HOW TO THINK ABOUT MASS RELIGIOUS CONVERSION: TOWARD AN EXPLANATION OF THE CONVERSION OF AMERICAN JEWS TO CHRISTIANITY[1]

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Mass religious conversion refers to the conversion of a society and of its institutions. Individual religious conversions follow from this social contextual change. This article is an exercise in developing social science concepts for the analysis of mass religious conversion. It draws on comparative historical, social survey and autobiographical materials. The conversion of the Copts of Egypt to Islam following the Arab conquests and the Christianization of Europe from medieval times illustrate the roles of social shock, the breakdown of communal authority and how a hegemonic religious system is adopted to restore social order to a subordinate community. The centrality of missions in the Christian case is illustrated. Data from the National Jewish Population Survey of 1990 permit an examination of the contribution of change in economic, social organizational and kinship institutions to change in religious institutions. Autobiographies of converts from Judaism to Christianity reveal some psychological mechanisms for dealing with societal and institutional religious changes. The article closes with a short exercise applying concepts developed here to understanding the conversion of American Jewry to Christianity.

Jews accounted for around three percent of the American population in the 1960s. Today, two percent of Americans identify as Jewish. Their fertility is well-below the average of their neighbors of the same income class. Immigration of Jews, while not inconsiderable in the last few decades, is dwarfed by Asian arrivals.[2] Lagging fertility and migration are part of the story. The major reason, however, for the relative decline is that a number of descendants of Jews no longer see themselves as Jews.

The 1990 National Jewish Population Survey's (NJPS) report of a fifty-two percent intermarriage rate has become a mobilizing symbol for Jewish communal leaders. NJPS also reported that about two-fifths of children, under 18 at the time of the study, born to Jewish parents were not currently being raised as Jews (Kosmin, Goldstein, Waksberg, Lerer, Keysor and Scheckner 1991). The cultural and structural assimilation of Jews to the American majority, commonly thought of as secular or ethnic assimilation, includes a process of religious conversion, primarily to Christianity, These conversions are not simply individual idiosyncratic choices but follow upon

conversion of a swath of Jewish society, of its institutions, of its collective being. In what follows, I offer a theoretical perspective on such societal conversions. Concepts for understanding this phenomenon will be developed through an exercise in comparative sociology. The result should enable us to distinguish between what is general about a societal conversion and what may be unique to the American Jewish setting.

THE CONCEPT OF MASS CONVERSION

Social science, and psychology, in particular, has analyzed religious conversion as an individual experience. William James, a trenchant observer of religious conversion, offers a personal phenomenology of the experience.

> To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self, hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firm hold on religious realities ([1902]1958: 189).

The essence is a spiritual regeneration whether of a faith already held or through a shift in loyalty from one religious community to another. His example of the latter is the conversion of M. Alphonse Ratisbonne from Judaism to Christianity (James [1902]1958: 223). James' religious realities are more perceptual than ontological. Some Jews also experience mystic regeneration in accepting Christ as their savior and proclaim themselves "right, superior and happy," a matter to be documented later. The formality of an organizational ritual, and the accompanying canonical status, is not a criterion of conversion for James; neither will it be in this article.

The acceptance by Jews of the Christian message dates from the birth of Christianity and has continued since. For Jews living among Moslems, Islamization began with the *hijra*. Christian and Muslim conversions to Judaism have been considerably fewer than Jewish acceptances of those faiths. More directly relevant to American Jewry are the rare, but not unknown, conversions in late nineteenth century Eastern Europe. This experience is documented, among other places, in a four volume set of biographical sketches by Zitron (1923). Published in Warsaw and entitled *Meshumodim*, Zitron speaks as the voice of the abandoned community and documents opportunistic acts by socially, economically and culturally marginal Jews and of social deviants cast out by a strongly integrated community who find refuge among their Catholic and Russian Orthodox neighbors. In Western Europe, during that period, Jewish converts were drawn from the social elite as well, while expulsion or excommunication were almost unheard of, a situation paralleled in the contemporary United States. Sometimes, reminiscent of James' ([1902]1958) observation, conversion has been accom-

panied by a sudden personality change. More typically, American Jews have adopted Christianity more gradually, perhaps taking two or three generations to do so. While European defectors were roundly condemned, increasingly, American converts find themselves encouraged or, at least, not accused, by members of their immediate social circle. Some see themselves as standard bearers of mass conversion.

"Mass conversion" is a concept in social rather than psychological theory. The concept does not refer simply to the numbers of converts or the rates of conversion, though those may be a consequence. Rather, it refers, to a change in the religious character of a society and of its social institutions. A change in the religious character of groups, as such, is a form of social change. Social change may result from a shift in population composition, or from a refraction of the group's symbol system or culture. The focus here is on change rendered by a structural differentiation. A *societal conversion* occurs when a subgroup differentiates itself from the body of its community and becomes a candidate for absorption into the wider society or to another society. At the same time, a subgroup, structurally differentiated from the wider, or other, society acts as a receiving sector for that society (Klausner 1991). The dynamic of this process is, largely, political, driven by changes in power relations and social authority. The consequences ramify through other institutional spheres, economic, familial and, ultimately, religious. Vulnerability to such political change may follow socio-cultural shocks which weaken the authority and integrity of that society. Such a shock may be due to conquest, or a population migration or simply rapid technical or economic change. If the conditions are propitious, the relative increase in the authority of another group becomes a ground for reorganizing relations in the weakened system and its acceptance of a new hegemony. The new hegemony may imply revised cultural definitions of reality or, as Peter Berger (1967) says, new "plausibility structures," which become bases for the legitimation of new social norms and values.[3] Individual religious conversions may ensue from such societal conversions. They may begin slowly, then increase rapidly and, finally, level off at some point short of the complete elimination of the subsociety.[4]

The Jamesian observation of the fusing of the divided self is the cognate at the personality level of such group reconstructions. James, though, paid scant attention to the social contexts which might account for both the division and reintegration of the self. A transient charismatic political authority may emerge to legitimate a shift in norms, a break within the cultural system and its community. The changes may involve a stage of mystic antinomianism, some mystic element working an alchemy of the soul.

This model of mass conversion will be constructed at this stage, from three types of analysis. The first uses broad historical material to discover a societal pattern of mass conversion. Examples will be drawn from

Islamization in the East and Christianization in Europe.[5] The concepts here refer to processes at the collective level. The second approach documents religious change on the institutional level using data from an empirical survey of American Jews. The concepts here describe institutional sectors and locate individuals in those sectors. The third approach is literary analysis of autobiographies of converts to expose micro-mechanisms of religious change on the personality level as the individuals come to grips with societal and institutional conditions. The material presented in each of these analyses is selected from a much larger array of material gathered in the investigation, is, hopefully, enough to illustrate the methodological issues and the challenge of integrating such diverse materials. In this sense, this paper is more a methodological exercise than a research report. The final question will be whether such a mass conversion model will help explain the flow of American Jews into Christianity.

RELIGIOUS CHANGE ON THE SOCIETAL LEVEL: TWO HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Islamization in the East: Creating an Ambiance for Change: The Islamization of South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa in the seventh century, following the Arab conquests, provides an historical example of mass religious conversion. Conquest and political control of the central social institutions combined with n Islamic cultural openness and a generally benign attitude toward the conversion of subject populations were the hallmarks of the Muslim/Christian encounter. In Persia, the attitude toward dualistic Zoroastrianism and its leaders was less benign and the conversion of Zoroastrians to Islam quite thorough. In Egypt there was a significant flow of Coptic Christians and Jews into Islam. The next few pages concentrate on the Egyptian case.

EARLY CULTURAL OPENNESS AND CULTURAL COMPROMISE : Tradition has it that the Qur'anic revelations began in 610 C.E.[6] The date traditionally assigned to the foundation of an Islamic society is that of the *hijra,* the migration in 622 AD of Muhammad and his companions from Mecca to Yathrib, later called Medinat al-rasul, the city of God's messenger, by which they abandoned their association with their polytheistic townsmen. Muhammad shortly established Islamic rule over the Arab pagan and Jewish populations of Medinah. According to Crone and Cook (1977), British scholars of medieval Islam, Islam assumed the form we know today during the eighth and ninth centuries. The *shari'a* crystallized as a legal system under the Damascene Umayyad and Baghdad Abbasid caliphates. In this milieu, Islamic philosophy, theology and law were influenced by Greek, and Roman, neo-Platonism by Syriac Christian charismatic theology and Jewish legal and ritual canons, cultures indigenous to the occupied territories.

Muhammad may have originally intended to establish a religion for Arabs which was linked to Jewish and Christian traditions (Poston 1992). The initial *qiblah*, orientation of prayer, was toward Jerusalem, the Fast of Ashura coincided with the Day of Atonement and the permission for Muslims to eat the food and marry the women of the People of the Book, avoiding pork, blood and strangled animals was consistent with the edicts of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15: 29). All of this suggests a cultural openness which would dampen coercive tendencies in Islam and reduce the sense of cultural change for those communities inclined to join the conquerors. The pagan population of the *jezira*, Arabian peninsula, and only that population, was subject to coercive compliance.

