neither goes forward nor backward. To stand permanently on a bridge is perilously like sitting on a fence." [1]

While there are surely dangers to being known as a 'bridge denomination,' it has also been stated that "the Anglican church [is the] ecumenical church par excellence; it finds itself at home with all manner of churches." [2] In this way, the church serves as a crucial link between the ideological factions which divide the single "living body" of the Church.

Both the Anglicans and the Conservatives have played this role from the time of their inceptions. As was discussed in Chapter Two, Richard Hooker gave a solid theological platform to the Elizabethan Settlement. What for Elizabeth was primarily a political concern, was for Hooker a deeply religious one. Hooker was clearly in search

of religious truth through balance and restraint. He decried the Puritans' excessive emphasis on scripture while embracing the Protestant doctrine of justification. He condemned the Roman Catholic view of church and papacy while defending much of traditional church structure and practice.

One Anglican writer asserts that via media is not a pejorative label: Anglicanism teaches the whole of Catholic faith while remaining free from the distortions and exaggerations of the Protestant left and the Roman Catholic right [3].

As historian James Addison has observed:

> Ever since the Elizabethan Settlement it has always been true that in any branch of the Anglican Communion there exist, in a greater or less degree of tension, two elements or factors -- the Catholic and the Protestant. That is the kind of Church that the Church of England then set out to be--a Catholic Church which had undergone a vigorous reformation. [4]

Addison goes on to describe the traits which have historically revealed an Anglican group's emphasis on one or the other side:

To heighten the Catholic factor is to magnify the importance of:

1. Episcopacy conceived of as apostolic descent;
2. Strong emphasis on Sacrament of the Eucharist;
3. Elaborate ritual;
4. A tendency to express the 'corporate' side of Christianity and the 'objective' aspect of religion.

To heighten the Protestant factor is to magnify the importance of:

1. The Bible as the major source of authority;

2. Devotion to the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ alone;

3. A high value set upon preaching, especially for the purpose of conversion;

4. A tendency to express the 'individualistic' side of Christianity and the 'subjective' side of religion. [5]

Bishop Michael Marshall noted that the Anglican Church which emerged from the Reformation was one which claimed continuity with the English Church of Augustine of Canterbury through ancient orders and early church teachings; it also, however, incorporated the spirit of the reformers through an emphasis on the place of laity in the life of the church, and the use of scripture and worship in the vernacular. [6]

Others have viewed the <u>via media</u> as a struggle between individual autonomy and Church authority. As Charles Gore wrote:

> The extremes are represented by a dogmatism which crushes instead of quickening the reason of the individual, making it purely passive and acquiescent, and on the other hand by an unrestrained development of the individual judgement which becomes eccentric and lawless just because it is unrestrained. [7]

J.H. Newman described this tension in the following way:

> By the right of private judgement in matters of religious belief and practice, is ordinarily meant

> the prerogative, considered to belong to each individual Christian, of ascertaining and deciding for himself from Scripture what is Gospel truth and what is not. This is the principle maintained in theory. . . by the Protestantism of this day. Rome, as is equally clear, takes the opposite extreme, and maintains that nothing is absolutely left to individual judgement; that is, that there is no subject in religious faith and conduct on which the Church may not pronounce a decision, such as to supersede the private judgement, and compel the assent, of every one of her members. [8]

While there is no complete consensus on the components of these two forces in the Anglican/Episcopal Church, they are generally referred to as the High-Church or Anglo-Catholic wing and the Low-Church. As will become more evident in the later chapters of this thesis, these divisions have never been rooted completely in theological disputes: political, aesthetic and social concerns have been just as instrumental in determining church positions.

Similarly, the Conservative movement has acted in such a 'bridging' capacity throughout its history. Norman Bentwich, author of Solomon Schechter's biography, observed that Schechter was a blending of two opposites. Schechter was a mystic who believed in Divine revelation and was a "lover of unreason." Schechter was also a modern scholar who believed in progressive tradition, held a critical attitude toward the Bible and transferred Jewish authority from the Bible to the living body of Israel. Bentwich quoted Pascal's "truth is two opposites," in order to conclude that because of the tension between opposites that

Schechter preserved, he was among the greatest of Jewish leaders. [9]

Joseph Blumenthal, lay leader of the Jewish Theological Seminary in the late nineteenth century, perceived the goal of the Seminary as "strict adherence to and intelligent faith in our holy religion, allied to secular education and American citizenship. . . . The sober thought of the people has come to correct the eccentricities of extremists." [10]

The early rhetoric of the Conservative leadership was primarily directed against the threat of radical reform. This was not, however, their only concern. The fierceness of their polemics against the religious left often overshadowed their overt dedication to modernization. The Conservatives were avowedly committed to secular learning, scientific methods of biblical study and decorum in synagogue worship. This spirit still dwells within the movement. As former J.T.S. Chancellor Gerson Cohen stated:

> Assimilation properly channeled and exploited can become a kind of blessing, for assimilation bears within it a certain seminal power which serves as a challenge and a goad to renewed creativity. The great ages of Jewish creativity, as we have seen, have always been products of the challenge of assimilation and of the response of leaders, who were to a certain extent assimilated themselves. [11]

As noted in Chapter Two, the inevitable break with the Orthodox over this Americanizing spirit occurred in the early 20th century. While the Orthodox could have possibly

accepted some of the small, aesthetic changes which took place in Conservative shuls, they certainly could not endorse the blatant statements of the movement's leaders that Judaism has always changed over time and according to its cultural milieu. The Wissenschaft approach to Bible study was certainly another serious point of contention between the two camps. The Orthodox could not accept the application of standard rules of philology to the Bible which was considered by them to be literally Divine.

The Conservative movement has often been quite self-conscious about its place in the scheme of American Jewry. One Reform thinker, Jakob J. Petuchowski, has noted, "Too often there is the look over the shoulder, the sneaking suspicion that Orthodoxy may be the true guardian of 'authentic' Judaism, after all, and that the changes introduced by Conservative Judaism are really not quite glatt kosher." [12] Petuchowski also states, however:

> Faced by a choice between an unbending Orthodoxy, on the one hand, and a completely anarchic Reform Judaism, on the other, there would have been many American Jews left out in the spiritual cold. Conservative Judaism has manifestly appealed to those many American Jews, and has provided them with a religious identification which meets their inner needs. [13]

On a superficial level, this is made clear by surveys conducted among Conservative laypeople concerning the reasons they belong to the movement. Many of the laypeople responded in terms of their personal observance. Their

responses generally reflected self-definition through reactions to the Orthodox and the Reform. Typical responses included: I'm not Orthodox because: I eat trayfe out; I don't always go to services; and I light matches on Shabbat. I'm not Reform because: I like to wear a kipah at shul; I like to attend a traditional service when I attend; and I don't like to drive to shul on Yom Kippur. One respondent perhaps hit upon a truth when he or she declared: "Well, we believe in everything Jewish and yet we are not too strict." [14]

Conservative leaders, who prefer to speak in ideological terms, often define themselves in terms of the two extremes. Jacob Agus begins a 1950 article on halakhah and the movement by rejecting both the classical Reform and the Orthodox views. "The [Reformer] disdains, a la St. Paul, any 'religion of laws.'" This perspective, according to Agus, is contrary to Conservative Judaism. "We [also] do not believe that God dictated the Torah to Moses, and that He had transmitted to Moses . . . the Oral Law. [Therefore we reject] the literalist Orthodox position." [15]

Similarly, David Novak, who is among those in the right-wing of the movement, describes Conservative Judaism in terms of negative attributes. A dedication to halakhah, he states, separates Conservatism from Reform. The boundary which separates the movement from Orthodoxy is

Conservatism's acceptance of the historical development of Judaism and its commitment to critical scholarship. While Orthodoxy uses a deductive approach to interpretation (using hermeneutic principles to interpret traditional sources assumed to be literally Divine), "Conservative thinkers have accepted the content of both the Written and Oral Torahs as conditioned by human history in general and Jewish history in particular. [Therefore,] Conservative Jews part company with the Orthodox in their inductive approach to the tradition. . . . Such an inductive historical approach will discover a far greater variety of precedents in the tradition and will lead to more liberal halakhic rulings." [16]

Both the Episcopal Church and the Conservative movement, therefore, have been affected by the surrounding extremes in several ways. They both contain components of the extremes, they were born from disagreement with those extremes, and they serve to link the extremes in order to preserve an ideological range of expression within both Christianity and Judaism.

A good metaphor, while containing a kernel of truth, will always distort the reality it is intended to capture. A metaphor generalizes from many distinct particulars and there can be no way to include all specifics and exceptions in one overarching generalization. With this qualifier in

mind, I would propose that there is a better metaphor for the role of these moderate positions than that of a bridge. As was noted earlier, a bridge is static and unchanging and these adjectives do not accurately describe these two religious systems.

Perhaps a more accurate metaphor is that of a weighted buoy to which two large ships are connected with cables. When one ship (representing one of the two extremes) moves, the buoy (representing the Episcopal Church/Conservative Judaism) may move with it but prevents it from drifting too far. Within such a metaphor, there are many elements which affect the positions of the floating objects. The ships and the buoy do have freedom to move within certain limits without affecting the others. Past a certain point, however, one cannot move without pulling the others along, if only for a very short distance. Additionally, all three may be moved by outside forces such as winds or choppy waters. Such movement symbolizes the many societal and historical forces which are external to, but an integral part of, religious change.

There are two reasons why this metaphor reflects the state of affairs more accurately than does an image of a bridge. One is that it portrays the middle position as one which is not only determined by the two extremes, but one which influences these extremes in return. The ways in

which the middle positions have affected the extremes are not so easy to pinpoint. It has certainly become clear in the Jewish community that the boundaries between the three movements have become somewhat fuzzier in recent times, and this cannot be due solely to an outward movement of the middle. There has also been inward movement on the part of the extremes. This is particularly clear in the traditional shift of the Reform movement. If the sole preservers of Jewish tradition had been the rigidly Orthodox, it is doubtful that traditional practices would have seeped into the liberal camp.

The Ḥavurah movement, an extension of the Reconstructionist movement, has clearly affected Reform congregational structure. The Ḥavurah movement consists of predominantly liberal, well-educated Jews who worship and study together in small groups. Their services are traditional in terms of Hebrew usage, nusaḥ, and garb, but untraditional in their full inclusion of women as leaders and participants. Ḥavurah groups are now fairly common within large Reform congregations. Their services are generally conducted in non-sanctuary areas of the synagogue and are generally more traditional than those conducted on the "main stage."

The Conservative movement has affected the Orthodox to a considerably lesser extent. If there has been an effect,

it has been in areas where "modern" Orthodox synagogues compete with Conservative ones for adherents. In recent years, the Upper West Side of Manhattan has received attention as being such a site. The Upper West Side, populated predominantly with young, upwardly-mobile professionals, has been affected, along with the rest of the country, by the conservative, "family-based" values which have become vogue. The Orthodox Lincoln Square Synagogue and the Conservative Ansche Hesed Synagogue are competing for the same group of tradition-seeking Jewry: Jews desirable due to their educational levels and financial resources. As in any free market, both congregations must remain somewhat flexible to change in response to their competitors, in order to make their product more desirable.

According to Shlomo Riskin, former rabbi of Lincoln Square Synagogue, the Orthodox have gleaned much from the Conservative movement. "It taught [us] the importance of interpreting Judaism while utilizing the contemporary idiom, it established the synagogue as being more than a place of prayer alone, [and it introduced the concept of] summer camp as a vehicle for Jewish education." [17]

The Episcopal Church has had an effect on some Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church through liturgy. Episcopal studies in and publications on liturgy and liturgical music have affected other liturgical

churches. It is difficult to pinpoint liturgical change which is directly due to Episcopalian liturgical studies; however, Episcopalian scholars have worked with both the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics in their own liturgical reform processes. [18]

The second reason why the buoy metaphor reflects a more accurate depiction of the Episcopalian and Conservative experiences than does a bridge, is related to the series of shifts each one has made between the two extremes. A bridge remains firmly in one central position. This is, to some, an ideal. As one Anglican theologian states:

> The claim is that the Episcopal Church is called to be both evangelical and catholic. . . . This does not mean that she is to be evangelical in her preaching and catholic in her liturgy. It is not a matter of being sometimes evangelical and sometimes catholic. The Church is called to be catholic and evangelical all the time in all that she is and does. . . . If it does not express this duality all the time it is failing. [19]

This may be considered ideal, but it is far from reality. While the Episcopal Church may have retained a balance over time, at any given point in time the Church is generally closer to one of its two wings: the shift is largely dependent on general societal trends or internal reaction to phenomena within the Protestant or Roman Catholic churches. This "action-reaction" phenomenon is true for the Conservative movement as well.

Society moves in cycles: periods in which personal autonomy is highly valued and liberal attitudes prevail are generally followed by those characterized by a quest for authority and conservative values. These trends are certainly played out in the religious realm. The Episcopal Church moved from a position of rational orthodoxy in the early nineteenth century to romantic revival several decades later; from a liberal inclusiveness to a new conservatism in the early 20th century.

Such changes reflect societal trends, but they can also reflect persuasive and/or charismatic individuals who were able to sway many to their side. This is certainly true of figures such as William White, who was greatly responsible for the Church's democratic structure, and William Muhlenberg, whose proposed 1853 memorial ushered in a new pluralism to the Church.

The Conservative movement has also experienced shifts over time which have resulted from such influences as immigration patterns, political and economic conditions, changing social mores, and actions of the Reform and Orthodox. Eastern European immigration, the economic mobility of these immigrants' children, and the "middle-class, church-going" values of the 1950's are only some examples of societal phenomena which directly affected the movement and its structure.

The Reform movement's Pittsburgh platform caused the nascent Conservative movement to strengthen their convictions on Hebrew usage, the centrality of Zion, and the binding nature of rabbinic law. In recent times, the elitism of the Orthodox and their insistence on Orthodox beliefs and practices in order to represent "authentic" Judaism both here and in Israel, have caused the Conservatives to speak and write more forcefully on the importance of pluralism.

The Conservatives have been heavily influenced by outstanding individuals as well. Solomon Schechter is almost solely responsible for the early success of the Seminary and for establishing the notion of historical development as central to Conservative thought. Many credit the dynamic speaking abilities and firm convictions of former Seminary Chancellor Gerson Cohen for the Seminary's decision to ordain women. Now that moderate Ismar Schorsch is at the Seminary helm, it remains to be seen if women's equality in Conservative Judaism will remain a priority.

Whether one chooses the metaphor of a bridge, the metaphor of the weighted buoy or some other image, there is clearly a parallel between the Conservative movement and the Episcopal church in terms of their complex relationship with the Jewish/Christian wings which flank them. Some of the changes are a result of larger societal changes which affect

all religious bodies. Other changes are due directly to change within the more liberal and more conservative elements in Judaism and Christianity. Even if at any given point in time these groups emphasize modernity and/or assimilation or conservatism and/or orthodoxy to a greater extent, both, over time, continue to serve as links through the preservation of the tension between extremes.

II. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Comprehensiveness: Multi-Ideological Religious Movements and the Difficulties Inherent to Them

The 1968 Lambeth Conference Report contains the following statements concerning comprehensiveness and how it applies to the Anglican Church. One may substitute the words "Conservative Jew" and "Judaism" for "Anglican" and "Christianity," since these statements apply equally to the Conservative movement.

> Comprehensiveness demands agreement on fundamentals, while tolerating disagreement on matters in which Christians may differ without feeling the necessity of breaking communion. In the mind of an Anglican, comprehensiveness is not compromise. Nor is it to bargain one truth for another. It is not a sophisticated word for syncretism. Rather it implies that the apprehension of truth is a growing thing: we only gradually succeed in 'knowing the truth.' [20]

As was discussed in the first section of this chapter, the preservation of tension between extremes requires tension between differing factions and trends within these religious systems. One major concern which arises out of

such a situation is: What unifies these diverse individuals? What do they, as a group, stand for?

This concern has been addressed by many in the two religious groups. Dr. Stephen Sykes, in his controversial 1978 book, The Integrity of Anglicanism argued for an Anglican systematic theology in order to preserve the "integrity" of the Church. About comprehensiveness he stated: "[It] is a radically unclear notion, requiring qualification to give it precision; and it is for this reason that when it is used in Anglican apologetic it has to be used in contexts which make clear both what is comprehended and what is still excluded." [21]

Similarly, some Conservative Jewish leaders have called for clarification of their movement's position. As one United Synagogue officer wrote: "Diversity can be a source of strength only if there is a central definition pointing to the parameters and the limits of this diversity." [22] Former United Synagogue president Arthur Levine stated:

> Though there were valid reasons for Schechter's avoiding definitions in his day, it is doubtful whether such an approach can meet the needs of a contemporary society that is demanding precise statements, a disciplined response, indeed, even an imposed discipline. In contemporary society the major thrust is, simultaneously, self-awareness and a need for structure -- a need for a defined sense of purpose, and a clearly delineated role for the individual. [23]

The Lambeth Conference statement which opened this section contained several assumptions, one of which applies directly to this discussion: there are both fundamental and secondary principles which members of a single religious group hold -- there may be a plethora of diverse opinions within a group as long as these opinions are considered to be about secondary issues. In order to explore the boundaries of Conservative Judaism or the Episcopal Church, one must decide what is <u>essential</u> to each, and what is of a secondary nature.

One school of thought on this matter claims that beliefs are what sets these groups apart from other denominations/movements. These beliefs, however, are broad in both camps. As has been said of the Anglican Church, there are no easily identified principles such as "by grace and faith alone" (Lutheran), "by Scripture alone" (the Reformed churches), or "saving always in all things the authority of the Apostolic See" (Tridentine principle). [24]

Some have claimed that the Thirty-nine Articles serve this purpose. The 1801 Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted the Articles as official doctrine for the United States Church. The only changes made were in those articles which applied to the political structure of England. The doctrinal role of the Articles was upheld by, among others,

Bishop William White in his Memoirs and James A. Fox at the third annual convention of the Mississippi diocese. [25]

The Articles were also used to defend the Church against the Tractarian movement of the mid-nineteenth century. John Henry Newman's highly controversial Tract 90 attempted to reconcile the Articles with Roman dogma. The Evangelical wing of the Church perceived great danger in this approach, and some Episcopal thinkers of this time were made to publicly clarify their interpretation of the Articles. The Articles were therefore utilized as an encapsulated version of the Church's doctrinal position. [26]

The esteemed position of the Articles during this period is made clear by their inclusion in the Muhlenberg memorial. This memorial, as described in Chapter Two, was an attempt to unify non-episcopal Protestant churches under the Protestant Episcopal Church banner. Even though Muhlenberg challenged many parts of the Church's identity, he demanded that those seeking ordination in the Church assent to the Thirty-nine Articles. [27]

Rev. William Reed Huntington, in his Tract 91, called for the removal of the Articles from the prayer-book. He favored a more inclusive statement, what is now called the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. This was the beginning of

the end for the Articles in the United States. Today, the Articles reside in the "Historical Documents" section of the American Book of Common Prayer, which would suggest their removal from the essential belief structure of the Church. The Articles fell out of use even in England, where affirmation of the Thirty-nine Articles was a long-standing requirement for ordination. "By the time the preparatory papers for Lambeth 1978 were issued, it was being said that the 'Thirty-nine Articles have been generally abandoned.'"[28]

The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (adopted by the House of Bishops, 1886) was initially drafted by Huntington in an attempt to restore the "purer" and more well-defined dogma of the early Church to the modern-day Episcopal Church. The Quadrilateral is composed of four broad areas in an attempt to bring greater inclusiveness to the Church. The version presently in the American Book of Common Prayer reads as follows:

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God.

2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

3. The two Sacraments, -- Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, -- ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church. [29]

The Quadrilateral underwent adaptations over time, but the four general categories: Scripture, Creeds, Sacraments and Historic Episcopate remained the same. Since the time of their formulation, others have suggested that these four elements constitute the fundamentals of the Anglican Church. Dr. F.A. Peake states:

> In response to the question, "what is the content of Anglicanism?" one might reasonably put forward, as an example, the Lambeth Quadrilateral. To suggest that this is a statement of the content of Anglicanism is not to argue that it is a definitive statement, eternal and unalterable. . . . The Anglican Christian believes of the Lambeth Quadrilateral that it 'attempts to define common ground and to lay down guidelines for future consideration.' [30]

Other beliefs which have been put forward as fundamental to the Anglican Church have included aspects of the Quadrilateral. Richard Hooker spoke of the Nicene and Apostles' creeds as the regula fidei of the Church. Others have proposed that belief in the Triune God serves as the Church's essence.

There have been Conservative Jewish thinkers who have viewed certain beliefs or ideologies as fundamental to all Conservative Jews. Louis Finkelstein, in a 1927 address to the Rabbinical Assembly delineated the areas in which, according to him, there was substantial agreement among R.A. members. These include: a belief in God who revealed Himself to Israel through the Torah and prophets, a belief in the centrality of Torah, a 'cautious' approach to change

in ceremonial, a belief in a historically evolving Israel, a dedication to the restoration of Eretz Yisrael, a commitment to the Hebrew language, and the unifying institution -- the Jewish Theological Seminary. [31]

In a critique of this address, Eugene Kohn pointed out that in these areas there was not only lack of agreement, but fundamental differences in all but one. As he states, "the only effective bond that unites us and distinguishes us from other rabbinic bodies . . . is our common devotion to the Seminary." [32]

Seymour Siegel outlined five ideological principles which define Conservative Judaism: a belief in covenantal theology and chosenness, acceptance of the mitsvoth as vehicles to greater understanding of God, an acceptance of the developing process of Jewish history, a belief in Schechter's "living body" concept of ultimate Jewish authority, and a view of social change as gradual and organic. [33]

Mordecai Kaplan, at a 1947 United Synagogue meeting presented his paper, "Unity in Diversity in the Conservative Movement." In it, he identified four areas of agreement among Conservative Jewish thinkers: the indispensability of the land of Israel for Jewish life in the Diaspora, the primacy of religion as the expression of collective Jewish

life, the maximum possible plenitude of Jewish content -- including the use of Hebrew, and the encouragement of a scientific approach in Jewish higher learning. [34]

The preceding examples of attempts to define these religious systems through beliefs have proved problematic. One reason is that there are almost always exceptions to be found. Secondly, fundamentals which are so primary as to include everyone cease to define a system. Belief in a Triune God is hardly unique to the Episcopal Church. An ideology such as "the primacy of religion as the expression of collective Jewish life" does not set Conservative Judaism apart from other forms of Jewish religious expression.

Along these lines is the following criticism of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral:

> In [successive] Lambeth Conferences, the four points have proved useful, largely because of their banal nature. . . . No doubt there has been advantage to the church in espousing principles (understood as form, not content) which in themselves did not raise heated debate. But the price paid has been dangerous lack of focus upon theological content. . . . The Lambeth Quadrilateral is, it is suggested, an inadequate constitutional statement, a very limited commentary indeed on the nature even of the forms of the Christian life and community. [35]

For these and other reasons, many have looked elsewhere to define their religious groups. One of the avenues which has been explored is liturgy. While liturgy has been considered by many to be a unifying force in the Anglican

Church, it has not served this role for Conservative Jews. The reason for this probably lies in the hesitancy of the Conservative movement to stray too far from traditional liturgical structure. Reforms have been made, as will be explored in Chapter Four, but the movement is much more willing to express their disdain at liturgical innovations of the Reform movement than they are to publicly acknowledge their divergence from Orthodox structures.

There are, however, many Anglican leaders who would identify with Robert Gordis's statement, "Perhaps the most obvious criterion of Jewish religious life in America is public worship." [36] As Anglican theologian W. Taylor Stevenson observes, Lex orandi lex credendi, what we pray is what we believe. He goes on to say:

> There is the recognition that experience is originary, and specifically the experience of the foundational symbols and myths of the Christian faith found in scripture and liturgy as those are mediated to us in the ongoing historical transmission of traditions. It is this recognition that makes Anglicans suspicious of any call for doctrinal conformity. [37]

Stephen Sykes also looks to liturgy to describe the framework of the Anglican church. He cautiously states:

> The present Anglican church has incorporated a regulated doctrinal structure in the content of its liturgy and in the rules governing its public performance. . . . It must be admitted, as mentioned above, that the words of prayers are not assented to as the words of credal declarations. The worshipper is free to interpret them as he wishes, and to use any part and neglect any part without restraint. [38]

Similarly, Dr. de Mendieta, a former Roman Catholic monk, observed the importance of liturgy backed by canon law as a widely recognized feature of Anglicanism. He writes, "The answer probably lies in the field of their public and common worship, rather than of explicit and clearly defined dogma." [39]

Fr. John Macquarrie addresses this issue in the following statements:

> While the majority of Anglicans have been happy to refrain from close dogmatic definition, it does not follow that there is no recognizable Anglican position in theology or even a distinctively Anglican way of going about the theological task. For instance, just by belonging to the World Council of Churches, the Church of England declares itself to be a church that believes in the Triune God. It may in fact contain theologi ans who do not so believe. . . The Church -- for good reasons -- does not disown him, but neither does it endorse his teaching, for in its own daily liturgy it continues to proclaim its trinitarian faith. [40]

Another area in which group unity and distinctiveness have been sought is ritual practice. Attempts were made in the mid-nineteenth century to bring ritual uniformity to the Episcopal Church. These attempts were a reaction to the rebirth of Roman Catholic practice which spread through High-Church parishes as a result of the Oxford Movement in England. Many Low-Church bishops were in an uproar over the growing ritualism, especially the use of candles, incense and genuflection as expressing the Roman doctrine of the Mass.

At the 1874 General Convention an extensive amendment was passed to Canon 20 ("Of the Use of the Book of Common Prayer"). This amendment forbade the following ceremonies and practices during the celebration of the Holy Communion:

a) The elevation of the Elements in the Holy Communion;

b) Any act of adoration of or toward the Elements in the Holy Communion, such as bowings, prostrations, or genuflections; and

c) All other like acts not authorized by the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer.

> For thirty years this canon remained in force without producing any perceptible effect upon the steady advance of ritual. Apparently it resulted in only one trial, which ended in an admonition to the offender. In 1904 it was repealed by General Convention without one dissenting voice. [41]

As illustrated above, the Church is rather inclusive in terms of public ritual. There are, however, those who claim that there are practices preserved by the Church which point to Anglican belief. As one Episcopal clergyman suggests:

> Anglicanism has been rather strict in matters of practice, even when it seems lax in expounding the theology behind these practices. For instance, it has insisted throughout its history on an invariable practice of episcopal ordination, and this does imply a conception of ministry. . . . The practice of reverently consuming the consecrated gifts at the end of the eucharist does imply some eucharistic theology, [one very different] from that which prevails in those Protestant churches where any bread and wine over is thrown in the trashcan or poured down the sink. [42]

In theory, halakhah as interpreted and modified by the Rabbinical Assembly Law Committee, is the official standard of ritual observance for Conservative Jews. In reality,

this is far from being the case. The R.A. itself recognizes that the responsa which emerge from the Committee offer, at best, general guidelines. As is clarified in the 1951 R.A. Proceedings:

> The decisions and opinions of the Law Committee can . . . only be taken as the collective . . . judgments within the Rabbinical Assembly, judgments arrived at after due consideration of all the viewpoints represented in our movement. These judgments or responsa are channels marking the main current . . . of our thinking. We take them as studied directions rather than directives. . . Since no sanctions are to be imposed, and members are free to follow the majority or minority opinion, there is no need for a vote by the Convention on the specific questions considered by the Committee. . . . While we do not apply sanctions against members who refuse to accept even a unanimous decision of the Law Committee, such a unanimous decision is considered the official opinion of the R.A. and may be quoted as such. [43]

Students who enter the Jewish Theological Seminary are required to pledge their adherence to kashruth, Shabbat observance and daily prayer. [44] But these observances are not kept by all Conservative rabbis in the field, nor do most Conservative laity observe them. The movement cannot be defined by any uniformity in ritual practice.