Having taken control of Medina, the Muslims fought their way back to Mecca. Within the next two decades, the small, now militarized, band emerged from the Hijaz and, within three decades, conquered the Byzantines in Palestine and Syria, took Coptic Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia. Before the end of the century Islamic rule extended over the Hindus in the Indian subcontinent in the east and over the Berbers in the west. Persian military leaders were absorbed into the Arab armies. Berbers of North Africa at first defeated the Arab armies but later succumbed to a naval attack. A number seemed to have become Muslims forthwith and were absorbed in the Muslim military, a privilege denied non-Muslims. Some Berbers relented their conversion several times before providing the force that attacked the Visigoths in Spain and extended Umayyad rule, establishing a capital in Toledo in 712.[7]

That the Berbers could relent suggests both the fragility of Muslim control and the lack of development of the *shari'a* law which would treat apostasy as a capital crime. It also suggests conversion by negotiation with group leaders. While Berber leaders could certainly make moral decisions, this arrangement has the flavor of a political alliance.

CONTROLLING POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND FAMILIAL INSTITUTIONS: Abu Salih estimated that at the time of the conquest there were some five million Copts in 10,000 villages (Lapidus 1972). Various minorities in the conquered lands, and the Copts among them, viewed the Muslims as liberators who rescued them from persecution. The Copts of Egypt, before Islam, were Jacobite Christians ruled by Malikite Byzantines. This Christian intersectarian conflict was marked by massacres of Alexandrian Copts under the suzerainty of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. 'Amr ibn al 'As, the Arab conqueror of Egypt in 640, was welcomed by those native Christians who "hated the Byzantine rule not only for its oppressive administration, but also—and chiefly—on account of its theological rancor" (Arnold [1913] 1984: 107ff.). Similar circumstances led Nestorian Christians in Persia and Jews in Palestine to sympathize with the Arab invaders of their country (Lewis 1984: 16ff; Ben Sasson [1969] 1976: 382).[8]

Conversion of subject peoples was not a priority for the Muslim conquerors. This was not due to an Islamic particularism since Islam was preached as a universal faith. Nevertheless, the social participation of non-Muslims was circumscribed. Policy roles in government and the privilege and honor of military service were restricted to Muslims to assure that the polity, if not all the inhabitants, would be Muslim. Muslim control of the major social institutions was considered a requirement for social stability, economic productivity, and an ambiance in which Islam could thrive. Poston (1992: 15), writes,

> The establishment of Muslim institutions . . . was an integral part of the process of Islamization. Included among these were the *masjid* (mosque) , as a specifically religious agency, the *madrasa* as an educational institution, a legislative system based on the Shari'a, a court system and an economic structure.

Copts and Jews in Egypt remained outside these institutions while maintaining their own places of worship, schools and judicial systems for adjudicating intra-communal matters. All of these, however, were subject ultimately to the regulative norms of the central regime and, so, required some acceptance of the Muslim "plausibility structure." The very acceptance of such regulative norms could stimulate aspirations for broader social participation on the part of the subjects. Here was the Ottoman millet system in the making. Max Weber had a term for this situation, "heteronomy" (Weber 1947: 148).[9] A heteronomous situation is one in which the norms regulating a social unit are, in some degree, drawn from another, often superordinate, system. At issue is the degree, scope and provenance of heteronomy.

There was, indeed, ethnic-Arabic particularism and a ruling elite of conquerors jealous of the prerogatives of class. Distinctions between Arab Muslims and *mawali* (literally: clients, native converts to Islam) were fundamental. *Mawali* were accepted as Muslims, but did not enjoy the honor of Arabs. Non-Muslims were divided into polytheists and *dhimmi,* primarily the *ahl al-kitab*, (monotheistic people of the Book). Both paid a *jizya* (poll tax) in return for promised physical and judicial protection. Conversions to Islam meant a sacrifice by the government of these revenues.[10]

Prestige and economic strata cut across communities, further evidence of a shared plausibility structure. Under this circumstance, the invidiousness of prestige and honor could not but be felt by minorities. As described in Egypt by Staffa (1977), the highest stratum was the *al-khassa,* the special people, and these were Muslims. The *al-'ayan*, notables, served as middlemen linking each community to the central authorities.

Religious communities, to some extent, tended to be occupationally specialized. Copts were bureaucrats, gold and silversmiths and producers and purveyors of wine. Jews were traders and also served as financial and political advisors to the elite and to government. Members of these commun-

ities interacted, and, indeed, depended upon one another in a kind of Durkheimian "organic solidarity." Jewish traders had Muslim clients, Coptic bureaucrats provided services to Jewish applicants.

Residentially, in both the east, in Baghdad, and in the west, in Alexandria and later in Cairo, the communities lived cheek by jowl. Cultural assimilation proceeded in areas which did not appear to challenge group integrity. Arabic, as the language of common discourse, and ultimately of scholarly work, was a prominent shared area. Language sharing facilitated the meshing of political and economic norms and practices. Religious syncretism crept in as an expression of good neighborliness. Levtzion (1979) reports Muslim participation in the Coptic New Year and belief in Christian ascetics and saints on the part of Muslims. Such shared respect between Jews and Muslims survives into the twentieth century in rituals at the tombs of holy men (marabouts).

Members of religious communities interacted, as well, at high governmental levels. One of the better known cases is that of Ya'qub ibn Killis (930-991), a Jew who had converted to Islam in Baghdad.[11] Caliph Mu'izz himself was well-connected in the *dhimmi* community. He married a Christian of a patrician family. The Malikite (Greek Catholic) patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem were his brothers-in-law (Staffa 1977: 70); Lewis 1984: 97ff.). Such familial and occupational mixing between Jews, Christians and Muslims at the highest levels of society bespoke a permeability of faith boundaries that could not but be noted by the larger populations. Muizz' wife and Ibn Killis both answered the call of the minaret.[12]

Conversion was, sometimes, opportunistic. Levtzion (1979), a student of conversions to Islam, reports that during the eighth century some bureaucrats converted to retain their governmental positions. Fief holders might adopt Islam to hold on to their property. The rules of inheritance were such that an estate could not pass from a Muslim to a *dhimmi* when a *dhimmi* who had converted to Islam died. People charged with criminal acts or with a failure to pay taxes could resolve their difficulties through conversion.[13]

SOCIAL SHOCK: The Role of Intergroup Friction and Persecution: Persecution may, in a small measure, prompt conversion but it is not likely to be proportional to the degree of persecution or its duration.[14] Oppression may influence the rate and timing of conversion, not the very existence of mass conversion. A modest level of persecution, or persecution in a delimited sphere, may trigger resistance, an integrative response, which would slow the rate. There might also be a lag effect with conversion following some years after the persecution has abated.[15] By and large, conversion of the oppressed is to the religion of the oppressor, the group with more powerful gods.[16] Conversion to religions other than to Islam was prohibited by the *Ulema*, a prohibition enforced by the political authorities. Apostasy from

Islam, especially if proved intentional or malicious, was, by this time, a capital crime.

In Egypt, conversion of Christians and Jews to Islam was encouraged, though not coerced, from 'Umar II (717-720) to al-Ma'mun (813-33). There were periods of repression as early as the eighth century. Copts were, from time to time, ghettoized and, at all times, chafed under tax levies. While the state was interested in stability and economic productivity and took a generally benign attitude toward Christianity, such was not always the case on the street. From time to time, members of the lower strata of Muslim society became incensed that the Christians were not controlled with greater severity. Occasionally, they protested the government's permission to build or repair a church. There was distrust and jealousy of Christian advisors to the Caliph. Pietistic Muslims perceived a Christian challenge to Islam and were doubtful about their loyalty.[17] According to Staffa (1977: 21), "Not even educated Christians found respect in the eyes of many fanatical Pietists who, having no patience with monasticism, thought of the Coptic monks as despicable owners of secret hoards to be squeezed for the benefit of the faithful." In 725-6, the Copts rebelled.

In the ninth century, under Fatimid *shi'a* rule in Egypt, tensions between Muslims and Christians increased. Muslims resented the Fatimid rulers' retaining of Christian advisors and Copts resented the burden of taxation. On these economic grounds, rather than directly religious ones, Copts again rebelled against the state several times. The fact of rebellion suggests a community well-enough organized to resist. These rebellions were repressed severely. Levtzion (1979: 257) writes, "The despair which followed these crushing defeats seems finally to have set in train the movement of mass conversion to Islam." Defeat and oppression in this case disorganized the Copt community and destroyed the authority of its leaders. Social anomie set the stage for conversions both because a weak social order cannot discipline its members and, perhaps more importantly, the Muslim community beckoned with a promise of a restabilized social order.

INDIVIDUAL CONVERSIONS: The literature on conversion to Islam has concentrated on individual conversions and has identified societal conversion as the aggregate result of these personal decisions. Bulliet (in Levtzion 1979: 32), writing in this tradition, says a Muslim "society is a society in which Islam has achieved such a numerical preponderance in comparison with other religions that the Muslims social institutions could determine the complexion of society as a whole." Bulliet considers institutional culture as a result of mass conversion and "numerical preponderance." This paper argues, to the contrary, that institutional conversion precedes and prepares the way for individual conversion. Lapidus (1972: 248), straddling the institutional and individual perspectives, writes,

> In tracing the history of conversions to Islam in Egypt, our problem is not to say when Egypt became Muslim, but by what processes and by what stages a predominantly Christian province with a small Arab-Muslim governing minority was converted to a Muslim province with a relative small Christian minority.