There is one other general category which has been suggested as a unifying force in both systems. This is the concept that some general ethos or method unites the group and differentiates it from others. Under this assumption, the group does not adhere to any unique doctrine, but it does have a particular approach.

"The method of Anglicanism," claims historian F.A. Peake, "is consensus. Consensus does not mean dilution of faith to meet the demands of the moment. Nor does it consist of the decision of an uninformed majority. Consensus rests upon the consideration . . . of both the Bible and tradition." [45]

While many demand a definition of a religious system based on its content, many within these movements prefer to concentrate on process. Among advocates of this perspective are those who choose to focus on means of decision-making and the pattern of interaction among differing individuals within their movement/denomination.

Anglican theologian D.R.G. Owen proposes that although there is no one Anglican theological system which is normative for Anglicans, there is an Anglican "spirit." He identifies three features which characterize Anglican theological argument: reasonableness, tolerance, and openness. He grounds this claim in the writings of the theological "founder" of Anglicanism, Richard Hooker. As was discussed earlier, Hooker established the three-pronged approach to Christianity: Scripture, Tradition and Reason. His goal was balance and moderation -- the <u>via media</u>. This approach, claims Owen, has set a distinctively Anglican tone through the present day. [46]

Similarly, Dr. de Mendieta states that among the elements which bind the Anglican communion together are the "principle of compromise employed in official church documents and the emphasis on spiritual freedom." [47]

On this phenomenon in the Conservative movement, Moshe Davis writes, "The compatibility of different theological trends within the Historical School, as a Jewish religious movement in America, is in itself one of the major characteristics which the nineteenth-century pre-Conservative group bequeathed to its successor." Davis identifies three trends which unite in the Historical School: traditionalist, developmental and progressive. It is the interaction of these trends which distinguishes the Conservative movement. [48]

Seminary Chancellor Ismar Schorsch says of his movement:

> Conservative Judaism comprises both halakhah and midrash, both prescribed behavior and intellectual openness and development. Those are the two dimensions of traditional Judaism; in this light, I see Conservative Judaism as the most authentic expression of the breadth of traditional Judaism. [49]

According to Schorsch, therefore, the Movement is characterized by its general approach: a blending of the two components of Judaism. Similarly, Robert Gordis, in a recent article entitled "Process and Pluralism in

Conservative Judaism," defines Conservative Judaism by the interaction between these two phenomena. As he states:

> In truth, there are honored members of the Rabbinical Assembly . . . who maintain segregated seating; their legitimacy is not subject to question. . . . The role of conservatives (with a small c), when they are in the minority,. . . is validated, not merely by the principle of pluralism, but also by the workings of process; it is indispensable for the health of the body politic as a whole. When an innovation is proposed, the objections of those opposed to it may be that it is completely ill-advised, or premature, or poorly structured. The ensuing discussion may, therefore, lead to the rejection of the proposal in toto, or its postponement, or its modification. Whatever the outcome, both participating groups have made a creative contribution. . . [50]

This mode of defining the two systems has received criticism both from within and without. Anglican Professor of Divinity Stephen Sykes considers the comprehensiveness of the Church a cover for sloppy theological thinking. As he writes, "Anglicans [should not] come to believe that it scarcely matters if their communion flutters to and fro, tolerantly receptive to every passing opinion. Spiritually, that would be disastrous; theologically, it would be irresponsible." [51]

Reform Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn speaks for many on the left when he points out the inherent contradiction in a statement such as this one from the R.A. Committee on Law:

> We should take proper note of the fact that certain laws are obsolete, e.g., the laws against shaving, because they do not meet with the approval of the people; yet we may not declare

them null and void, as they are Scriptural commands.

Gittelsohn's criticism is as follows:

> No movement which refuses to nullify any Scriptural command can call itself modernist. Nor can it be labelled totally traditionalist if it concedes even in theory that some laws are obsolete. . . . Conservative Judaism simply can't have it both ways. [52]

In both sections I and II of this chapter, we have seen the variety of ways in which Conservative Jewish and Anglican leaders have sought to define their distinct approaches to Judaism and Christianity. There are those who define through negative attributes, i.e. "We are not Puritan/Reform." and "We are not Roman Catholic/Orthodox." There are those who define their group through ideology or doctrine. There are those who seek definition through practice or liturgy. Still others look at the system's process or approach.

I believe that the actual unifying force in these religious systems is their institutions. A clergyperson who receives ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary and belongs to the Rabbinical Assembly is a Conservative Rabbi. A priest who graduates from an Episcopal Seminary and serves an Episcopal parish is an Episcopal priest. Similarly, those laity who belong to a religious institution affiliated with one of these movements is a member of that movement. As Louis Finkelstein has written:

> [The founders of the Seminary], like their forerunners, Hillel and his predecessors,. . . hoped that, through emphasis on Jewish learning, they had found a means to create Jewish unity around a great, central institution. . . . Uniformity of observance, if it could not be achieved, was of secondary significance. . .[53]

If there is an additional unifying force among Conservative/Episcopal clergy and theologians, I believe it is in their approach. Granted, this way of defining a system is vague. It is not quantifiable -- there is indeed an elusive quality about it. It is beyond the terminology of philosophy, psychology and systematic theology but the religious experience, while containing these components, reaches beyond them all.

Terms such as "progressive revelation," "the living body of Israel," "reason, scripture and tradition" may not lead all adherents to similar conclusions, but they do provide a common language for those adherents. I also believe that the role of <u>via media</u> which each of them plays is not to be underestimated. This position plays an important stabilizing role in both Judaism and Christianity.

Perhaps the primary reason one chooses his/her place in the religious spectrum is psychological. One may feel more comfortable with little personal autonomy, complete personal autonomy or some autonomy within limits. Over the course of time, there will always be people who prefer one of these positions over the other two, and for this reason I believe

that the Episcopal Church and Conservative Judaism will continue to flourish and attract religious people to their systems. The struggles and floundering which each of them experiences does not exceed those of other systems which also continually strive to adapt themselves to changing circumstances.

The following statements of Justice Potter Stewart directly apply to the struggles of Anglicanism and Conservative Judaism. Justice Stewart made the following observations in his attempt to arrive at a legal definition of "hard-core pornography":

> I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it. [54]

III. Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal Church: Evolutionary or Revolutionary?

In Chapter Two, the histories of both systems were examined. The Anglican Church is said to have been founded by Henry VIII. The Conservative movement is said to have originated with the positive-historical school of Zacharias Frankel. The implication of these statements is that these movements represent deviations from mainstream Christianity and Judaism. Many within these systems would claim otherwise.

As we have seen in section II of this chapter, many thinkers within these systems consider their moderate approach -- their way of balancing modernity with scripture and tradition -- to be central to their identity. Many insiders claim that this approach has always identified normative Christianity/Judaism. They substantiate their claims through scriptural and other religious texts as well as through historical data.

In order to support the claim that their particular blending of faithfulness to tradition with adaptation to modernity has always been normative within their religions, many appeal to the concept of progressive revelation. This is the idea that Divine truth gradually unfolds over time; therefore, it is necessary for various adjustments to be

made in every age in order to bring us closer to a messianic era. As Anglican F.A. Peake states:

> Creation, for the Anglican, is a continuing process in which man -- as made in the image of God -- shares. This implies belief that the Holy Spirit who was active at Pentecost is equally active in 1981, and that contemporary interpretations of the faith are to be in keeping with the insights of other ages but also in terms which make sense to modern man. [55]

One difficulty that arises when attempting to summarize the ways in which these movements substantiate the notion that their approaches are evolutionary is that they often combine two differing concepts. On one hand they claim that revelation is progressive and that this continuing growth toward truth is part of their approach, while on the other hand they claim that every age is equally close to God and only outer changes are made in order to incorporate the spirit of the age into the core of Christianity/Judaism.

One example of this lies in the thought of Solomon Schechter. Schechter proposed that Judaism was a living organism that had evolved historically. However, he also insisted that the history of the interpretation of the Scriptures is liable to variations through "subjective notions of successive generations regarding religion and the method and scope of its application." [56] There is a conceptual difference between viewing Judaism as "evolving" which implies "better over time" and viewing the variations over time as due to subjective, cultural differences. These

two conceptual threads run through the scriptural and historical proofs used to root Anglicanism and Conservative Judaism in their normative religious traditions.

The following New Testament texts have been used to demonstrate the validity of Anglicanism as true to historical Christianity. The first is from John 14:25-26 and supports a scriptural notion of progressive revelation. In it, Jesus says to his disciples: "These things have I spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." [57]

Another text which has been used for similar purposes is Acts 2.5 ff. This text gives credence to the idea that adaptations must be made in order to transmit the core of Christian truth to successive generations. According to St. Luke's account of the first Pentecost, "They all heard in their own language" the record of the "mighty works of God." As Bishop Michael Marshall writes:

> The worldwide, ageless ingredients of the good news must also find their expression in local form. There must be no dull, colourless, central totalitarian approach to this universal proclamation. Each nation and culture and each age will root the word in its own language, while also resisting the temptation to become eclectic and eccentric. [58]

The Rabbinical Assembly Law Committee's responsum on riding to synagogue on the Sabbath contained the following textual bases for change in halakhah:

1. An ancient Tannaitic Midrash inquires, how could Moses learn the whole Torah in forty days on the mountain? Is not the Law, in all its details wider than the earth and deeper than the sea? In reply, the Midrash asserts that "rules," k'lalim, were given to Moses at Sinai, rules of interpretation and application which were later crystallized into laws.

2. A Talmudic account of the dispute between Rabbi Eliezar and Rabbi Joshua ben Chananya, [in which] the latter ruled against "the echo of a Divine voice," bath-kol, declaring lo bashamayim hi, it is not in heaven.

3. The fanciful story of Moses marvelling at the innovations of Rabbi Akiba reflects the historic insight of our Sages. [59]

This responsum also included the following Talmudic phrases to justify the abrogation of a Shabbat prohibition (riding on Shabbat) which had clearly fallen out of use: taphasta merubbah lo taphasta -- "to overreach is equivalent to not reaching at all" -- and tov 'asarah tephaḥim ve'omed mimme-ah tephaḥim venophel -- "it is better to build a fence of ten handbreadths that is likely to stand than one of a hundred handbreadths that is liable to fall." [60]

In addition to scriptural material, both the Anglicans and the Conservatives use historical evidence to demonstrate that changes and diversities have always existed in their religious heritages. The thirty-fourth Article of Religion, Of the Traditions of the Church, states:

> It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. . . . Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, Ceremonies or Rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying. [61]

Dr. Cyrus Adler, in a 1923 address to the Rabbinical Assembly, makes the claim, "At no time in the history of the Jewish people, except in Eastern Europe, has there been any profound objection to the learning and the language of the nations among whom the Jews were settled." [62] He goes on to illustrate this point with examples from the Babylonian academies and the great schools of Northern Africa and Spain. According to Adler, the Seminary followed in the normative, historical Jewish tradition:

> The Seminary recognized that there are and always have been and always will be divisions in Jewry; that there are always people who call themselves conservatives; that there are legal minds and rationalistic minds, philosophers and mystics; that some Rabbis always favor the strict interpretation and others the mild interpretation. [63]

Similarly, Gerson Cohen, in "The Blessing of Assimilation in Jewish History", draws upon the examples of Alexandrian Jewry and the Jews of the "golden age" of Spain to demonstrate the incorporation of outside cultures into Judaism. This assimilation, he claims, has always enriched Judaism throughout the ages; Conservative Judaism does not signify a radical break from this assimilation process. [64]

As we have seen in the writings of Richard Hooker, he perceived the Church of England as the legitimate heir of the early Church. He considered the three-fold authority of scripture, tradition and reason to be historically normative, and the Puritans and the Roman Catholics to represent extremes which distort the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church.

Similarly, Bishop Stephen Neill states that the doctrines of catholic faith are contained within Holy Scripture and the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian creeds. These are central to Anglicanism. The Anglicans condemn Roman Catholic additions such as the Infallibility of the Pope and the Corporal Assumption of the Virgin Mary, as well as the Unitarian denial of the Divine sonship of Jesus Christ. [65]

Certainly many have argued that these movements/ denominations are revolutionary and not evolutionary. The first step one must take in order to reach a conclusion on this matter is to determine the true core of Judaism/ Christianity. As has been discussed earlier, this is not an easily achievable feat. Many argue that the decision in favor of women's ordination, rendered by Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal Church, is radical enough to break them away from the historical mainstream. As will be seen in Chapter Five, many Conservative and Anglican leaders

consider this seemingly drastic change to be rooted in their heritages.

Rabbi Harold Kushner, a Conservative rabbi, makes an interesting observation in his article, "Is the Conservative Movement Halakhic?". His answer is that it is not. As he states:

> Conservative Judaism is not halakhic because Conservative Jews are not halakhic, and increasingly even Conservative rabbis are not halakhic. When our people are observant, they choose to be observant. They decide which mitzvot they will take seriously and how seriously they will take them. [66]

While Kushner sees this as an enriching change in Jewish life, he clearly views the Movement as a break from the earlier halakhic process. Jews who do mitsvoth out of choice, and not out of a sense of being commanded, are not acting out of traditional Jewish motivations.