The most precise data available on individual conversions to Islam is that presented by Bulliet (1979b: 23) in his own book on conversion from Zoroastrianism to Muslim in Persia. His finding probably has an analog in Egypt. He culled data from 6,113 biographies which appeared in Muslim biographical dictionaries. These dictionaries provide pre-Islamic pedigrees of Muslim families. This tells us something about the relation of religion and family.[18]

Bulliet identified intergenerational changes from Persian to neutral to Islamic names. The proportion of Islamic names increased following a logistic or S-shaped curve in which the X axis refers to time and the Y axis represents the proportion of the society converted. Conversions were few in the years immediately after the conquest but increased rapidly over the next century. Finally, with the proportion converted near 90% the curve levels off. The hold-outs remain as a hard-core minority. In Persia this process peaked (i. e., the conversion *rate* was highest) about two hundred years after the conquest. The population, at that time, was about half Muslim. In another two hundred years, the Persians were nearly all Muslims.

In Egypt, individual conversions continued over six centuries from the Arab conquests to the Mamluk period, by which time the Copts were a small minority. The somewhat more rapid process in Persia than in Egypt is, perhaps, due to repression of the Zoroastrian religious leadership soon after the conquest. The Magi, as dualists, were anathema to the new monotheistic rulers. The Zoroastrian community deprived of its authoritative leaders became vulnerable to conversion. The Copts were a People of the Book and so their leadership was not seriously undermined prior to the ninth century rebellion. Further, the Abbasid administrative apparatus centered in Baghdad rapidly absorbed Persians who had become *mawali.* Copts were tentatively included in the Egyptian bureaucracy in the pre-Fatimid period. Only a small fraction of them accepted Islam.

DESPONDENT MINORITY LEADERS: The religious leadership of the Persian-Christian minority, largely Nestorian Christians, though not stripped of authority like the Zoroastrian Priesthood, felt helpless in the face of the politically assimilating trends. By the end of the first Islamic century, they were reduced to exhorting and lamenting. A letter from the Nestorian Patriarch Ishoyab III addressed to Simeon, the Metropolitan of Rev Ardshir and the Primate of Persia, laments Christian conversions to Islam in Khurasan.

> Where are the sons, of father bereft of sons? Where is that great people of Merv, who though they beheld neither sword, nor fire nor tortures, captivated only by love for a moiety of their goods, have turned aside like fools, from the true path and rushed headlong into the pit of faithlessness—into everlasting destruction, and have utterly been brought to naught, while two priests only (priests at least in name), have like brands snatched from the burning, escaped the devouring flames of infidelity. Alas, alas! Out of so many thousands who bore the name of Christians, not even one single victim was consecrated unto God by the shedding of his blood for the true faith . . . And the Arabs to whom God at this time has given the empire of the world, behold, they are among you as you know well: and yet they attack not the Christian faith, but, on the contrary, they favour our religion, do honor to our priests and the saints of the Lord, and confer benefits on churches and monasteries . . . that faith which whole nations have purchased and even to this day do purchase by the shedding of their blood and gain thereby inheritance of eternal life, your people of Merv were willing to barter for a moiety of their goods—and even less" (Arnold [1913]1984: 86).

The Nestorian Patriarch is the universal voice of the leaders of declining religious minorities.

The Christianization of Europe: Political Religion: *THE HIGH POLITICS OF CHRISTIANIZATION : Social Shock* The Christianization of the Roman Empire began with small conventicles colonizing remote parts of the empire. The Church assimilated to imperial authority when the Eastern Roman Emperor, Constantine, adopted Christianity in 313 and, subsequently, expanded on the heels of Constantine's military successes. Christianization of Europe gathered momentum in the sixth and seventh centuries as Rome and Byzantium extended their imperial influence northward to Europe. Royal conversions occurred for reasons of state and Christianity became the established religion of state after state. Christian political norms defined the cultural orientations of economic institutions and adjusted the legal institutions to canon law, another case of heteronomy. Canonical personal status law pressed familial institutions to incorporate Christian norms. Individual conversions followed in course.

While Christianization is a complex story, the role of mission is peculiar to it and, for that reason, is at the heart of this discussion. Mission is both a central sentiment of Christian civilization and an organized social activity. Buddhism, Islam and Christianity have been characterized as missionary religions. Buddha sent out his disciples with the words, "Go, monks, preach the noble doctrine." Its monastic communities engaged in translating Buddhist texts and in traveling to distant, mostly Asian, lands. They remained, though, a teaching order, "exemplary prophets" in Weber's sense.[19] Judaism

may have had some brief experience with mission during the Second Temple period. It may even have been state policy during Hasemonian rule (Seltzer 1988; Goodman 1994) but it never was translated into a serious continuing movement. Islam's *da'awa*, religious propaganda, is central to its legal culture, but rarely has this produced an organized, activist approach to non-Muslims.[20]

Formal organization for mission has been central to Christianity from its inception. The proof-text for Christian mission is the Great Commission, "Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples" (Matthew 28: 19).[21] It received form, personnel and financing through the Papal encyclicals of Pope Gregory the Great (560-604). Fundamentally, the church is a mission. Father Johannes Scheutte, Supreme General of Divine Word Missionaries, has contended that mission is not simply an activity of the Church, but is in the nature of the Church (Schreiter 1988: 97).

The relation between mission and the temporal polity sometimes became strained since mission is itself a center of power. Christian monarchs' responsibility for mission has sometimes clashed with the Church's control of mission. Further, within the church organization, missions have struggled for self-determination, a matter that has complicated the relations between missions and the Papacy.[22]

Missionary priests have had a role in political negotiations between Christian and pagan states. For example, a significant move into Northern Europe began in 486 when Clovis, King of the Franks, was converted to Catholic Christianity (Hilgarth 1986: 98). When the Franks, a major Western European power, established alliances, especially with weaker powers, "The Frankish rulers and those who represented them usually required a renunciation of paganism as a condition for granting support" (Sullivan 1994: 724). Louis the Pious made such demands on King Harald of Denmark following political representations conducted by missionaries. Negotiations of Christians with pagan monarchs took place in a coercive atmosphere but seem, by and large, to have achieved a religious transition in the pagan country without a disintegrative social shock. Leaders remained in place and introduced change through their edicts. Eventually, the newly Christian ruler could impose cultural discipline. In fact, each Christian European ruler became an agent for an expansion of mission activities.

> (T)here existed an underlying assumption that the expansion of the Christian realm was a duty impinging on kingship . . . Royal missionary effort was a concomitant of Carolingian theocracy" (Sullivan 1994: 88).[23]

An interesting example of the mix of high politics and mission was the conversion to Christianity of King Boris of the Bulgars in 865. Initially, Boris was closely allied with Byzantium to his south. Greek influence, diffused among the Bulgars, softened the elite for political and religious

change. In the Slavic areas, there had been a general desire for things Greek and "the missionary's religion was looked upon and accepted as part of that superior civilization which the barbarians sought so eagerly" (Sullivan 1994: 20). Around mid-century, relations between the Bulgars and Constantinople became strained, evoking a Byzantine attack. Boris surrendered and his baptism became a condition for his retaining his throne. Boris, now a Byzantine Christian, was not beyond sending a delegation to Rome. Pope Nicholas I responded with missionaries and assistance in organizing the Bulgarian Church. The Pope advised Boris on canon law regarding the treatment of rebels, judicial "procedures, handling of fugitives, conduct of war and punishment of certain criminals, diplomatic relations and the treatment of slaves." These Roman missionaries, in their pedagogical role, assumed a good measure of control of political, economic and, especially, religious activities. Their forcefulness may have given Boris pause and, in 870, Bulgaria returned to Constantinople. That decision was fatal to the papal missionary establishment in Bulgaria, but set the tone for Bulgarian national orthodoxy which has persisted to this day (Sullivan 1994.: 94ff.).

Missionary efforts, which were hardly benign, were resisted by some pagans. They were led by individuals recruited from the converted European populations, such as Boniface, Willibord, Sturmi and Liudiger and Willehad. Missionaries were sometimes murdered.

THE CULTURAL-INSTITUTIONAL ATTACK: Missionary Shock Troops: Christian mission, as a politico-religious organization, viewed pagan survivals in its lands as demonic. The attack on pagan culture and civilization was already underway in the fourth century. The Theodosian code of 379 denied the legitimacy of non-Christian religions and became a model for the legal battle against Roman paganism.

> We command that those persons who follow the rule shall embrace the name Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom we adjudge demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogma, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten first by divine vengeance and secondly by the retribution of Our own initiative, which We shall assume in accordnce with divine judgment (Hilgarth 1986: 47).

Roman and Greek myths were disparaged with missionary zeal. Martin, Bishop of Braga, writing in the sixth century on the "Castigation of Rustics," exposed the folly of worshipping Olympian deities. He borrowed the Biblical imagery used to condemn the cult of Astarte and added other perfidious acts.

> Then the Devil or his ministers, demons who were thrown down from heaven, seeing ignorant men . . . wandering after creatures began to show themselves in different forms and to speak with them and to seek that men should offer sacrifices on high mountains and in shady

> groves and worship then as God. So one said he was Jove, who was a musician and so incestuous in him many adulteries that he had his sister as his wife who was called Juno, that he corrupted his daughters, Minerva and Venus . . . Another demon he called Mars, who was a perpetrator of strife and discord (Hilgarth [1969]1986: 58).

Charles Martel, in the eighth century, who stopped the Muslim advance into Europe at Poitier, also destroyed Frisian temples. According to Sullivan (1994: 720ff.), such destruction was not an act in the heat of battle. It was a policy designed to convince the pagans of the powerlessness of their gods. It was this implementation of mission that delivered the social shock associated with mass conversion.

Missionary leaders offered their own formal legal system to fill the social and cultural void left by the collapse of legal norms. The conversion of Clovis in the sixth century led to just such a legal regime. A National Church Council at Orléans which called for the application of Roman law to

> murderers, adulterers, thieves and if they seek sanctuary in a church, they are to be protected, unless they carry arms . . . . If any widow of a deacon or presbyter join herself in a second marriage to any man, they shall either be punished or separated, or, if they persist in their criminal intent, they shall both be punished by excommunication" (Sullivan 1994: 99ff.).[24]

On the other hand, intentional religious syncretism, as a way of easing the transition, was not absent from missionary endeavor. It is said that when the King of Kent was converted, he turned pagan temples into churches, but allowed previously contracted marriages to continue and "virtually sanctioned the sacrifice of animals to the Christian God, thus permitting the new converts to continue one of their most ancient practices" (Sullivan 1994.: 57).11

THE FORMAL ORGANIZATION OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN THE MODERN PERIOD: Control, Finance and Personnel: In early modern times, the age of European expansion both to the east and the west, the papal role in missions was renewed. One need but think of the sixteenth century Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, in China or the Franciscans who followed the conquistadors in Central America. In the modern period, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, established in 1822, has been among the major Catholic mission organizations. It is "an organization authorized by the Church for the purpose of maintaining and developing the Catholic missions which have been established among non-Catholics throughout the world" (Hickey [1922]1972: 1). In 1849, Gregory XVI placed the society in the rank of Universal Catholic Institutions and thus to an eminence in the church second only to the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide ([1922]1972: 4).

By the eighteenth century, various Protestant groups entered the mission field in force. The Lutherans sent a mission to India in 1706. Protestant

Churches have sponsored missions and lay and clerical Protestants have established missions independent of church organizations. These specialized religious organizations are dedicated to recruitment and some are targeted to specific territories or populations.

Missions have been variously financed out of local or synodal church budgets or, more directly, by subscriptions. For example, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in America, which concentrated on the conversion of Protestants to Catholicism, collected individual offerings from Catholic communities. Contributors became members of the Society and received a bi-monthly report on activities. While the sponsoring communities may have a range of attitudes toward the missionaries regarding the usefulness and legitimacy of their efforts and, personally, regarding their motives, the Church and mission organizations, for their part, try to sustain an image of honorable and heroic service. They do this by circulating reports of their work.

Missionaries are recruited, generally from among church members, and trained in seminaries or specialized schools. Denominations differ here. A study (Brusco 1995) of Latin American evangelicals found that 90% were English speakers from the United States and, of these, 57% from the heartland states, half spent their childhood in a rural area, 23% were children of missionaries or clergy, 60% of their fathers had not been educated beyond high school, 70% were brought up as Evangelical Christians and women outnumbered men.

Missionaries. particularly lay missionaries, may be trained in missionary methods, adaptation to the relevant foreign culture, and receive guidance in relating to others in the mission station. Ideological training may also include martyrology. For example, Swanson cites the educational use of Elizabeth Eliot's *Through Gates of Splendor,* which chronicles the lives of five young Americans who, in 1956, set out to reach the isolated Auca tribe with the Christian gospel—only to be speared to death in their first attempt on the banks of the Curaray River deep in the Ecuadorian rain forest. The image of these martyrs is intended to inspire subsequent missionaries. Testimonial narratives describe the sentiment and ideology with which they approach their task. The moment of faith in a Christian's life story is depicted as parallel to the moments of divine action in Biblical history, creation, the fall, judgment, death, redemption, resurrection, regeneration. Such associations secure membership in a symbolic spiritual community transcending history.

Hazel Ernestine Brunner, sent by the Presbyterian Church USA's Board of Foreign Missions to Siam, was a characteristic nineteenth century woman missionary. She taught school, married and raised four children during her thirty-six years in Siam. Heuser (1955: 24) describing nineteenth century American women missionaries, writes,

> Inspired by the millenialist expectations that were fueled by the Second Great Awakening and reflecting the spirit of the Student Volunteer Movement, with which many were associated, they honestly believed the world could be evangelized within their generation.

Individual motives for service are defined by the life circumstances of the person. Missionaries see their world as divided between the saved and the damned. Thus, while the mission invites the benighted (those in social and moral darkness) to the table, disdain for the targets of missionary effort may introduce a measure of ambivalence. Here is an example: during the late nineteenth century a good number of the graduates of Mount Holyoke College, originally a Congregational Seminary for women, became missionaries. Sherrie Inness (1994) estimates that 10% of the women missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in the nineteenth century were Mount Holyoke women. In an article entitled, "Repulsive As the Multitudes By Whom I Am Surrounded," she describes how students and field missionaries maintained a distinction between the Anglo and the "heathen." She says,

> Religious work made it feasible for Mount Holyoke women to escape, at least temporarily, certain notions of acceptable nineteenth century feminine behavior, but it also inculcated in them the idea of their moral superiority to the foreigners they sought to convert (Inness 1994: 366).

TARGET GROUPS AND THEIR INDUCTION: When mission was bound to kingship, as in the medieval period, the target was an entire society. Since mission became more of a limited effort, the missionary target is, ordinarily, not an entire society, but some seemingly amenable sub-group which, the missionary hopes, may leverage the broader society. Such is so whether mission is aimed at an internal minority or at a foreign non-Christian society. A study of Pentecostalism in Colombia describes a mission tactic of allying with women and, though them, converting men. Elizabeth Brusco (1995: 3ff.), who applied ethnographic method to the study of a mission to Colombia and its clientele, writes,

> . . . Colombian Pentecostalism can be seen as a form of female collective action . . . (which) . . . elevates domesticity, for both men and women . . . The asceticism of evangelical Protestantism changes the machismo complex of drinking, smoking and extramarital sexual relations and redirects into the household resources spent on these things and so raises the standard of living of women and children.

Ammerman (in Marty 1988: 111ff.), a student of contemporary American Fundamentalist Christians, describes how they view their unsaved evangelical targets as a threat to themselves and to others, a kind of social menace:

> Personal salvation is not only one's ticket to eternal life but one's ticket into the community of the faithful. Catholics, liberal Protestants and Jews are among the unsaved. There is distance between the saved and unsaved, not friendship . . . . To the evangelical, it does not matter whether a person is a Jew or gentile, Hispanic or Anglo, black or white, rich or poor—just so long as she is saved, she is a sister to the Lord.

Billy Sunday (Packard 1988: 101ff.), when preaching to 20,000 New Yorkers in 1917, called New Yorkers "vile, iniquitous, low down, groveling, worthless, damnable, rotten, hellish, corrupt, miserable sinners."

These attitudes may not entirely dissolve with conversion. It will be recalled, from earlier in this article, that a sector of the receiving community emerges to establish a bridge for the new converts. They, sometimes, need to persuade others in their community to accept the converts. As a result, the convert's transition into the new community is sometimes a hero's welcome and sometimes an obstacle course. Such is particularly the case when converts set terms for their conversion. The history of church missions to Hispano-Americans in the Southwest illustrates the problem. Yohn (1995: 6) tells how Hispano student converts "battled the ethnocentrism and racism of the Presbyterian church demanding that this institution recognize them as legitimate members . . . . Unlike their teachers these Hispano students were cultural pluralists."

The problem of acceptance has roots in the very condition of mass conversion. The culture of the welcoming sector may be at variance with that of their own wider society. In the transition to that wider society, the convert may encounter different premises about religious change.

Converts, especially in the early stages of mass conversions, will have been alienated from their community of origin and even subjected to its hostility.[25] To stabilize a convert's new identity, and to assist in the transition, converts may need some program of religious instruction as well as the services of clergy to perform marriages and sacraments, provide for worship, perhaps in another language. The receiving community may need to provide newcomers with practical economic as well as emotional support services.

Nowadays, the Roman Catholic Church prefers that new members follow a Rite of Christian Initiation. In these settings, the convert is encapsulated in what Rambo (1993: 9ff.) calls a "matrix of transformation." It entails establishing relationships (emotional bonds to the group), rituals (integrative modes of identifying with new life), rhetoric (an interpretive sys-tem to build new meanings for the convert) and roles giving converts a special mission to fulfill. Rambo sees personality change through

> language transformation and biographical reconstruction . . . [with] motives selected, emphasized, reprioritized and deleted according to the implicit or explicit rules of testimony and the rhetorical system of the group into which one is converting.

Missions have established educational institutions for the religious socialization of youth of the target society. These schools may also serve as an instrument of social mobility.[26]

Yet, conversion may not be a road to a higher social rank or improved political and economic conditions. It may simply stabilize and legitimate a servile status. The conversion of African slaves in the American South and in the Caribbean did not liberate them, but assigned them to the subservient role prescribed in eighteenth century Christian doctrine. This realization is related to the emergence of non-Christian black nationalism in the twentieth century (Washington 1984).

The Conversion of the Jews: *THE ROLE OF MISSION*: The conversion of Jewry was a Christian priority from the beginning. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, sought and expected the grafting of the severed branch of Jewry to the olive-tree of the true faith. The ingathering of Israel in its land and proclamation there of the gospel will herald the Second Coming. Here, too, mission is but one of the elements in the conversion of Jews. Yet, organized mission is a unique voice for a sentiment general in the society.

Personal persuasive encounters have been a dominant method for all missions. This took a special form in the medieval church which with its rational Thomism, sponsored public disputations. These often involved command performances on the part of Jews. Missions, often under papal and royal sponsorship, enjoyed some success especially when, as in Spain, they were accompanied by cultural and political persuasion.