Lawrence Kaplan argues that decisions made in the Conservative movement are made de facto and not de jure. For example, the vast majority of Conservative synagogues have mixed seating despite the fact that all sources are clearly against it. This is a significant change which is revolutionary, and not evolutionary in terms of Jewish sources. [67]

Another criticism, outlined by Menachem Kellner, deals with the issue of authority in Conservative Judaism. As was

mentioned in an earlier chapter, Solomon Schechter established the Conservative idea of Judaism as the "living body of Catholic Israel" which evolves historically and in which authority rests. Kellner questions the legitimacy of rooting this notion in Rabbinic Judaism. As he states:

> One cannot at one and the same time claim to be the direct, legitimate heir of Rabbinic Judaism and also define Judaism as the religion of the Jews. . . . The Rabbinic position on the relationship between Israel and the Torah is that it is Torah, and not Israel, which is primary. It is the Torah which defines the People of Israel who exist thanks to it and who are bidden to protect it, preserve it, transmit it, and, certainly, obey it. . . . It is the point of Exodus 19:5 ('If ye will hearken unto My voice, indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be Mine own treasure from among all the peoples.') [68]

The issue of authority in Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal Church will now be explored in greater detail.

IV. Authority in Anglicanism and Conservative Judaism

According to Congregationalist theologian P.T. Forsyth, "The principle of authority is ultimately the whole religious question." [69] Whether or not one accepts such a strong statement, authority undoubtedly plays a crucial role in determining the nature of a religious system.

The difficulty with discussing this issue is that the stated authority is often not the true authority. For example, it could be argued that in even the Roman Catholic

Church, in which the infallibility of the Pope is accepted as dogma, laypeople, and in many cases clergymen, act in ways which differ from Papal teachings. Certainly the seat of authority is more vague in Anglicanism and Conservative Judaism.

Leaders of both movements/denominations often assert that true authority is <u>not</u> synonymous with coercive power. Anglican theologian Arthur Vogel argues that even though any Christian account of authority begins with Christ ("All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." --Matthew 28:18), Jesus never imposed his authority in an authoritarian manner. He cites Jesus' way of using parables and miracles to signify and teach about God. Jesus also "explicitly condemned the rulers of the Gentiles who exercise authority by lording it over their people, imposing authority from above (Mt 20:25; Mk 10:42)." [70]

Similarly, theologian John Skinner states that Christian authority is ultimately anchored in God. However, God's "creative and redemptive activity, as it is mediated, is a nurturing and liberating presence at work subtly in nature, in history, and in the various cultural and ecclesiastical fabrications of reality achieved through human action and work." [71]

The preceding notions of authority lead Skinner to define authority as:

> that kind of structured reality, whether social or personal, which through nurture and cultivation enables individuals to become truly centred selves or persons, and thus, relatively free beings. [72]

Such a definition presupposes two dimensions to authority: a social and an individual. Thus, authority rests in a tension between the Anglican as part of a worldwide Communion and as an autonomous being.

The dispersal of authority is a constant theme in the Anglican Church. According to a report of the 1948 Lambeth Conference:

> Authority, as inherited by the Anglican Communion from the undivided Church of the early centuries of the Christian era, . . . is a dispersed rather than a centralized authority having many elements which combine, interact with, and check each other. . . . It is distributed among Scripture, Tradition, Creeds, the Ministry of the World and Sacraments, the witness of saints, and the consensus fidelium, which is the continuing experience of the Holy Spirit through His faithful people in the Church. [73]

The community of believers is said, by some, to be the base of Anglican authority. As Michael Marshall claims:

> [L]ike all Christian truths (as in the scriptures) [Anglicanism] belongs to a people with a story to tell and that story is the living incarnation of that truth. The people and the story are primary; the emphasis or ethos is derivative and probably only becomes apparent at a later stage and in retrospect. Anglicanism is the story of a people first and foremost. [74]

Similar is F.A. Peake's assertion that Anglicanism has much in common with the Orthodox churches of the East inasmuch as:

> The Church is hierarchical but not hierocratic. The highest authority in the Church is the whole Church, not the Bishops as such. According to Eastern theologians, the whole body of the faithful participates in the whole life of the Church. [75]

Richard Hooker implicitly took a stand on Church authority when he set forth the presuppositions which limit Scripture's authority. Hooker asserted that Scripture presupposes the human ability to reason and make societal laws in order to confirm and interpret Scripture. It is clear, therefore, that Hooker could not subscribe to the Puritan notion of sola scriptura as the base of Christian authority. His belief was in the dispersal of authority among Scripture, tradition and reason.

Many Conservative thinkers, like their Anglican counterparts, are wary of authoritarian forms of authority. As Louis Finkelstein has stated:

> [W]e need Law and Discipline in life, but . . . this law and discipline must take continual cognizance of the goals which they are intended to serve. It is only in bureaucracies, in prisons, and in backward schools, that discipline is sometimes regarded as an end in itself. [76]

The oft-quoted thoughts of Solomon Schechter on the issue of authority in Judaism were certainly influenced by Anglican theology. His tenure at Cambridge University

brought him in contact with Anglican concepts such as "Broad Church" (the branch of the Church of England which is tolerant of a range of Anglican viewpoints) and "High Church" which roughly translated into "Catholic Israel" and "High Synagogue." One can see the influence of Hooker's three-fold authority idea in these statements of Schechter's:

> It is not the mere revealed Bible that is of first importance to the Jew, but the Bible as it repeats itself in history, in other words, as it is interpreted by Tradition. . . . Liberty was always given to the great teachers of every generation to make modifications and innovations in harmony with the spirit of existing institutions. [77]

The Christian idea of consensus fidelium, defined above as "the continuing experience of the Holy Spirit through His faithful people in the Church," seems to translate into the following propositions of Schechter's:

> Since . . . the interpretation of Scripture or the Secondary Meaning is mainly a product of changing historical influences, it follows that the centre of authority is actually removed from the Bible and placed in some living body, which . . . is best able to determine the nature of the Secondary Meaning. This living body . . . is represented by . . . the collective conscience of Catholic Israel as embodied in the Universal Synagogue. [78]

It is important to note here a general difference in approach between Judaism and Christianity that makes comparisons in this area more complex. While Christians tend to concentrate heavily on God's presence which continues to live in and guide the Church as well as its members, traditional Jews generally refer to Torahitic and

Rabbinic Law as guides to the modern-day Jewish community. While God is certainly considered to be the source of these laws, God is not the explicit focus of Jewish discussions on authority in Jewish life. This attitude is perhaps rooted in the Biblical verse, "lo bashamayim hi", "it is not in heaven." God's revelation through the Oral and Written Law was complete and, as written in Pirkei Avoth: "Turn it (the Torah) over again and again for everything is contained in it."

Conservative rabbi Ben Zion Bokser calls for greater emphasis on the role of God's presence in Judaism. As he states:

> All of our religious groups, with the notable exception of some elements of Hasidism, have failed to stress the need for openness to the ongoing encounter of God and man. They have failed to stimulate a sensibility to the ongoing infusion of the divine which is ever seeking to uplift man and which, alone, is the source for a deep religious faith. [79]

Rabbi Phillip Sigal takes a position which is uncharacteristic of most Conservative thinkers, but which is completely in keeping with the Anglican view of authority when he relates:

> I believe that rabbinic halakhah was and is informed by the mysterious working of ruah hakodesh, the Holy Spirit, which generates our perception of the ancient revelation just as it did that of the rabbis of old. [80]

Generally, however, the question of authority in Conservative Judaism focuses on the tension between

Scripture and tradition on one hand, and the external realities and considerations of the Jewish people on the other. While it appears that Schechter's ideology would place him in a position now termed the Conservative "left-wing," this is not the case. Schechter maintained his concept of authority in a "living body" conservatively (small c). As Schechter explained in a letter to Professor Max Margolis:

> I think you are also not quite just to the historical school, or what you call "historism." All that the school maintains is that usages and customs receive a certain sanction and holiness by having been observed by Israel for many generations. They become identified with Israel, and unless there are serious moral objections to their continuation, they have still to be observed. [81]

It is clear, therefore, that Schechter did not endorse major changes in Jewish practice simply because many Jews were not observant. It is difficult to determine if Schechter would have been so vocal about the "living body" notion if he had lived fifty years later. Shabbat and kashruth observance were of primary importance to him, and the non-observance of these mitsvoth by modern-day Conservative Jews seems to provide the greatest challenge to his ideology. Perhaps the words of Louis Finkelstein, delivered in 1937, provide a view of authority which seems more in keeping with the spirit of Conservative Judaism:

> Sabato Morais, who founded the Seminary, Solomon Schechter, who was its second president, and Doctor Cyrus Adler have all accepted the

> fundamental principle that Jewish law must be preserved, but that it is subject to interpretation by those who have mastered it, and that the interpretation placed upon it by duly authorized masters in every generation must be accepted with as much reverence as those which were given in previous generations [emphases mine]. [82]

In Finkelstein's view, authority rests with those who are fully knowledgeable in Jewish tradition and not with the entire people as a whole. Changes may take place which adapt tradition to a modern society, but only by those who treat Scripture and tradition with utmost seriousness and reverence.

Robert Gordis goes one step further with his assertion: "Catholic Israel is the body of men and women within the Jewish people, who accept the authority of Jewish law and are concerned with Jewish observance as a genuine issue." According to Gordis, a Jew must be generally observant (Although s/he may violate "one or the other segment" as long as s/he is sensitive to the problem of his/her non-observance.) in order to exercise the right to make decisions regarding the status of halakhah. [83]

Gordis uses the example of the American system of government as an analogy. Even though our democratic nation is, in theory, government of the people, by the people, and for the people, it is, in reality, government expressing the will "only of those sufficiently interested in it to exercise the franchise and obey the laws." He cites the

examples of apathetic citizens who choose not to participate in decision-making, convicted criminals who forfeit their rights as citizens and members of certain extreme idealistic groups who voluntarily relinquish their rights in the state. [84]

For Gordis, authority resides in Catholic Israel. This body is not homogeneous; it has its conservatives and its liberals. However, the body is restricted to those who accept and observe the vast majority of Jewish law. Only this body is permitted to make changes in halakhah.

Two rabbis in the right-wing of the Conservative movement, David Novak and David Feldman, deviate further from Schechter's ideology. They have argued that although historical factors play a role in determining the nature of Judaism in every age, the ultimate authority on Jewish practice must be the halakhah itself. Feldman, in Birth Control, Marital Relations, and Abortion in Jewish Law, makes clear that wherever there is a clash between halakhah and modern-day values, halakhah must have the final say. [85]

Similarly, David Novak argues that the Conservative rabbinate errs by seeking to resolve problems caused by people's non-adherence to the halakhah. His view on authority in the Movement is illustrated by the following:

> Although Jewish law is interpreted by humans for human situations, its sources are given by God. Many human abuses have crept into Jewish . . . law and we are morally obligated to correct them. . . . [B]efore we correct human error we must accept the perfect authority of God. Laws of the Torah may be restricted by interpretation but they can never be permanently uprooted without our being false to the Torah system as a whole. Jewish moral zeal to right legal wrongs is self-defeating if it eclipses the transcendent authority of the law itself. [86]

The range of Conservative thought on authority runs the gamut from a nearly complete reliance on Rabbinic Law to a nearly complete reliance on modern-day humanity. This "left-wing" position is taken by Phillip Sigal. He criticizes those in the Movement who continually seek authenticity by looking over their right shoulder at the Orthodox. He calls for a repudiation of the formerly established book of Jewish Law, the Shulḥan Arukh:

> We must disassociate ourselves formally from the older halakhah. There is civil and criminal law on our books . . . which we must explicitly repudiate. . . . We need a long overdue but explicit statement that the Shulḥan Arukh is not "Jewish law," but only a digest of the options that were available in 1565. [87]

Sigal is critical of the present halakhic model utilized by the Conservative movement, in which authority resides in the Orthodox thinkers of the day. He urges that Conservative rabbis have more faith in their own movement's scholarship and decisions -- decisions reached by examining halakhic material and by taking extra-halakhic concerns into account.

As was discussed earlier, the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Law and Standards issues majority and minority opinions on religious matters. In any case in which the Committee's decision is not unanimous, the mara d'atra, the individual congregational rabbi, has the freedom to choose the position he/she will take. This arrangement works out better in theory than it does in practice. In actuality, there is a tension between the congregational rabbi and the Committee.

As Rabbi Simon Greenberg observes:

> [I]n many instances [the Committee] tended to undermine [the authority of the congregational rabbi], because any group within a congregation which favored the minority report of the Committee, while the rabbi favored the majority report, or vice versa, had the support of the national organization in its opposition to the rabbi. Moreover, a member of the Rabbinical Assembly who found himself usually agreeing with the minority reports of the Committee gradually developed a sense of being "out of step" and an outsider within the R.A. [88]

Sigal, Greenberg and others have called for a restructuring of the Law Committee in which the Committee would issue information and a variety of considerations but not official responsa. This would give the body of Conservative rabbis more genuine authority in their communities.

Authority, in terms of day-to-day religious functions in the Episcopal Church, is distributed among the various

decision-making bodies and individuals. Theoretically, diocesan bishops must authorize all liturgy used by parish priests in their jurisdiction, but often priests have a fair amount of autonomy. Priests have relative autonomy in choosing the marriage ceremonies they will perform, although they must receive written permission from their bishop to perform a marriage involving a divorced individual. Both bishops and priests are bound by Church canon and constitutional law, which may be amended by Convention. [89]

The tensions and balances which characterize much of theology and approach in Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal Church also characterize their authority structures. A suggestion was made at Lambeth 1968 that the Archbishop of Canterbury play a central authority role analogous to that of the Pope in Roman Catholicism. The Archbishop Donald Coggan argued against such a shift in power structure; his statements implied that Anglicans are not and should not be partial to rigid definition. [90] As we have seen, this sentiment prevails in the Conservative Movement as well.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Recent Change in Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal Church: Liturgy

In previous chapters we have explored some of the crucial issues with which both these movements have struggled. In Chapters Four and Five we will look at the main concerns of these movements as they undergo tangible changes. The intent is not to study the intricacies of liturgy or ordination per se: these topics could and do fill many volumes. The intent is to focus on the reasons behind the changes and the struggles inherent in them.