Formal Protestant Missions to Jews emerged soon after the Reformation. Like the Catholics, they preferred professional missionaries. Lay Christians and the secular authorities were discouraged from disputing with Jews. The authorities were sensitive to the "dangers (to Christians) involved in disputations between Jews and unlearned or ill-informed Christians. The real work of conversion should be undertaken by persons especially trained for the purpose" (Clark 1995: 16). The Institutum Judaicum established in Halle in 1728 by distinguished laymen was an early German Pietist effort. The Institutum offered courses in Hebraica and Judaica for German Pietist clergy.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (1809) and the British Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Jews (1842) had professional lay and clerical staff who sought out Jews. They established Christian schools for poor Jewish children, offered financial support to prospective converts and engaged in public debate on the religious, social and political status of the Jews (Ragussis 1995: 15). They were supported by members of Parliament and clergy. They also enjoyed the Royal patronage of the Duke of Kent and Lord Shaftsbury.

Missionary schooling was offered to Jews in both Eastern and Western Europe. Early nineteenth century Prussia, for example, had compulsory education laws but schools charged tuition. Missionaries set up schools for poor Jews. Christian content was played down so as not to discourage the parents from sending their children.

> Within the classroom, the mission teachers maintained a hybrid culture which mingled Jewish tradition with Christian promise. As an example, on Christmas eve 1837, Missionary Borling set up a Christmas tree in one corner of the classroom and Chanuka lights by the window. Jewish ceremonies were appropriated and reinterpreted for missionary purposes. Rabbis and the secular Jewish press protested these schools (Clark 1995: 209ff.).

Such syncretistic arrangements blur differences and facilitate crossing from one faith group to another.[27]

In the contemporary period, the rise of ecumenism sometimes conflicts with and sometimes meshes with mission.[28] Recognition of the Jewish roots of Christianity is both a preparation for dialog with a neighboring community and preparation for welcoming that community to the fold. As Paul van Buren (cited in Bloesch 1989: 140ff.), a Protestant theologian who encourages the church to look at its Hebraic sources, says,

> . . . the church is betraying its evangelistic mandate if it withholds the doctrine of salvation from the very people who gave us the messiah and the Savior of the world. Such an attitude could be construed as the worst kind of anti-Semitism because it means deliberately by passing the Jews in giving out the invitation to the banquet to the kingdom.

In practice, contemporary American liberal Christians do little about evangelizing the Jews. For fundamentalist Christians, including a major denomination such as the Southern Baptists, Jewish evangelization remains obligatory. American sectarian movements, such as the Unification Church, which has roots in American influenced Korean Presbyterianism, "court young Jews passionately" (Fisch 1984: 13). Marshall Sklare, in 1973, was shaken by the continued vitality of efforts to convert the Jews to Christianity represented by the broad-based evangelical movement "to return the nation to Christ," called Key 73, and which prompted his 1973 article, "The Conversion of the Jews." In an introduction prepared for his book *Observing American Jews* (1993: 215), in which this article is reprinted, he wrote how he became aware that "Jewish evangelism" had a long history in the United States and that it continued to remain on the Christian agenda.

SOCIAL CONTROL OF THE CONVERT: The oppression of New Christians, both former Jews and Moors, in fifteenth century Spain is a well-known example of social control of converts. The issues behind such control are often matters of the sincerity and loyalty of the converts. The Spanish

situation was complicated by the large numbers of converts who were viewed as a threat by old Christians. As Lea (1968: 197) puts it, on the grounds of *limpieze de sangre* (purity of blood) doors were closed to descendants of Jews and Moors, and of heretics publicly penanced by the Inquisition. There were obstacles to their admission to many of the colleges and universities, to benefices in many cathedral churches, to most of the religious and all of the military Orders, to positions in the Inquisition and even, in some places, to municipal offices. Lea (1968.: 213ff.) believes that the crown and the Inquisition had good reasons to be suspicious of Moriscos, Muslim converts to Christianity, and he adds that

> The Moriscos have submitted to baptism but were heretics at heart; they went to mass to escape the fine, they worked behind closed doors on feast days with more pleasure than on the other days and they kept Fridays better than Sundays; they washed themselves even in Decem-ber and regularly performed the accompanying *zala*; to com-ply with the law they had their children baptized and then washed off the chrism, they performed circumcision on the boys, and gave them Moorish names.

Some formed self-defense groups and were subsequently suppressed and forbidden to carry arms. One attempt to disarm them turned up 14,930 swords and 3,554 cross-bows found in 16,337 houses (1968: 194).

Jewish converts did not threaten rebellion nor could they appeal to foreign powers. Roth (1995), examining the situation of Jewish conversos, argues that most converted voluntarily and became sincere Christians. Yet, social and economic isolation forced conversos into the status of a minority sub-community accepted by neither the Christians nor the Jews, which led to the myth of the "Marrano" and resulted in patently false charges before the Inquisition (156). He attributes the purity of blood "ploy" to jealousy of the wealth and power of the conversos (415).

Social control may take the form of emotional, economic and social care of the Jewish convert. The new convert may have abandoned his or her sources of support, suffered rejection by their co-religionists and even by his or her family while not yet having established new relations. The entry sector of the new society or religion, especially the missions, may institutionalize such supports[29] In eighteenth century Germany, for example, Johann Heinrich Callenberg, a founder of the Institutium Judaicum, distributed Yiddish and Hebrew texts and "offered board and instruction to catechumens (candidates for baptism) and converts, the majority (of whom) were nomadic and impoverished, showing the symptoms of severe disorientation and isolation" (Clark 1995: 59). In 1734 Callenberg called for the establishment of Jewish-Christian proselyte colonies to function as separate social and economic units like the French Huegenot colonies in Germany (Clark 1995.: 65). This plan, though, never realized, shows that Callenberg

believed that the shock of conversion, disorientation and identity loss, was a main factor hindering Jews from taking the step of baptism.[30]

Callenberg's suggestion for a proselyte colony recognized that converts may need to seek out the company of other converts. Such settings may serve as transitional communities. In the case of a significant mass conversion, as in Spain, a minority community of former Jews emerged naturally.

The existence of such transition groups contributes to doubts on the part of the wider receiving society regarding the loyalty and sincerity of converts That experience may trigger, in the receiving group, a latent philosophical anthropology which doubts the possibility of true conversions.[31]

Hebrew Christians or Jewish Christians are a transition group ordinarily spawned cooperatively by converts and their hosts. They may be traced to Antioch and to Caesaria. Paul tolerated the continuation of some Jewish practice among new Christians. This organizational form aims for religious change without ethnic or national change. Their cultural descendants have appeared in Europe and in North America in the nineteenth century. An ethno-religious tie to Jewry and a religious tie to Christianity creates a relational ambiguity for the Jewish and Christian communities and a problem of acceptance for them.[32] The Assemblies of God national Home Mission Department, a financial support of Jews for Jesus, tried to accommodate Jewish communal identity by agreeing that Jews for Jesus could form "fully operative messianic synagogues within the denomination." At the same time, they insisted upon a Christian basis of legitimacy, that is, a Jewish practice could continue if rationalized in Christian terms. Consistent with this view, Gobel (1981: 14), a leader of Jews for Jesus, writes,

> If I legalistically avoid eating pork or driving on Saturday as a superior ethical specimen I am under the law but if I do it to be able to have a more credible witness for the Jewish messiah to my saved orthodox neighbors, I am under Messiah's Gospel; and not Moses' law" (Gobel 14).

Here is the crucial hegemonic issue.

THE RECORD OF JEWISH CONVERSIONS: Have Jews been vulnerable to missionary efforts? Yes and No. No, if one assesses the number of conversions directly involving a Christian missionary and a Jew. Yes, if one understands the mission as a formal organizational expression of the general openness of the Christian society to Jewish conversions. The invitation is effective when Jewish communal authority and solidarity decline and is effective in precisely those sectors of Jewry that have escaped that authority. In those sectors those who beckon meet those who seek.

Students of conversion in Eastern Europe in the last century point to such sectors within an otherwise well-integrated community in which structural control declined. Agursky (1990: 69) writes,

> Jewish and non-Jewish scholars ascribe conversions of Jews in nineteenth century Russia to a desire to evade the Tsarist anti-Semitic legislation .... An investigation ... shows that conversions were the result of disintegration of the traditional community.

Jewish cantonists, recruits to the Russian military who had been removed from their community, tended to convert. A conscript lived intimately for twenty-five years in a gentile total society. There were also some romantic attachments to non-Jews. These tended to occur at openings in the "opportunity structure" produced by economic and residential relations. Conversion was the only route to intermarriage in a society with no provision for civil marriage.

Eastern Europe knew missions specifically to Jews. The St. Vladimir Brotherhood in Kiev, for instance, specialized in seeking and cultivating Jewish converts (Agursky 1990: 82). Michael Stanislawski (1987) examined the files of the Lithuanian Consistory of the Russian Orthodox Church and estimates some tens of thousands of conversions. He classifies converts into the involuntary, such as young cantonists compelled to accept baptism, and the voluntary converts which he divides into five types: 1) Those seeking education and professional advancement; 2) the haute bourgeoisie; 3) the criminals; 4) the believers; and 5) the destitute.