Both these movements are liturgical ones, meaning that both use a fixed liturgy. This is standard in Judaism and not so in Christianity. Many Protestant denominations have no standard prayer book, so as to, to use the Jewish terminology, pray completely with kavvanah and without kev'a. The Anglicans, therefore, are closer to their Roman Catholic brethren in terms of the form of their public worship.

On a practical level, liturgy is important for several reasons. One is that public Sabbath worship is, for many, the only religious act that is performed on a fairly regular basis. This is true even for many Jews, despite the many mitsvoth which are intended to encompass every action in a Jew's life. Secondly, despite the many adult education

programs which are offered in churches and synagogues, most adults learn theology and religious history solely from the contents of the prayer book which they read during public worship. Thirdly, religious tradition, for many, comes to mean the words printed in their prayer book, even if the words were written only several decades earlier. For all these reasons, liturgy is perhaps the most important aspect of a person's religious life.

The word 'worship' means the acknowledgement of the worth of the one to whom the activity is directed; it is an activity directed toward God. [1] Therefore, as Dr. Jakob Petuchowski suggests, the most obvious way to judge a prayer book is to rate its effectiveness. "Are the prayers contained in this book heard by God? Are they answered?" [2] But, as Dr. Petuchowski points out, this may reach beyond the limitations of an article, and a thesis as well. Therefore, we must settle for judging the effectiveness of a prayer book by its effect on the pray-ers and their own spiritual/emotional needs.

As we have already seen, these religiously moderate systems have their own set of difficulties justifying new liturgies: unlike the Reform or non-liturgical Protestant camps, they cannot appeal to reason or modernity alone; and unlike the Orthodox or Roman Catholic wings, they cannot

gloss-over the concerns of modern society when examining their liturgy.

The process of revising the 1928 Book of Common Prayer began approximately in the late 1950's and ended in 1976 (although it was not officially sanctioned by the General Convention until 1979). Several general movements in the Christian world had major impacts on the changes which were made in the 1979 book: the ecumenical movement, the liturgical movement, and the revival of Biblical theology. These general trends affected, among others, these aspects of the Episcopal liturgy: the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, the increase in participation of the congregation, the democratic process of liturgy change, the offering of alternative readings and the change of language more in keeping with the vernacular.

The various movements which impacted upon liturgical change in the Church seem to be very much intertwined. As Liturgics Professor Marion Hatchett states:

> The beginning of World War I marked . . . the beginning of a new or renewed emphasis on Biblical theology, Patristics, and ecumenism, and of historical-critical study of liturgy, renewed lay participation with a rediscovery of the corporate nature of the church and the role of the laity. . . . Between the two World Wars a new Liturgical Movement began to spread among Roman Catholics . . . and to affect continental Protestantism and Eastern Orthodoxy. It was not until the late 1930's that it began to have some effect upon Anglicans. [3]

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was greatly responsible for the renewed interest in Biblical research. The study of this period and the period of the early, undivided Church not only opened the doors to ecumenism but also uncovered forms of religious expression which seemed to "speak" to modern humanity more than did the medieval forms. At the same time, in the Church of England, A. G. Hebert was introducing revolutionary ideas of common worship in which the laity would actively participate. This marked the beginning of what is now called the liturgical movement. [4]

The liturgical and ecumenical movements brought the Anglicans closer to both the Roman Catholics and to some Protestant denominations. "One of the Eucharistic Prayers was drafted by an ecumenical committee that included Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians and Methodists, as well as Episcopalians." [5] Due to the extreme changes that have taken place in this century, the 1979 Book of Common Prayer contains more revolutionary changes than any previous prayer book.

The sacrament of Baptism is one area which has undergone change since 1928. According to the Book of Common Prayer,

> Holy Baptism is the sacrament by which God adopts [Christians] as his children and makes [them] members of Christ's Body, the Church, and inheritors of the kingdom of God. The outward and visible sign in Baptism is water, in which the

person is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The inward and spiritual grace is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit. [6]

Although it seems as if Baptism should be a complete rite of Christian Initiation, this was rendered vague by the fact that, until recently, one could not take Communion until after a second rite: Confirmation. This gave the impression that Baptism was only the first half of Christian Initiation which was completed with the Confirmation, usually taking place in adolescence. In 1970, the General Convention voted to allow children to take Communion, thereby clarifying the importance and completeness of the sacrament of Baptism.

This led to changes in both the rites of Baptism and of Confirmation. Prior to the new prayer book, Baptism rites were divorced from their integral relationship with the congregation, with the bishop and with the Church year. Confirmation, it seemed to many, had been exalted at the expense of downgrading the primary sacrament of Baptism. [7] Therefore, the editors of the new prayer book attempted to restore the centrality of Baptism through congregational involvement, through administration by the bishop, and through its administration on major feast days.

Another change in the Baptism rite is the age of the celebrant. In the early Church, adults were the norm for Baptism. Baptism was preceded by a period of instruction and spiritual preparation. Over time, probably due to a high rate of infant mortality, it became customary for infants to be baptized within eight days of birth. It is clear from the rubrics of the 1928 prayer book that infant Baptism was still the norm. As it reads, "The Minister of every Parish shall often admonish the People, that they defer not the Baptism of their Children. . . " [8] It is also written in the text of the rite, in many places: "this child (this person). . ."

The 1979 book does not encourage infant Baptism, and in fact considers adults and older children to be the prime candidates for Baptism. This is very much in keeping with the practice of the early Church. It may also reflect a statistical reality of the Episcopal Church. According to a 1984 State of the Church report, nearly 60 percent of Church membership was not raised in the Episcopal Church, but came to them by choice as adults. [9] Therefore, it is possible that a combination of sociological and theological causes led to the change in Baptismal rites.

The Holy Eucharist, according to the preface of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, is "the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord's Day and other major

Feasts" [10] This phrase was added since the 1928 book and reflects the fact that the rite of Holy Eucharist was given a more prominent place in worship. According to one Episcopal priest, this reflects the ascendency of the Catholic movement within the church. [11]

According to Marion Hatchett, the pre-1979 Eucharistic rite has been criticized for its lack of Old Testament lections, its lack of flexibility, its lack of opportunities for congregational participation, its separation of essential actions, and its failure to provide a real breaking of bread. These concerns have been rectified in the 1979 prayer book. [12]

The changes in the Eucharistic rite reflect a sharing of theology between Episcopalians and both the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The increase in Biblical readings reflects a Protestant emphasis on Scripture. The emphasis on the sacrament of the Eucharist, as well as the practice of receiving the Eucharist while standing and not kneeling, reveals a Roman Catholic influence. The ecumenical movement most probably has much responsibility for these changes.

The impetus for increased lay participation, as was mentioned earlier, stemmed from the writings of Hebert, but also from more general societal factors. It is important to

note that congregational participation did predominate in the early Church, but declined during the Middle Ages. The literal belief in transubstantiation caused laity to withdraw from receiving the cup during the Eucharist since they feared spilling the Lord's blood. Additionally, Latin, the language of the Mass, was not understood by most lay people. For these reasons and more, liturgy came to be thought of as the duty of the priest alone. [13]

The greater literacy of Americans over the past century is perhaps the greatest force behind the movement for congregational participation in worship. The literal belief in transubstantiation is no longer widespread among Episcopalians (although there is no "official" Eucharistic theology in the Church). Additionally, in the last few decades, there has been a decrease in the number of regular church-goers and an increase in the number of things one might do to fill one's time on a Sunday morning; therefore, greater participation on the part of the congregation could heighten interest in the service.

This desire to include laity in the worship process took two forms. One is the set of prefaces before each service which specify the parts of the liturgy appropriately done by bishop, priest, deacon, and lay person. These make explicit that the ministry of the Church includes all its members. As it states in the 1979 prayer book:

> In all services, the entire Christian assembly participates in such a way that the members of each order within the church, lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons, fulfill the functions proper to their respective orders. . . [14]

Lay participation also increased through the revolutionary process by which the new prayer book came to fruition. According to Leo Malania, Coordinator of the prayer book revision, "For the first time in history the prayer book has been produced by a process involving the whole church. All congregations were invited to try the new service from the moment it was authorized by General Convention in 1967." [15]

A number of services for trial use were issued from 1967 until 1976, all named for the color of their covers. The 1970 "Green book", offered three Eucharistic rites and included more contemporary language. The 1973 "Zebra book" (black and white) included revisions based on responses to the previous book. The "Blue book," which incorporated further revisions, was issued in 1976 and was approved officially in 1979. [16]

The Standing Liturgical Committee discovered from the "Green book" that there was both a desire to keep the traditional language of the 1928 book and a desire to update the Church's language of worship as some other Christian branches had done. In an attempt to please as many as

possible, the book now provides two rites: Rite I in Tudor English, and Rite II in contemporary language. According to Marion Hatchett:

> Though the Tudor English of the 1928 edition is loved by many, some of its words are definitely obsolete (for example, vouchsafe) and others have changed meaning (for example, prevent, comfort, conversation). This language is inaccessible to some, and it is distasteful to others. [17]

As was mentioned earlier, the language of the prayer book may constitute, for many, "tradition." Therefore, the use of outmoded language comes to be comfortable for congregants and change may seem quite disturbing. As one Long Island deputy observed at the 1976 General Convention, the mental health of Episcopalians could be endangered by the change in liturgy; he cited the case of a psychiatrist who had treated Roman Catholics for severe post-Vatican II depression related to the change from Latin to the vernacular. [18]

Another controversial change in the liturgy stemmed from the desire of many for more varied and flexible forms of worship. As was discussed in Chapter Three, many in the Anglican church cite liturgy as the unifying factor (It must be noted, however, that each country in the Anglican communion has its own distinct prayer book.). For those who uphold this view of the Church, the offering of differing rites and services would seem divisive.

There are several responses one could make to such a critique. One response is that a variety of forms have always characterized Christian worship since the time of the apostles. The new book simply brings together the diversity of Christian traditions and includes concerns of modern Christians as well. As Coordinator Leo Malania states, "We reached back before the Reformation to earliest traditions and we reached into the future trying to anticipate what people will be praying about." [19]

Another response is that the theology of the book remains constant despite the fact that the forms have changed. This disputed point is presented by Liturgics Professor Leonel Mitchell who notes:

> [I]t is not true . . . that the 1979 prayer book has radically altered the theology of the Episcopal Church. It would be more accurate to say that the way in which we express the theology of the Episcopal Church has been changing and developing throughout the years and centuries until many people came to feel uneasy with their worship precisely because it did not reflect the way they believed. [20]

The main opposition to the Draft Proposed Book coalesced to form the Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer (SPBCP). While the Society's leaders were concerned with the contemporary language, the "watered-down" theology, and the proliferation of services, they focused upon the language issue, probably because it would garner more support among laity. Many in their ranks

found the usage of "You" and "Your" more disrespectful than the "Thee" and "Thou" of previous books. As its president, Professor Walter Sullivan argued: "The Rev. Dr. Massey Shepherd and his partners in Greenbookery would have us declare our buddy-hood with God." [21] Despite the fact that the Society claimed 100,000 members by September 1976, the Proposed Prayer Book passed both the 1976 and 1979 General Conventions by an overwhelming majority.

The changes which marked the new Book of Common Prayer were far greater than those which marked the new Conservative prayer book, Sim Shalom. There are Conservative leaders, however, who would certainly endorse the following comments of The Churchman's editor concerning the making of the 1928 Episcopal prayer book:

> The chief task of the Convention in this matter [of revision] is not to preserve for our delectation a sacred literary monument, but to provide prayers which any intelligent Christian can say with sincerity. And not to desire this sincerity, to remain content with the present lack of coordination between religion and life, is nothing short of a sin. [22]

One such Conservative thinker is Robert Gordis who has written prolifically on Conservative liturgy and thought. As he states in the words of Rabbi Kook, "the old must be renewed and the new become sacred." [23] He uses two Talmudic passages to illustrate the difficulty of synthesizing new and old in Jewish liturgy: "Eyn mikra yotse midey peshuto" (Shab. 63a), "The literal meaning of a

text cannot be disregarded," and "Hametargem pasuk ketsurato harey zeh badday" (Kid. 49a), "Whoever translates a text literally, falsifies it." [24]

Gordis identifies three principles which he believes must guide the Conservative movement in their liturgical endeavors: continuity with tradition, relevance to the needs and ideals of the present generation and intellectual integrity. These principles were utilized to produce the Movement's 1946 siddur, and were manifested in several areas.

Continuity with tradition was certainly maintained in this, a prayer book nearly identical with any Orthodox siddur. Gordis maintains that several concepts prevalent in the prayer book cannot be understood by modern Jews in a literal fashion, but that most of them need to be preserved in liturgy. These include the references to the messiah, the concept of "chosenness," and the Hebrew phrase, mehayyeh hammetim. [25]

Gordis, in the introduction to the 1946 prayer book, justifies the perpetuation of these references by the concept of "continuity with tradition." He provides examples of how they may be interpreted metaphorically, sometimes backing up his interpretations with Rabbinic material. There is one concept, however, which he believes

must be purged altogether: the references to animal sacrifice. This was done to some extent, but not completely; this task was left for the editors of the 1985 prayer book, Sim Shalom.

A few minor additions and substitutions were made to rectify passages which the editors deemed to be out of touch with the twentieth century intellectual climate. One such addition was the Hebrew word, ba'olam," to the particularistic sim shalom prayer in order to make it more universalistic. The desire for greater universalism also entailed the changing of shelo 'asani goy (who did not make me a gentile) in the morning berakhoth to she'asani yisrael (who made me a Jew). The editors' dedication to egalitarian values was limited to the substitution of she'asani betsalmo (who made me in God's image) for shelo 'asani ishah (who did not make me a woman).

The 1985 Sim Shalom prayer book is more inclusive than the 1946 siddur in that it includes services, not only for Sabbath and Festivals, but for weekdays and home observances as well. The main revisions included in this book lie in the English translations, the offering of alternatives, and the further removal of references to the sacrificial cult.

The 1985 siddur, like the most recent Anglican book, contains more contemporary English: "You" and "Your" now

replace "Thee" and "Thy." The language is also more inclusive of women in that the Hebrew female suffixes are offered as alternatives to the male for female worshippers. The translation of avoth is offered as "ancestors" as opposed to the non-inclusive "patriarchs."

The offering of alternative readings is done strictly within a traditional framework. The tephillath ḥovah, the obligatory prayer, has been retained while some of the outdated additions of later generations have been replaced by more meaningful Rabbinic passages. Such revisions characterize parts of the pesukey dezimrah, the taḥanun, the private prayer of Mar at the conclusion of the 'amidah, and the Sabbath and Festival musaph services. [26]

There are two major similarities between the prayer book revisions of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer and the Conservative Siddur Sim Shalom. One is the process of "change rooted in tradition." By this I mean that the new passages which were added, were, by and large, new for modern worshippers but rooted in the early Church/Rabbinic period. Both these books clearly result from thorough scholarship, and despite the fact that they have been criticized by some who claim that too many liberties have been taken with the established liturgy, changes are thoughtful and rooted in either traditional texts or serious intellectual and/or social concerns of the modern era.

It is interesting that spokespeople for both movements/denominations relate that a number of neglected texts rooted in their early histories actually meet modern needs better than do later passages. This is Sim Shalom editor Jules Harlow's assertion concerning the supplications by Rav Amram and by Rav Saadiah Gaon added to the taḥanun. [27] As was discussed earlier, Biblical theology deeply affected the sacramental rites and some of the liturgical text in the new Book of Common Prayer. The old, however, is viewed by many as new, in that it is more relevant than medieval material.

Another similarity between the new prayer books is that they are the first ones (within the two systems) to offer alternative readings. Why is this? I would propose three possible explanations for this phenomenon. Firstly, during the 1960's and 70's, individual expression and freedom of choice became American bywords. This was a time when many challenged established norms and institutions for being too constricting and hindering the freedom of the individual. These societal factors, external to the religious movements themselves, may have influenced their decisions to offer liturgical variety.

Another explanation is that synagogue and church attendance began to decline during this time, as normative middle-class values were being called into question. Many

believed that institutionalized religion had no place in their modern lives and many clergy strove for innovative programming to draw them back to the fold. "Relevant" worship which differs slightly each week could be seen as part of this phenomenon.

A third explanation ties in with the discussions of unity in diversity in the previous chapter. It is clear that theological and ritual diversity exists in both the Episcopal Church and the Conservative movement, but this fact seemed, for years, too threatening to admit publicly. It could be that strict uniformity is no longer sought in these systems since there is little hope that it can be attained. The acknowledgment of even slight differences in liturgical practice among churches and synagogues is perhaps a sign that these groups are becoming more comfortable with their comprehensiveness.

Prayer book reform did cause some amount of controversy in the two systems. The decision to ordain women, however, overshadowed liturgy reform in the minds of most adherents. The discussion surrounding this historic decision will be explored in the next chapter.

Full bibliographical details of the works quoted here will be found in the Bibliography

NOTES

[1] Leonel L. Mitchell, The Way We Pray, p. 66.

[2] Jakob J. Petuchowski, Rev. of Siddur Sim Shalom, Conservative Judaism, p. 82.

[3] Marion Hatchett, "The Anglican Liturgical Tradition," in The Anglican Tradition, ed. Richard Holloway, p. 75.

[4] William Sydnor, The Real Prayer Book, pp. 84-85.

[5] Hatchett, pp. 76-77.

[6] The Book of Common Prayer (1979), p. 858.

[7] Marion Hatchett, Sanctifying Life, Time and Space, p. 163.

[8] The Book of Common Prayer (1928), p. 273.

[9] David E. Sumner, The Episcopal Church's History: 1945-1985, p. 162.

[10] The Book of Common Prayer (1979), p. 13.

[11] quoted in Sumner, p. 114.

[12] Hatchett, Sanctifying Life, Time and Space, pp. 172-174.

[13] Charles P. Price and Louis Weil, Liturgy for Living, p. 75.

[14] The Book of Common Prayer (1979), p. 13.

[15] Betty Gray, "Episcopalians Shape a New Liturgical Life," The Christian Century, p. 731.

[16] Gray, pp. 731-732.

[17] Hatchett, "Draft Proposed Prayer Book," Worship, p. 215.

[18] Sumner, p. 107.

[19] Gray, p. 732.

[20] Mitchell, The Way We Pray, p. 12.

[21] Sydnor, p. 94.

[22] Sydnor, p. 74.

[23] Robert Gordis, "A Jewish Prayer Book for the Modern Age," Conservative Judaism, p. 20.

[24] Gordis, p. 6.

[25] Gordis, p. 9ff.

[26] Petuchowski, p. 82.

[27] Jules Harlow, "Introducing Siddur Sim Shalom," Conservative Judaism, p. 14.

CHAPTER FIVE

Recent Change in Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal Church: Ordination of Women

Throughout history, women have been treated as what some have called the "other." Women have been defined through their relationships with men: daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses. While women have always been appreciated for their child-producing and child-rearing capabilities, few of the many diverse strengths of women have been respected in a male-dominated world.

It is only recently that women have been allowed entrance into traditionally "male" positions and careers in the secular realm. Women doctors, lawyers, politicians and other professionals are now abundant and widely accepted in American society. The religious world, however, has been more reluctant to break down the sex-role barriers which have characterized traditional religion.

Religious groups which are on the theological "left" were the first to open their clerical positions to women. The Methodists began ordaining women in 1880. It was not until the 1970's when other mainline churches began to ordain women. Similar to most mainline Protestant denominations, the Reform movement in Judaism ordained its first woman rabbi in 1972.

These movements, while struggling with sociological and psychological factors, did not face the same theological difficulties as did the Episcopal Church and the Conservative movement. Both these groups, as has been illustrated previously, consider themselves to be tied strongly to tradition. The Episcopalians/Anglicans retain strong ties to the Catholic church and the Conservatives see themselves as an halakhic movement.

The Episcopal Church was forced to take a stand on this issue after the "irregular" 1974 ordination of eleven women in Philadelphia by three non-diocesan bishops. The women and their supporters believed that this revolutionary action was necessary, since the previous two Conventions had defeated proposals to ordain them. Two weeks later, at an emergency meeting of the House of Bishops, the ordination was declared invalid; the women, however, continued to function as priests. In 1975, four more women were ordained to the priesthood in Washington D.C. The official vote to ordain women took place at the 1976 General Convention where it passed with a small margin. The fifteen women who had previously received ordination were recognized by the House of Bishops as priests.

The ordination of women became an "official" concern of the Rabbinical Assembly in 1977 when a motion was presented asking the faculty of the Seminary to admit women to the

rabbinical program. At that time, an inter-disciplinary commission was formed to investigate the issue, and their pro-ordination conclusion was presented to the R.A. in 1979. The application of Rabbi Beverly Magidson, graduate of the Reform seminary, to the Rabbinical Assembly served as further impetus for the movement to articulate its position. Rabbi Magidson's application was rejected by a narrow margin, but this may be due to the fact that many wanted to wait for the Seminary to ordain women before accepting women from other movements. In April 1983, the R.A. voted in favor of women's ordination. Six months later, the faculty of the Seminary voted to admit women to its rabbinical program.

The consideration of women's ordination did not appear suddenly in either movement/denomination; women had been gaining greater religious rights prior to the ordination discussions. In 1964, the women serving as deaconesses in the Church were recognized as "ordered" and not "appointed." This paved the way for Rev. James Pike, Bishop of California, to ordain a deaconess to the diaconate in 1965. In 1969, the canon of the Church was amended to license women to act as lay readers and to administer the chalice. [1]

In the Conservative movement, decisions to include women more actively in public worship had gradually been

rendered by the R.A. Committee on Law and Standards. As early as 1955, the Committee permitted women's 'aliyoth on special occasions. In the early 1970's, it was suggested by the committee that women be counted in the minyan, permitted to have bath mitsvah services, allowed to fulfill the obligation to recite kaddish for a deceased relative, and permitted to lead in the birkath hamazon. [2] The Committee, of course, has no power to enforce these rulings, and the carrying-out of these suggested practices is left to the discretion of the individual rabbi.

By the mid-1970's, it was clear that the role of women in public religious affairs was drastically greater than that of just a decade earlier. It seemed to many that the next logical step was women's ordination. The heated battles over this issue were carried out in meetings, at Conventions, and in official and unofficial publications. The arguments drew from Scriptural, traditional and historical sources. Through the debates, it became clear that there were basic differences among theologians and clergy as to the role and function of priests and rabbis. With some exceptions, the discussions did not focus on the act of ordination per se, but on the functions of a clergyperson in these traditions. In the following pages I will present an overview of these debates. I will begin

with the arguments of the anti-ordination of women positions in both camps.

One who argues against the ordination of women is not, as some have assumed, necessarily acting out of deep-seated misogyny. It is true, however, that some adherents to this position speak out of their own emotional difficulties. One priest, writing under a pseudonym, claimed that any woman who strives to function beyond her role as wife and mother is a sick individual and any society which endorses her actions is sick as well. [3] I will not further comment on this viewpoint, except to say that the opinions contained in the following paragraphs are ones which, unlike this one, are reasonable and coherent.

Certain New Testament texts and conditions are often central to arguments against the ordination of women. In I Corinthians 14:33b-35 we read:

> As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

Other common New Testament texts used to illustrate Paul's position on women in the church are drawn from I Corinthians 11. In it we read, ". . . the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God" (verse 3) and "For a man ought not to

cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man." (verse 7) Similar is Ephesians 5:22-3: "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. . ."

C.S. Lewis draws upon these scriptural ideas when he argues that only males can properly represent the Lord to the church, for the church is feminine to Him. Lewis believes that we do not possess sufficient knowledge to challenge Divinely-given differences between male and female, as we are in no position to question the relationship between God and humanity. [4]

Another argument against women as priests follows from the belief that the priest functions as a symbol of God in the church. Albert J. duBois advances this line of reasoning as follows:

> The male has the initiative in creation. The act of blessing, which is the fundamental priestly act, is creative. To say "Bless us" is the supplicatory prerogative of any minister, but to stretch out a hand and say "Bless this" is to initiate a creation. In this the male priest reflects the creative activity of God the Father. [5]

A related assertion is that women must be excluded from the priesthood because God became incarnate in a human male -- Jesus of Nazareth. As one proponent of this view has stated:

> Being a Jew, being a Palestinian, being a first-century man -- all these are what we might call, in the language of Aristotelian metaphysics, the "accidents" of Christ's humanity; but his being a man rather than a woman is of the "substance" of his humanity. . . . [H]e could not have been a woman without having been a different sort of personality altogether. [6]

Implicit in this statement is the understanding of the priest as representative of Jesus Christ. While this perception of the priesthood is not shared by all, it is supported by the catechism in the Book of Common Prayer which declares, "The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people. . . " [7] This view is supported by the Reverend Stanley Atkins who states:

> The notion that an all-male priesthood is somehow defective because not sufficiently representative, is an argument against the priesthood of Jesus Christ. . . . The man-priest symbolizes more clearly the maleness of Christ which is the emblem of his masterfulness as our Savior. [8]

In Atkins' view, Jesus represents the "Priest par excellence". If one adheres to this view and also believes that Jesus' maleness is central to his being, and not just a cultural accident, then one would be inclined to oppose women in the priesthood. A similar viewpoint is upheld by those who point to the all-male apostles as paradigms for modern-day priests. Atkins advances this view as well:

> Christ's choice of men as apostles was not accidental. . . . He chose men to be his apostles in order to fulfill the symbol of Fatherhood which he used for the creator of the natural order. The apostles represented the church, and the modern

> priesthood represents the people of God today. . . . It is their witness, their authority, which provides the Church with the capability to make known to the world the meaning of the mission of Jesus Christ and the redeeming love of God revealed in him. [9]

Similarly, the statement of beliefs of the United Episcopal Church of America, a splinter group formed in 1970 as a reaction to growing liberalism in the Church, includes the following: "The Apostolic Ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons was instituted by Christ and it is male in character." [10]

Those who subscribe to this viewpoint believe that the apostolic succession, of which the priesthood is the vehicle, can only be maintained by males. According to this interpretation of scripture, it is not in God's plan for women to be the bearers of Jesus' mission and word. Women do play important roles in the New Testament, and may perform important functions in Church work such as pastoral counseling and teaching. However, priestly functions such as absolving, blessing, and celebrating the Eucharist must be carried out by men.

Another reason for maintaining an all-male priesthood is the continuity of tradition. As was discussed in Chapter Three, thinkers in the Episcopal/Anglican Church consider the Church to be evolutionary and not revolutionary. Opening priestly functions to women seemed to many to be a

radical departure from traditional Church practice. As Atkins relates:

> The persisting tradition of two thousand years in church order reveals the mind of the Spirit for the future of the ministry of the church. Christian priesthood has consistently been male through cultures of varying sexual patterns. To obey the Spirit, we must be faithful to this history. [11]

Additionally, there was some concern that this change would damage Christian unity. [12] This was a particular concern in terms of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations. The official dialogue between these two Churches in the United States began in 1965. The 1969 mission statement of these dialogues included the following declaration: "We see the goal as to realize full communion of the Roman Catholic church with the Episcopal Church and the other churches of the Anglican Communion." [12] With an ambitious goal such as this, many would certainly be wary of taking a major step away from Roman Catholic practice. Many American priests were probably aware of the letter of Pope Paul VI to Archbishop Coggan in 1975 in which he stated: "We must regretfully recognize that a new course taken by the Anglican Communion in admitting women to the ordained priesthood cannot fail to introduce into [t]his dialogue an element of grave difficulty." [13]

The arguments among right-wing Conservative leaders on women as rabbis parallel these Anglican objections. They

are drawn from Torahitic and Rabbinic texts as well as from historical experience and concerns about preserving tradition and Jewish unity (i.e. unity with the Orthodox).