Stanislawski's typology is based largely on individual motives but may be viewed social structurally. The Believers (type 4) seem to be idiosyncratically motivated and scattered though various sectors of the Jewish community. They may well be spiritually sensitive people attracted to Christian symbols of the transcendent. One would look to personality formation in the family and involvement in Jewish mystical tradition such as the case of Joseph Rabinovich (Zipperstein 1987) who experienced a vision of Jesus on the Mount of Olives. We will encounter others in the study of autobiographies below. The haute bourgeoisie (type 2) move among the wealthy and politically powerful Christian gentry and are well-socialized toward Polish, Russian and Lithuanian "plausibility structures." Those seeking professional advancement (type 1) are candidates for this high society. Some among these last two types will be recognized in the analysis of the 1990 survey of the American Jewish population in the next section of this paper. Criminals and the destitute (types 3 and 5) may be on the margins of Jewish society and alienated from its authority. Some of the criminals may belong to a deviant sub-society with a mixed religious membership while the destitute find succor in the church's welfare and charity activities.

Jewish converts are recorded in the American colonial period. Jews numbered about 5000 in the colonies and were often quite isolated. Established communal authority existed only in some major centers such as Charleston, Newport, New York and Philadelphia. Few of the contemporary

descendants of prominent Philadelphia Jews in the revolutionary years are Jewish today.

The prominent role of voluntary organizations in the United states provides a significant base for missions. Formal missions aimed specifically at American Jews emerge in the early nineteenth century and Jewish converts had a role in them (Sarna 1987).

JEWS AS CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES: Christians who convert to Judaism do not become Jewish missionaries to their former co-religionists. Yet, since the first century Jewish converts to Christianity have dedicated themselves to evangelizing their former co-religionists. Friar Paul and Friar Raymond are two of many prominent medieval examples (Chazan 1983: 306). A post-enlightenment example is that of Theodore and Alphonse Ratisbonne of Alsace.[33] Alphonse's mission to his former co-religionists was concretized through the Institute of Notre Dame de Sion which he established. Given formal status by the Vatican in 1874, its main mission station was, and still is, in Jerusalem with the declared purpose of converting Jews.

Nancy Ammerman explains the evangelical conception of Jews as ultimate missionaries. They are to assume this task during the period of tribulation and just before the apocalyptic end. After that Jesus and a Davidic king will rule from Jerusalem (Ammerman 1988). Mission to the Jews is key to salvation of the world. Jewish converts entering into serious evangelical work begin with Joseph Samuel Frey. Born to a religious German Jewish family in 1779, he converted and established Benei Abraham in England. Arriving in America, he formed the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews in 1802. Subsequently, he served a Presbyterian and later a Baptist congregation (Rausch 1982: 23ff.). More recently, Jacob Gartenhaus, who was raised in an orthodox Jewish family in Austria, migrated to America, became a Christian and studied at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary. He chaired the Southern Baptist Convention's mission to the Jews. As of 1963, he claimed 24 missionaries to the Jewish people on five continents (Gartenhaus 1963). (Further examples of Jews who became Christian missionaries will be given in the discussion of autobiographies.)

THE AMERICAN COMMUNAL STUDY: INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS OF CONVERSION

Religious Change as Institutional Change: An historical account of the conversion of American Jews to Christianity could follow the above model showing how, especially with a decline in Jewish communal authority, Jewish institutions are brought under the hegemony of a Christian "plaus-ibility structure." The cultural and structural assimilation of Jewish immi-grants and their descendants to American society needs no documen-

tation here.[34] American Jewry, on the whole, has already been incorporated into the general culture and in social organizations associated with economic, political and stratificational, educational, health and recreational and aesthetic systems. Increasingly, they are being absorbed in the general, especially Christian, kinship system, a change that has been facilitated by the replacement of Jewish by American civil law, not only in the commercial and criminal areas but also, in the area of personal status. Institutional norms tend to be derivative of the thematic norms and values of the society. The dominant norms and values of American institutions are shaped and legitimated by Christian, particularly Protestant Christian, responses to "ultimate concerns." Jewish religious organization is moving toward the status of a "denomination" of American "civil religion," that is, toward a liberal Protestant version of public life. The religious conversion of individuals follows upon their structural assimilation into those other social institutions.[35]

While intermarriage, or structural assimilation into kinship, has public attention, it is but one of the transitions into the new community. This section will try to put that transition in context. Sometimes the term secularization is used to describe these changes under an assumption that individuals abandon religion in general.

Secularization is taken by scholars as an expanding of civil society to encompass and, perhaps, absorb ethnically and religiously diverse groupings as well as the removal of economic political and other institutional spheres from religious influence. The fact is that religious systems, as responses to "ultimate concerns," encompass civil society. No significant societal activity is external to a religious institution just as no societal activity is significantly disengaged from economic and political institutions. Religious institutions are a functional requirement of society just as an operating economy and polity are functional requirements. There is no religious vacuum. This is not to say that a particular religious organization is a functional requirement any more than, in economic institutions, a stock market or a Department of Commerce is a functional requirement.[36]

We leave aside, for the moment, the broad societal historical picture to turn to some empirically observable institutional processes associated with structural assimilation. Data from the National Jewish Population Survey of 1990, a study of Jews in the United States, will be used for this purpose.[37]

Methods of Data Collection and the Construction of the Apostasy Types: The National Jewish Population Survey team interviewed informants age 18 or over in a sample of 2,441 households.[38] The present analysis is limited to those aged 22 and older who declared that they were born or raised Jewish. Most of these persons remain Jewish by religion. Some reject religious identification with Judaism while retaining an ethnic identi-fication. Converts are defined here as those born or raised Jewish who report having adopted a religion other than Judaism.[39]

The survey, by projecting its sample of individuals 18 or over onto the estimated population universe, reported that 6,840,000 Americans are Jewish by religious or ethnic preference. These include 210,000 adults who had been born or raised Jewish but who have "rejected Judaism and currently follow a religion other than Judaism." Another 415,000 adults are classified as having "Jewish parentage or descent who were raised from birth in a religion other than Judaism." These two classes, totaling 625,000 adults are treated as "converts" in our analysis. Some 1,120,000 individuals are of Jewish background, but avow no current religion. In addition, some 700,000 children under 18 were born Jewish but are being raised in a religion other than Judaism. These last, being under 22, are not examined in the analysis. The analysis will not be conducted with these total popu-lation projections, but rather on the basis of the characteristics of the 2,441 hoiseholds and of the informants, ususally the oldest person in their respec-tive households..

An "apostasy" variable was constructed by comparing the religion into which an individual claims to have been born or raised with the one with which he or she now identifies.[40] The resulting "apostasy" variable was divided into five categories, four of which involve a measure of structural assimilation. The first consists of those born into Judaism or raised as Jews and/or who currently claim Judaism as their faith (88% of the respondents). These consistently Jewish respondents are subdivided into three categories: 1) a base-line group of those who have been *steadfastly Jewish* (Jewish/ Jewish in Table 1). They contribute to charities, give to Jewish or to Jewish and non-Jewish charities and, if they are married, have a Jewish spouse. 2) Those who identify as Jews and who contribute to non-Jewish, but not to Jewish causes. Such a pattern of contributions is taken a proxy for a wide spectrum of Jewish secondary associations with which the respondents may or may not identify. Since these respondents commit their charitable contributions to the non-Jewish world, they are termed "*Economic Emigrants*" (Jewish/EE in Table 1). They constitute 17% of entire sample and 19% of those identifying as Jewish. 3) Those identifying as Jewish and who have a gentile (nonconverted) spouse. They have crossed the family boundary in establishing a household with members of two faiths and are designated as *Jewish with a Gentile Spouse* (Jewish/GS) in Table 1 (3% of entire sample). These first three types of "consistently Jewish" by religion are followed by 4) those born Jewish, but no longer Jewish by religion and who do not declare that they have accepted another religion. These Jews not identifying religiously are termed "*Jewish/None*" (7% of the sample). The "none" refers to a claim of "no religion." They are ethnically or nationally identified Jews. 5) Those born Jewish, but who now consider themselves of another religion. Most are now Christian. They are termed "*Jewish/ Christian*" and constitute 6% of the respondents. Some of the married in these last

two categories may have non-Jewish spouses and some may contribute only to non-Jewish charities.

These categories define social positions. Assignment to each of the five categories is a function of acts which identify the respondent household, probabilistically, as Jewish, Jewish with some non-Jewish characteristics, or not Jewish. Each category beyond the first suggests a type of structural assimilation, and each successive category, as measured by its correlates, is closer to the religious converts. Yet, these categories are not necessarily sequential stages in an apostatizing career. Individuals may convert to another religion in any one of the other four categories, including the steadfastly Jewish.

The converts, the fifth category, are, of course, those who have converted[41] during their lifetimes. Since the flow from Judaism to Christianity is intergenerational, the data provide only a snapshot of the process as it occurs in a single generation. Since respondents are of various ages, none having completed a life-span, the proportion of converts under-estimates the number who would convert throughout an entire life-span..

Findings: Table 1 shows the correlations between each of these five types and fifteen variables divided into: 1) those which predispose to structural assimilation; 2) those which indicate a crossing of a social structural boundary; and 3) those which may be considered cultural outcomes of the social statuses represented by each type. Fuller definitions of the variables are given in the footnotes to Table 1. For the sake of tabular uniformity, the percentaging throughout is by columns. Logically, the first four variables, as independent variables, should be percentagized by row.