Similar to the Episcopalian discussions, ordination of women per se has never been the focus of Conservative objections in this matter.

> The role of the rabbi as we know it today is not one which is established in classical Jewish texts, but rather is one which has evolved through social need and custom. Ordination at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America is done in a way which is nearly indistinguishable from the granting of an academic degree at the successful completion of a course of study. [15]

The central area of discussion has been the functions which a rabbi is required to perform in a congregational setting, and the various difficulties inherent in a woman being asked to carry them out. According to the minority opinion in the "Final Report of the Commission for the Study of the Ordination of Women as Rabbis":

> Not all congregations accept the view that women may be counted in a <u>minyan</u>, receive <u>aliyot</u>, or lead the service in liturgical prayer as a surrogate for others. Many more congregations and many Jews outside our Movement may be affected by practices in connection with testimony relating to marriage and divorce, where the laws are restrictive in the case of women. [16]

According to Rabbi David Novak, the functions which are necessarily male "are leading a public service (<u>sh'liah tzibbur</u>), reading the Torah at a public service (<u>ba'al koreh</u>), and acting as a witness (<u>ed</u>) in a Jewish judicial

proceeding." The only function which is necessarily male and also necessarily rabbinical "is to act as a judge (dayyan) in a Jewish judicial proceeding." The functions designated as male are ones which are necessary to perform in a congregational setting and therefore problematic for synagogues in which the only rabbi would be a woman. [17]

Novak argues that a woman cannot act as sheliaḥ tsibbur because she is not obligated to pray or read from the Torah and, therefore, cannot fulfill the obligation for the congregation. He denies the claim of others that women can voluntarily take upon themselves the religious responsibilities obligatory for men, supporting his position with the Biblical story of Koraḥ. As Novak writes:

> Koraḥ's challenge to Moses and Aaron was that "you have too much, for the entire congregation all of them are holy. . . ." In other words, why have the others been excluded from positions of authority. Moses' answer is that "tomorrow the Lord will make known who is His and who is holy and He will draw him near. . . . " God . . . [chose] Moses and Aaron from among the other leaders. The covenant and the various statutes that it contains are not voluntary from the human position. [18]

The prohibition against women serving as witnesses is d'oraita (Biblical). As Novak states: "Such rulings, unlike ordinary rabbinic legislation, do not admit of repeal. The fact that this tannaitic interpretation is not disputed by any other tannayim indicates that it is incontrovertible." [19] Since women are prohibited from

serving as witnesses, they are a fortiori excluded from the essentially rabbinical role of judge. The case of Deborah who "judged Israel" (Judges 4:4) cannot be cited as evidence since, according to several sources, it involved special Divine dispensation. [20] As he quotes from the Mishnah, "whoever is fit (kasher) to judge is fit to witness; but there are those who are fit to witness and are not fit to judge. (M. Niddah 6.4)" [21]

There have also been extra-halakhic objections to women rabbis. Similar to Episcopalian concerns, Rabbi David Feldman believes that the ordination of women marks a revolutionary break from tradition and not an evolutionary step forward. As he contends:

> As of now, women put on neither Tallit nor Tefillin, they do not serve as cantors or Torah readers, nor are they counted in the Minyan in many places. . . . Unless our idea of the Rabbi is of one who teaches, preaches, and does pastoral work, to the exclusion of these ritual functions -- or unless we have decided to abandon evolutionary Conservatism for revolutionary Reform -- we cannot allow ordination of women in our Movement. [22]

This sentiment may be closest to that of many laypeople who are more familiar with the "spirit" of Conservative Judaism than with its halakhic and philosophical framework. One layperson, in a letter to Sh'ma, observes:

> If we examine a dictionary we will find that reform means to change and conservative means to conserve and preserve. If we are indeed to preserve and conserve the tradition that Abraham the father of Judaism traditionally left us, we

> must maintain male rabbinic leadership in Conservative Judaism. [23]

This congregant may not be familiar with Jewish scholarship, but he does imply that male religious leadership is somehow central to tradition -- a concept which is shared by others. Feldman asserts that "a distinctive feature of [Jewish] Tradition has been its sex-role division." [24] Ruth Wisse supports this assertion in her 1979 Commentary article, "Women as Conservative Rabbis?":

> Women rabbis, if and when they are ordained in the Conservative movement, . . . [as well as the] movement as a whole may then find it increasingly difficult, when the distinctions between women and men have no known consequence or meaning, to maintain Judaism's unyielding differentiations between wool and linen, between milk and meat, between Sabbath and week, between Israel and the Nations. [25]

Unlike Novak, who believes that, over time, women rabbis could be instituted within a changed halakhic structure, [26] Feldman and Wisse believe that sex-role differentiation is an immutable tenet of Judaism. According to Wisse, it is an essential fence which guards our innermost Jewish concepts.

This phenomenon is known as the "domino effect"; the fear that once one major religious change is made, many others are likely to follow. This disturbs some who object to women's ordination. Their attitude may be summarized by a variation of Pirkei Avoth 4:2: The reward of conserving

tradition is the conservation of tradition, and the wages of reform is more reform.

Another concern of the anti-women's ordination camp is the break with the Orthodox community. The minority opinion of the Commission on Women's Ordination's "Final Report" includes the following:

> [W]e are concerned that at a time when American Jewish youth seem to be turning more toward traditional values, and to an authentic halakhic life style, this would seriously compromise the traditional image of the Conservative Movement and The Jewish Theological Seminary of America as an authentic halakhic institution. [27]

This concern is one of image: What would the Orthodox think? How would it make us look? As was discussed previously, the Conservative movement is often looking over its right shoulder at the Orthodox, attempting to gain religious approval. This phenomenon has been experienced before in the area of women's religious rights. The issue, which would long haunt the Rabbinical Assembly, was the Epstein ketubah.

Rabbi Louis Epstein's 1930 proposal was to reformulate the ketubah so as to alleviate the problem of 'agunah (a woman whose husband has disappeared and there is no proof of his death). Since the husband must initiate a Jewish divorce, his disappearance means that she cannot be granted a divorce, and therefore cannot remarry. Rabbi Epstein proposed a solution which was devised within an halakhic

framework, and after five years of debate and discussion the R.A. Law Committee unanimously accepted his proposal.

The story, however, did not end there. The Orthodox community reacted violently and viciously to the Movement's decision and the Law Committee froze in its tracks. It reported to the R.A. in 1936 that it would not implement the approved ketubah and instead continue to study the issue. The 'agunah dilemma plagued the Assembly for several decades in a worst-case scenario of organizational bureaucracy. It is clear from this illustration that many in the Conservative movement perceive "authenticity" as approval from the Orthodox -- and the decisions they render may reflect this fact.

Those who support the status quo in a traditionally-oriented religious system do not have the burden of proof when a change is under debate. Therefore, much more material was generated from the left-wing than from the right in both systems. The pro-ordination camp had to prove that either (a) traditional sources could be found to support the ordination of women, or (b) tradition denied women clerical positions for reasons that were non-essential to Judaism/Christianity.

The pro-ordination of women material generally contained arguments to rebut the arguments of the right-wing

which were presented above. The New Testament quote most often used to support women's ordination is Galatians 3:27-28: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This Biblical notion of equality stands opposed to the passages from I Corinthians 11 and 14 and Ephesians 5.

According to Dr. Marianne Micks, Paul tells slaves and women to obey in the current social order because he thought it was coming to a swift end. The Galatian Christians were instructed that the earthly economic and sexual distinctions were rendered irrelevant by Christ because Paul anticipated the imminent coming of the messiah. Dr. Micks finds the eschatalogical passage in Galatians to be relevant to the present time because of the future orientation of the Eucharist. As she states:

> In the Eucharist, where we encounter the risen Christ, we encounter God. We encounter . . . his new age now in our present age of the church. We participate now in the feast of the future. . . . In Christ, in this sense, there is neither male nor female. [28]

Similarly, Rev. Emily Hewitt and Rev. Suzanne Hiatt assert that Galatians 3:28 is of a theological nature, while I Corinthians is nothing more than a set of practical directions for maintaining church order. Galatians 3:28 has

special theological importance because it describes the order of things "in Christ."

> As Christians we live between two worlds, between this world and the Kingdom of God. This world, as much as we seem to be bound up in it, is not where we "live and move and have our being." Our real life as Christians is "in Christ." When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say, "Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." [29]

Dr. L. Hodgson also draws upon this passage when he states:

> The general consensus of Biblical scholarship holds that Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, . . . were related to the particular social and religious situation in which Christians of the first century found themselves. . . . The unchanging truth implicit in the gospel, but which could not be completely translated into practice in Paul's own day, is contained in the declaration that in Christ the distinctions of slave from freeman and of male from female, are transcended so far as status is concerned. [30]

The issue of the maleness of Christ is treated at length by Richard Norris, Jr. in his article "Priesthood and the 'Maleness' of Christ." One of his main points is that priests do not represent Christ any more than do baptized individuals. Since women are baptized, "women can and in fact do share the identity of Jesus as the Christ: they are incorporated in him . . . and Christ lives in them." [31]

Norris also disputes the notion that Jesus' maleness was and is a necessary precondition of His "being what he is and doing what he does." As he contends:

> When the Church Fathers speak of the incarnation of the divine Logos, they speak in terms which emphasize his participation in the general human condition. . . . [According to Justin Martyr], what is important <u>christologically</u> about the humanity of Jesus is not its Jewishness, its maleness, or any other such characteristic, but simply the fact that he was "like his brethren in every respect." . . . What the Fathers learned to understand by "incarnation" was <u>the likeness of the Word of God in his humanity to all those who are included within the scope of his redemption</u>. [32]

Reginald Fuller also asserts that the New Testament stress is on Jesus' humanity and not on his maleness. The Greek terms used to describe Jesus' humanity such as <u>soma</u>, <u>anthrōpos</u>, and <u>anthrōpotēs</u> signify non-gender specific terms such as body, flesh, and human person. The episcopate, according to Fuller, exists not in order to represent Jesus, but to "set before men and women the soteriological work of Christ -- by word and sacraments." [33]

Fuller also addresses the claim that the maleness of the apostles is theologically significant. He contends that the twelve were significant for their functions as preachers, judges and witnesses of the resurrection event. In the case of the first two, their maleness was required because of the cultural life of their time and place. In the case of the witnessing, it was necessary for them to be male due to the Jewish laws of <u>eduth</u>. The apostolic succession, he claims, does not imply the "passing along" of the witnessing event -- this cannot truly be passed to

successors. Therefore, the maleness or femaleness of the presbyter is irrelevant. [34]

Urban T. Holmes cautions those who seek to define the Church's ministry through Jesus' life and work:

> [W]e should be careful about any arguments concerning the nature of the Church and the function of the ministry derived from the historical Jesus. It is with the Resurrection event that the whole question becomes alive. For Paul and Peter as well as ourselves it is the central reality of our Christian faith. [35]

As was discussed earlier, some attribute the necessity of a male priesthood to the male characteristics of God the Father. In response to this claim, many quote the first Article of Religion, Of Faith in the Holy Trinity: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions. . . " [36]

Rev. Alla Bozarth-Campbell, one of the women known as the "Philadelphia 11," relates her struggles to fulfill her calling in her book, Womanpriest: A Personal Odyssey. In it she summarizes some of the points that have been discussed above:

> [M]any hold that the priest represents Christ to the people, and since Jesus was male, no woman can do this. Yet Christ is not physically re-presented in the person of the priest. Theologically speaking that is to confuse the priest with the Holy Communion itself, to take the sacrificer for the Sacrifice. The priest represents Christ in the same way that every baptized person does, through her or his Christ-centered, loving humanity, and in a spiritual, moral, and figurative way. If women

> can't represent Christ to the world, then we can't be Christians, let alone priests. If we can, then our priesthood is as authentic as our baptism. [37]

Much has been written in the Conservative movement to support the ordination of women. Supporters of women's ordination approach the issue in several different ways. They may use halakhah to support the decision, they may argue in favor of examining the halakhah through the filter of modern-day ethical and sociological concerns, or they may contend that extra-halakhic concerns alone mandate that this decision be made, even to the point of superceding the traditional sources.