VARIABLES PREDISPOSING TO RELIGIOUS CHANGE: I shall now compare the percentages across the rows. The first row of Table 1 shows the percentage of each of the five types that was raised Jewishly, that is, the proportion who replied that they were raised to think of themselves as Jewish. The response does not indicate the extent of Jewish education nor of Jewish practices in the home. Those who currently profess no religion and those who report being no longer Jewish tend to have been raised in Christian homes or in homes professing no religion. A Jewishly identified home makes Jewish educational-cultural and social relational and institutional involvements more likely. Converts and the non-religious come from homes with less of a Jewish identity, religious or otherwise. On the surface, such is no surprise, but it does reveal the intergenerational process of con-

Table 1. Association of Variables With Assimilatory Types (In Percentages)

	Jew/ Jew	Jew/ EC	Jew/ GS	Jew/ None	Jew/ Chr
Predisposing Variables					
Raised Jewish[1]	99	96	97	75	65
High Jewish Education[2]	64	54	51	38	40
Important to be Jewish[3]	63	28	67	3	21
Liberal[4]	44	57	40	68	28
Social Structure Boundary Variables					
Supportive Intermarriage[5]	26	45	36	48	46
Member Non-Jewish. Organizations[6]	23	48	40	58	59
Give to Non-Jewish Charity[7]	0	100	0	55	54
Non-Jewish Friends[8]	17	34	50	47	62
Never Attends Synagogue[9]	33	73	66	99	88
Church Attend Only[10]	1	7	6	14	38
Cultural Outcomes					
Some Holiness Acts[11]	23	5	7	0	8
Some Home Observance[12]	69	28	38	2	5
Some Public Observ[13]	37	11	28	5	3
Usually w/ Christmas Tree[14]	10	36	38	43	64
Wants 3+ Children[15]	28	19	16	27	49

[1] Whatever the religion at birth, R was raised as a Jew.
[2] R has some Jewish education, either from formal schooling or from reading Jewish books and periodicals.
[3] R says that Judaism is very important in his/ her life.
[4] R identifying self as relatively politically liberal.
[5] R would support or strongly support their child's marriage to a non-Jew.
[6] R belongs to non-Jewish community organizations, but not to any Jewish organizations.
[7] R contributes to non-Jewish charities, but does not contribute to any Jewish charities.
[8] R counts no Jews among his/ her close friends and does not live in a Jewish neighborhood.
[9] R rarely or never attends synagogue.
[10] R attends church, but not synagogue.
[11] R observes some abstinences of Holiness Scale such as fasting or keeping kosher.
[12] R performs some of the home observances on the Religious Celebration Scale such as lighting candles on Friday evening.
[13] R observe one or more public acts such as Purim, Israel Independence Day, has attended a Jewish school or reads Jewish literature.
[14] R usually or always have a Christmas tree in the home.
[15] R anticipates having a completed family with three or more children.

version, the Jewish parental home as non-religious and the children opting for another religion.

The Jewish education measure combines Jewish schooling, a matter of parental determination, adult education and reading of Jewish periodicals, matters of adult choice. A high score on this measure implies basic knowledge of Jewish culture.When a school is involved, it also implies Jewish social interaction. There is some decline in the proportions relatively high on this measure from the baseline group of steadfast Jews to those who have crossed either the economic or the family boundary. Again, the lowest scores, and there is little difference between them, are of those who now profess no religion and of those who have become Christian. A lack of Jewish schooling would not make the children apostates.[42] However, parental alienation from Jewish educational institutions and the social relations involved does signal the later distancing. By and large, however, the data suggest that being part of a Jewish socio-cultural system, perhaps accepting its ideas as authoritative, is associated positively with other Jewish institutional involvements, illustrating a connection between cultural and structural assimilation.

The question about the importance of Judaism to the respondent measures the salience for a person of Jewish involvements. Salience, centrality for an identity, probably, but not necessarily, reflects the extent of one's roles in Jewish institutions, the synagogue, Jewish social movements. The degree of salience is taken to correspond to the number of life domains. The measure is highly associated both with being a steadfast Jew and with having a gentile spouse. The association in each case may be explained differently. The steadfast Jew is simply extensively involved, while, for the intermarried Jew, the very contrast with the spouse and the ambiguity this introduces in community relations may raise the salience of Judaism or Jewishness in his or her life.[43]

Political liberalism on the American scene may imply a relativistic attitude toward one's own group. In that sense it contrasts with jingoism. American liberalism tends to be associated with pluralism and more permeable boundaries between the various ethnic and religious groups. The youth society of the "Woodstock generation" of the sixties, while not always liberal, tended to override religious and ethnic boundaries. An antiestablishment minority may seek strength by recruiting ethnic and religious minority individuals to its banner. These recruits become politically liberal. Table 1 indicates that the most liberal are those with no current religious orientation. Presumably, they minimize religious differences. Those who actually convert, draw closer to wider society's religious establishment, a seemingly conservative move. Those with gentile spouses are the second most conservative. While, on the surface, Jewish individuals who reach out for a gentile spouse might have been more liberal originally, as they draw

closer to the establishment majority, they may become more conservative. The motive for intermarriage may not match the cultural outcome of that decision.[44]

A secondary analysis, such as this one, may have only a few proxies for relevant variables. All of the types to the right of the steadfast Jews (Jew/Jew) in Table 1 have limited their participation in the Jewish community or taken a step towards the wider society. The percentages are consistent with this classification, showing that a move away from steadfast Jewishness is associated with a distancing from Jewish cultural settings (at home or in the school), a decrease in the salience of being Jewish and an adoption of a political attitude consistent with an opening of group boundaries followed by a more conservative one. All of these suggest that the candidates for conversion are those from the more open sectors of the Jewish community.

CROSSING STRUCTURAL BOUNDARIES: The next set of variables are correlates or predictors of the propensity to cross social structural boundaries. The definition of the categories of assimilation distinguishes those who have crossed kinship and religious boundaries. A measure of attitude toward intermarriage, for example, expresses the readiness to accept a permeable kinship boundary. As a collective measure, it expresses the degree of social support for this, a measure of the depth of assimilation of the community. The question was phrased in terms of the attitude toward marriage of a child to a non-Jew, that is, someone who had not converted to Judaism. In the sample as a whole, 19% opposed, 49% accepted, and 32% supported the idea of an intermarriage for their children.[45] The opposition to intermarriage, I assume, was stronger in earlier years. While community leaders seek to prevent intermarriage, the popular position is, to a greater or lesser extent, to be open to it. Support is lowest among the steadfast. The other categories are more accepting. That a fourth of the steadfast support intermarriage reflects the fact that some may still be only marginally Jewishly committed to this form of Jewish distinctiveness even though they have not elected to contribute solely to a non-Jewish charity, marry a gentile or declare themselves not religiously Jewish. A little less than two-thirds of the intermarried do not support intermarriage for their children. Perhaps, their own experience has been burdensome.

Respondents were categorized according to their involvement in voluntary organizations. Those belonging to no organizations were excluded from the analysis. Of the remainder, some belong solely to Jewish organizations, some to both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations and still others belong solely to non-Jewish organizations. Thirty-two percent of those who belong to organizations, are in this last category. These are "organizational emigrants." What intermarriage implies for primary relationships, organizational membership implies for secondary associations. A fifth of the stead-

fast Jews belong solely to non-Jewish organizations. Thus, though they have neither intermarried nor directed their charity outside of the community, they are not members of a synagogue or any other Jewish communal group. This proportion increases to three-fifths among those who declare that they have no religious orientation and among the converts. Again, the last two categories differ from the first three while being similar to one another. The assumption of a new religion, or the rejection of an old one, implies new social relations including a new organizational environment.

A similar picture emerges from a comparison of philanthropic practice. Respondents in the sample were classified according to whether they gave solely to Jewish, to both Jewish and non-Jewish charities, or solely to non-Jewish charities. Twenty-three percent of all respondents are in this last category. Patterns of charitable giving entered into the definition of the Economic Emigrants, as confirmed by the 100% entry in Table 1. These individuals may give to United Way or the Red Cross, but not to the United Jewish Appeal, Jewish homes for the aged, or any other Jewish charity. The differences are striking. None of the steadfast Jews and none of the intermarried give solely to non-Jewish causes. Yet, about half of those with no religious orientation and an equal proportion of the converts do so. The last two types, again, resemble one another and differ from the first three categories. Charitable choices involve identification with the aims of the organization to which one contributes. Not to give to any Jewish group suggests lack of involvement in the Jewish community where, were they visible, they would be approached for contributions.

Formal organizations may crystallize social, economic, religious and political interests of their informal circles. Thus, informal social life paralleling these formal organizational orientations, should have a similar relation to the apostasy types. A sociality measure is the proportion of close friends who are Jewish. Responses to a question as to whether most of the respondent's friends were Jewish and whether the neighborhood in which the respondent lived was Jewish were combined in a sociality index. For 26% of the sample as a whole, Jews do not contsitute most of their close firends and they do not live in a Jewish neighborhood. The converts, those with no religion and the intermarried, have similar scores.[46] The non-Jewish ambiance meets the social and symbolic needs of the intermarried, those with no religion and the converts. A change in milieu is not, however, absolute even for those who change their religion. The converts were born Jewish, and so it is not surprising that a third or so retain Jewish friends. A person may assimilate and even convert in the American circumstances without suffering Jewish social exclusion, as is consistent with the finding, noted above, of a generally relaxed attitude toward intermarriage.

Converting or having no religious identification could be expressed in withdrawal from Jewish worship. To be intermarried or to neglect Jewish

charities could also be associated with a decline in worship. About 55% of the sample as a whole never attends synagogue or does so only a few times a year. About a third of the steadfast Jews fall in this category but, as we see in Table 1, the proportion rises considerably in the other categories. There is little difference between the Jews of no religion and those with a gentile spouse. In fact, lack of synagogue attendance is a not a negative *correlate* but rather both are expressions of the underlying alienation from organized Judaism. Doubtless, some of their synagogue attendance is at rites of passage of family and friends.