The pro-women's ordination responsum that has been considered by many supporters to be the definitive work is by Dr. Joel Roth of the Jewish Theological Seminary. He analyzes three areas which apply directly to this issue: "the status of women vis-a-vis the mitsvoth from which they are exempt, women as witnesses, and the ability of women to fulfill the classical functions of the rabbinate -- teaching, judging, and rendering legal decisions." [38] In a Moment interview, Roth clarified his position that neither ethics nor egalitarianism is the issue -- "being halachically serious is. . . . If we say we're [a] halachic [movement], we must follow the accepted rules by which the system works." [39]

Unlike David Novak, Roth finds halakhic evidence to support the claim that women can take on the obligation of observing the mitsvoth despite the fact that they are not obligated by the tradition. He cites Rabbenu Tam, Isserles, and the Ravad who say that women may observe certain time-bound positive commandments and recite the blessings even though women are traditionally exempt. He finds additional references which support his assertion that "the term 'obligation' is applicable to self-imposed observance of mitsvoth from which one is legally exempt." [40]

He also contends that women who choose to take on the obligation of traditional observance may fulfill the obligation for others (i.e. act as sheliaḥ tsibbur). He argues that Rabbi Hanina's dictum, "Greater is one who is commanded and fulfills than one who is not commanded and fulfills." (Kiddushin 31a) was intended for non-Jews who would feel no compunction about failing to perform a commandment. Accoriding to Roth, Jewish women over the ages have been punctilious in the observance of mitsvoth when they have chosen to perform them, and there is no reason why Jewishly-committed women who understand the nature of the commandments should not be allowed to take on the obligation to perform them and fulfill the requirements of others. [41]

Roth agrees with Novak that women are prohibited, de-oraita from serving as witnesses, but he pursues the

matter further. According to Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:8, certain types of testimony are referred to as "testimony for which women are fit." As Roth states: "Exceptions to a blanket prohibition beg for some speculation on the underlying reason for the prohibition that accounts for them." Roth claims that the Rabbinic concepts of women as unreliable, greedy, lazy, garrulous and jealous would disqualify women for serious legal positions, but that our modern-day understanding of the nature of women must be reflected in modern-day halakhah. The active abrogation of a de-oraita norm is permissible when deemed warranted by the sages (for example, in Tosaphoth Nazir 43b). [42]

Roth can find no legal objection to women serving as teachers. The question of whether women may serve as judges in religious disputes is not answered definitively by the halakhah; however, "a woman serving a community would be acceptable as a judge on the grounds that they have accepted her upon themselves, since rabbis today are selected by the communities whom they serve." Roth, therefore, supports the ordination of women as rabbis, provided they take upon themselves the obligation for the mitsvoth from which they are traditionally exempt. [43]

Dr. Mayer Rabinowitz approaches the issue in a similar way. He examines the halakhic arguments concerning women as mesadderoth kiddushin, as shelihoth tsibbur, as members of a

minyan, and as witnesses. He supplies the following reasons why women can act as mesadderoth kiddushin: there is no sheliaḥ tsibbur involved; the bride is equally a part of birkhath erusin; birkhoth ḥatanim are blessings of prayer and praise which can be recited by women; and there is no biblical basis for either birkhath erusin or birkhath ḥatanim. [44]

Rabiniowitz finds that equality of obligation is not a traditional consideration for being counted in a minyan. There are two requirements for inclusion in a minyan: adult status, and non-slave status. Any references to the ten individuals required for the minyan as necessarily male are relatively late additions (Rabbi Joseph Karo, Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 55:1 and Rabbi Mordekhai Yaffe, Levush Hatekhelet 55:4). According to Rabinowitz, women clearly meet the criteria for inclusion in the minyan given their modern-day status. [45]

Additionally, he examines the traditional role of the sheliaḥ tsibbur and finds it outdated. Historically, the sheliaḥ tsibbur function has evolved from one of praying for the congregants into one of enhancing the service and ensuring that the congregation prays together. Today, when prayer books are readily available in Hebrew and in English, worshippers do not need the rabbi to fulfill their liturgical obligations. Therefore, traditional obligation

to pray is no longer a factor in determining which individuals may serve in a sheliah tsibbur capacity. [46]

Rabinowitz goes further than Roth in questioning the idea that women are prohibited from serving as witnesses. As he argues:

> While it is true that the gemara derives the prohibition from biblical verses, this in itself does not make it a biblical injunction. The derivation of the requirement of ten for a minyan from biblical verses did not make the requirement biblical in nature. The fact that biblical verses are cited in the talmudic answer to the question "how do we know. . . " is not proof that the injunction is biblical, rather, it is an attempt to attach an existing practice to biblical verses. [47]

Since the source of the prohibition against female witnesses is unclear, and since women in Mishnaic times were accepted as witnesses in certain cases, Rabinowitz claims it is appropriate to reclassify the status of women vis-à-vis eduth based on modern-day realities. Rabinowitz concludes that Conservative Judaism may and should ordain women as rabbis since there are no halakhic reasons to forbid it, and there are many contemporary reasons to allow and even encourage it.

As has been illustrated in previous chapters, Conservative thinkers differ as to the necessary balance to be maintained between tradition and modernity. Many who prefer to see the scale tipped more toward the 'tradition' side than the 'modernity' side use arguments such as Roth's

and Rabinowitz's to support their pro-women's ordination position. This may be indicative of an individual's commitment to halakhah or of an individual's desire to appear "authentic" in the eyes of the Orthodox community. Whatever his motivation, Ismar Schorsch explains the Movement's decision in the following way:

> We are no less committed to the halachic tradition than [the Orthodox]. The decision to ordain women was based on a halachic t'shuvah of great learning and considerable ingenuity. . . . We pay deference to the overriding value of halachah by moving within its framework. The framework is not ruptured. [48]

This is not the only way Conservative thinkers support the pro-ordination of women stance. Some assert that halakhah and contemporary ethical considerations are equally valid in establishing modern Jewish law. As Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner writes:

> Morality is developed in conjunction with Halakhah. Our own sense of morality, however imperfect, is what we have to work with. If it tells us that it is wrong to limit the religious expression of the majority of the Jewish people, then we are obliged to listen to that moral sense which is also of divine origin. A Conservative approach to Halakhah allows, perhaps even requires, one to bring to bear moral, sociological, historical factors. [49]

Lerner contends that women's ordination is consistent with the historical development of Conservative Judaism. She agrees with historian Moshe Davis who noted that "the most profound change introduced by the Conservative movement was . . . 'the recognition that women deserved a more

significant role in the life of the synagogue.'" The ensuing changes, 'aliyoth for women, the bath mitsvah ceremony, etc., follow a logical progression of which women's ordination is the final step. [50]

Lerner, who was raised Orthodox and came to her pro-women's ordination position later in life, reached her decision through an understanding of the Conservative approach to halakhah: an understanding that halakhah evolves over time and does not remain static. She believes that the process of allowing women to enter into positions of religious leadership has been gradual enough to warrant women's ordination in the Conservative framework. This is justified, not only by tradition, but by today's society -- a consideration as important as the past.

Similarly, Robert Gordis examines a variety of factors in his article, "The Ordination of Women." He points out that arguments against women as rabbis that include concerns for niddah and Rabbi Eliezer's ban on teaching Torah to women are irrelevant among contemporary Conservative Jewry. He believes that these need not even be discussed in light of the reality of Conservative Jews and their level of observance.

Gordis' approach is interesting because he says both that (1) modern-day ethics may supercede the traditional

sources, and (2) the superceding of halakhah due to ethical considerations is rooted in traditional sources. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether Gordis believes that modernity or tradition has final authority and he uses both to support his pro-women's ordination position.

Gordis does seem more convinced of the desirability of the change by its ethical and pragmatic ramifications than by its halakhic ones. As he warns:

> To continue to exclude women from this area of service when they are admitted to virtually all others will surely alienate many ethically sensitive men and women, particularly among our youth, and drive potentially creative members of the Jewish community out of Jewish life. [51]

A third group of supporters of women's ordination believe that modern-day ethical considerations must take precedence over halakhah in the Conservative movement. As Mordecai Waxman states:

> [H]alakhah must be weighed in the scale of ethics, with due recognition that ethical standards have changed over the course of time. . . . The central issue for those who are concerned with halakhah increasingly must be not whether a law is ancient or modern but whether it is ethical or unethical. [52]

Dr. Judith Hauptman of J.T.S. falls into this category as well. She approaches this issue in the following way:

> You can always find legal precedents for any position you take. But if you want to get a sense of how the halachah evolved, you must look at its underlying motivation, which is ethical. In giving women equality, we are responding to that motivation. [53]

Similarly Rabbi David Aronson begins his discussion of the women's ordination issue thusly:

> This is not a halakhic responsum on the question of the ordination of women. It is the writer's view that both the seriousness of the question and the exigencies of the times require that this question, with its wide implications, be decided as a takkanah rather than a mere reinterpretation of this or that halakhic statement. [54]

It is noteworthy, however, that Aronson roots this usage of the takkanah in traditional sources. He cites the example of the rabbinic modification of the divorce law to allow the court to force men to divorce their wives if the wives have sufficient reason to desire the action. He states: "When the teachers felt that there were conditions where it was unjust and cruel to retain the old halakhah, they changed the directives and observant Jews were obliged to heed them." [55]

The controversy over women's ordination clearly illustrates the tensions that exist in both the Conservative movement and the Episcopal/Anglican Church between remaining a traditional religious system and adapting to the modern era. It is not because of lack of adequate scholarship or thought that difficulties arise: it seems to be impossible to set clear boundaries given the reality of historical and sociological flux and the commitment to some form of traditional religious structure. While the aftermath of the decision to ordain women in both religious groups caused

some amount of schism and losses of small numbers of adherents, this change will, as previous changes have, eventually become integrated into the system. As Rabbi Harold Schulweis has pointed out: "It is helpful to remember that the past too was once the present." [56]

Full bibliographical details of the works quoted here will be found in the Bibliography

NOTES

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[2] Dr. Burton Cohen, ed., Women and Ritual: An Anthology, pp. 10-12.

[3] Rev. David Stewart (Pseud.), "My Objections to Ordaining Women," in The Ordination of Women: Pro & Con, ed. Michael Hamilton and Nancy Montgomery, p. 50.

[4] C.S. Lewis, quoted in The Ordination of Women: Pro & Con, ed. Hamilton and Montgomery, p. 25.

[5] Albert J. duBois, "Why I am Against the Ordination of Women," The Episcopalian, n.pag.

[6] John Paul Boyer, quoted in Women Priests, ed. Hewitt and Hiatt, p. 62.

[7] The Book of Common Prayer (1979), p. 856.

[8] Rev. Stanley Atkins, "The Theological Case Against Women's Ordination," in The Ordination of Women: Pro & Con, ed. Hamilton and Montgomery, p. 24.

[9] Atkins, p. 24.

[10] Donald S. Armentrout, "Episcopal Splinter Groups: Schisms in the Episcopal Church, 1963-1985," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, p. 319.

[11] Atkins, p. 28.

[12] Atkins, p. 27.

[13] David E. Sumner, The Episcopal Church's History: 1945-1985, p. 143.

[14] Sumner, p. 145.

[15] Cohen, p. 94.

[16] Cohen, p. 109.

[17] David Novak, "Yes to halakhah means no to women rabbis," Sh'ma, p. 45.

[18] David Novak, "Women in the Rabbinate?" Judaism, pp. 42-43.

[19] Novak, "Yes to halakhah means no to women rabbis," p. 46.

[20] Novak, "Yes to halakhah," p. 46.

[21] Novak, "Women in the Rabbinate?" p. 42.

[22] David Feldman, "Some Problems Ahead," Judaism, p. 21.

[23] Henry O. Eulau, Letter, Sh'ma, p. 88.

[24] Feldman, p. 22.

[25] Ruth Wisse, "Women as Conservative Rabbis?" Commentary, p. 64.

[26] Novak, "Women in the Rabbinate?" Judaism, pp. 47-49.

[27] Cohen, p. 110.

[28] Dr. Marianne Micks, "The Theological Case for Women's Ordination," in The Ordination of Women: Pro & Con, ed. Hamilton and Montgomery, p. 16.

[29] Hewitt and Hiatt, p. 55.

[30] Professor G.W.H. Lampe, "Church Tradition and the Ordination of Women," The Expository Times, p. 124.

[31] Richard A. Norris, "The Ordination of Women and the 'Maleness' of Christ," p. 77.

[32] Norris, pp. 73-74.

[33] Reginald H. Fuller, "New Testament Considerations," p. 59.

[34] Fuller, pp. 60-61.

[35] Holmes, quoted in Hewitt and Hiatt, p. 64.

[36] The Book of Common Prayer (1979) p. 867.

[37] Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Womanpriest, pp. 108-109.

[38] Joel Roth, "Ordination of Women: An Halakhic Analysis," Judaism, p. 70.

[39] Francine Klagsbrun, "3080 Broadway," Moment, p. 14.

[40] Roth, pp. 71-73.

[41] Roth, pp. 73-74.

[42] Roth, pp. 75-76.

[43] Roth, p. 77.

[44] Mayer E. Rabinowitz, "An Advocate's Halakhic Responses on the Ordination of Women," Judaism, p. 58.

[45] Rabinowitz, pp. 58-61.

[46] Rabinowitz, pp. 61-64.

[47] Rabinowitz, p. 64.

[48] "An Interview with Chancellor Ismar Schorsch," Moment, p. 21.

[49] Anne Lapidus Lerner, "In God's Image Was Humanity Created," Judaism, p. 37.

[50] Lerner, p. 38.

[51] Robert Gordis, "The Ordination of Women," Midstream, p. 31.

[52] Mordecai Waxman, "The Basic Issues," Judaism, p. 282.

[53] Klagsbrun, p. 14.

[54] David Aronson, "Creation in God's Likeness," Judaism, p. 13.

[55] Aronson, p. 15.

[56] Harold Schulweis, "We need women conservative rabbis," Sh'ma, p. 87.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have attempted to demonstrate the struggles central to religious systems which strive for balance between tradition and modernity. Both Conservative Judaism and the Episcopal Church define themselves through a combination of general considerations: the parameters of the movements on either side, their particular approach which takes into account the evolutionary and dynamic nature of Judaism/Christianity, and a de-centralized authority structure.

It is clear that there is much subjectivity involved in the process of change in both religious systems: each individual within each system prioritizes tradition and modernity differently. This renders group decision-making all the more difficult. Since many of the factors that have influenced change within these movements have affected society as a whole, there is no reason to believe that subjectivity characterizes these systems any more than others.

These movements/denominations reject rigid uniformity and strict definitions in order to allow relative freedom for theological and ideological debate. Many within these movements believe that the philosophical vagueness which results from this trade-off of values is worth the

inclusiveness that is gained. The adherents that continue to be attracted to these cautiously flexible religious structures must certainly agree.

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