With conversion, I expect synagogue attendance to be replaced by church attendance. In fact, there is considerable overlap, a fact which itself reflects an advanced stage of mass assimilation in which the boundaries between religions has become permeable. Respondents were classified according to whether they attend synagogue only, attend neither church nor synagogue, attend both church and synagogue, or church only. Table 1 presents the proportions attending church exclusively. The proportion rises significantly from one category to the other. That only 38% of the converted are solely church attending reflects the transitional situation of new converts. (Twenty-two percent attend both church and synagogue on occasion.). In all likelihood, they have Jewish relatives and friends and may attend their synagogue functions. About a third of the converts attend neither church nor synagogue. Apparently, some conversions are organizationally nominal.

These correlations reinforce the image of social structural assimilation identified with the categories. Those who move away from Judaism and the Jewish community along one or another institutional dimension are more likely to join only non-Jewish formal organizations, contribute exclusively to non-Jewish charities, have few Jewish friends and more frequently attend church. An attitude supportive of intermarriage is no surprise as it fits neatly into those life-styles..

RESULTING CULTURAL AND ATTITUDINAL CHANGE: The lower part of Table 1 presents results involving five measures of cultural outcomes for each of the five categories. Four measures assess orientation to Jewish and Christian religious ritual. The first consists of three items referring to observance of dietary laws and the Sabbath and constitute a "Scale of Holiness Acts" since these rituals sanctify nature and time and have been traditional centerpieces of Jewish observance. About three-fifths of all the respondents perform none of the acts. Overall, seventeen percent observe two of the three, that is, as referred to in Table 1, "some holiness acts," including just over a fifth of the steadfast Jews. Few, if any, households in the remaining assimilatory categories observe the Sabbath or keep dietary laws. A few, very few, converts still engage in some of these observances,. suggesting that some are in mixed Jewish-Christian households and, perhaps, the existence of a few Hebrew-Christians in the sample.

Responses to items on a Home Religious Practice Scale, based on home and synagogue observances, shows such to be more common in this population than are the "holiness acts." Elements of the Home Religious Practices Scale include attending a Seder, lighting Hanukkah candles, fasting on Yom Kippur and lighting Sabbath candles. While 33% of the sample do none of these, 51% observe three or four of them. These latter, the relatively more observant, are referred to in Table 1 as "some home observances." The proportion committed to this level of observance declines from 69%, among the steadfast, to almost none among the converts and those with no religion. The irrelevance of these home and synagogue observances distinguishes the last two from the three other types.

Another scale combined measures of communally oriented and public Jewish observances and exposure to Jewish communications media. It is based on items referring to reading Jewish literature, a Jewish newspaper, observing Purim, the reading of the Megillah on Purim, attending Israeli Independence day observances and participating in some adult Jewish education program. In part, the measure overlaps with the Jewish educational index in the top portion of Table 1. An overwhelming 74% of all respondents do not participate in any of these observances. Table 1 refers to the proportions engaged in any of those observances. Those participating in one or more public acts declines from 37% of the steadfast to almost none among those without a religion and among the converts. That converts avoid any public statement of their Jewish roots may be expected. However, that the non-religious Jews neither read Jewish literature, Jewish newspapers nor participate in educational programs indicates that we are not dealing with Jewish secularists, such as secular yiddishists of earlier decades who affirmed a Jewish national or ethnic association. The current non-religious seem to be outside the community in these respects.

As public expression of Jewishness declines, public expression of Christian symbolic acts increases. Respondents were asked whether anyone in the household "never," "sometimes," "usually" or "always" displays a Christmas tree on the holiday. On the whole, 21% of the respondents usually or always display a tree, including one in ten households of steadfast Jews. More than a third of the other Jewish types and over two-fifths of those with no religion and nearly two-thirds of the converts have a Christmas tree. The last figure may be close to the proportion in the general Christian population who always or usually display a tree. Some of those with a tree would deny that it is a public statement of their Christianity. It certainly does not reflect the depth of Christian attachment. Indeed, respondents might display a Christmas tree and light Chanuka candles. Other than for the Hebrew-Christians, this suggests a nominalism toward either commitment.

Fertility level is lower among Jews, except for the Orthodox, than among Americans in general. Jews who become ultra-orthodox increase their

fertility in response to communal norms. Fertility level is, generally, associated with age at marriage, whether women are in the labor force, economic situation, part of an attitude toward mobility and of aspiring to provide better for fewer children. It may also be an index of family morale. While high morale does not necessarily increase family size, poor morale may depress it below the average for the group.

NJPS asked how many children respondents anticipated having. On the whole, in this sample, 27% anticipated having three or more children as a completed family. The converts have the highest proportion anticipating this many. Since the converts do not differ occupationally in income and in marital status from the others in this sample, those variables are not likely to account for the increased expected family size. It may be that having entered the hegemonic social system they have a greater feeling of social stability, a more positive outlook on the future. They have also joined the non-Jewish kinship setting with its higher fertility norms.

A CLOSING COMMENT: After examining all of Table 1, I am in a position to identify some variables associated with structural assimilation. The decrease in socialization measures says something about the role of Jewry as the "reference group," a group from which one takes standards of evaluation. The declining role of Jewish communal institutions as a reference group for individual Jews in America is what is meant by "a loss in communal authority."

The political hegemony of Protestant Christianity is in the background of all of the general institutions in much the way that Islam defined the context in which Coptic society lived. The boundaries breached are, principally, the philanthropic and the familial ones and, ultimately, the religious boundary itself. The initial fact is not so much that individuals cross these boundaries. Rather, the wider society's institutional culture and structure encompass Jewish institutions so that individuals may, with little thought, assume the social behaviors of American Christians giving only to non-Jewish charities, belonging only to non-Jewish organizations and joining Christian families. These, at both the institutional and individual levels, are aspects of the transformation of the community as a whole. This transformation includes an expanding assimilating sector within Jewish society. The character of this sector is indicated by the correlates of the assimilatory categories. The support of intermarriage indicates that maintenance of kinship boundaries is no longer to be defended. Belonging to non-Jewish organizations, giving solely to non-Jewish charities, having a non-Jewish friendship circle and moving from synagogue towards church attendance are all indices of shifting from the particularistic to the more general or to other particularisms. The decreasing Jewish home and public religious observance and increasing public statement of Christian belonging are the cultural expressions of this structural change. The acceptance of a new norm of

family size, while not directly a religious measure, tells us that the converts have changed their social location in a rather profound way. Two of the cultural variables, home religious practices and display of a Christmas tree, discriminate strongly among the assimilatory categories. The former, home observance, has a spread of 64 percentage points from the lowest to the highest category; the latter, displaying a Christmas tree, a spread of 54 percentage points. The display of the Christmas tree is one of the few measures that distinguish the Jew with no religious affiliation from the convert. The former is as likely to have abandoned Jewish observances as the convert, but is less likely to accept the common Christian practice of displaying a Christmas tree.

The lack of difference between those with no religion and the converts in ten of the fifteen measures referred to in Table 1 suggests that having no religion in a Christian environment is tantamount to tacit participation in Christian institutions. Those alienated from religion remain politically and religiously distinct from the converts while sharing with them a wide social ambiance. The lack of holiness observances characterizes the community as a whole. It is the penumbra of the mass conversion process.

The Jewish community itself has restricted the reach of its authority in accepting the mixed religious nature of most American social institutions. The Jewish communal drive for integration in the major political, economic and cultural institutions implies a greater fluidity across the Jewish/Christian religious boundary. The mass of the American Jewish community avoids attending to this by rationalizing that general institutions are secular, set outside the bounds of religious concern.

CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY AS AN INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

How to Think About Spiritual Autobiographies: The historical schema sets the context for mass conversion. The survey analysis shows how it works out at an institutional level among contemporary American Jews. The manner in which societal and institutional conditions impact on the individual varies with the location of the person in the social structure. Needless to say, the local impacts of collective events might be quite different from their global character. This article will not attempt to uncover these objective local impacts. Rather, we concentrate on the ways individuals may apprehend the local situation created by both the societal and institutional environments.

The individual responds to the events experienced, develops a kind of personal policy. This refraction of the social through personal experience contributes to a sense of autonomy and even offers an opportunity to stand against one's society and its faith. Much was written on the previous pages

about the way an encompassing faith may produce a reinterpretation of a faith. On the other hand, an individual in transition to a new faith may interpret the new one through the conceptual apparatus, emotional predispositions and evaluative standards of the old society and faith.[47] Fichtelberg (1989: 120) exemplifies a part of this phenomenon from the autobiography of Frederick Douglass who, he says was

> . . . hobbled by a genre created by whites for the expression of national ideals.. Douglass striving with all his passionate intensity to produce the authentic cry of the slave, succeeded only in reproducing the clichés of his oppressors. His most severe attacks on American institutions served, ultimately to endorse them.

The Douglass autobiographic text is captive to the culture it protests against. A convert carries the baggage of a previous faith.

A small number of Jewish converts to Christianity, with a proclivity for literary expression, document their experience, and reconstruct it, in an autobiography. Some enlist the aid of a colleague to create their literary voice. They understand and explain their conversion experience as central to their lives and, usually, as a conscious revolutionary decision. Written after conversion, these autobiographies are, on the whole, directed to members of their new faith.

In autobiography the narrator, the author and the protagonist have the same identity. Lejeune (Quoted in Barbour 1994: 7) defines an autobiography as ". . . a retrospective prose narrative that someone writes concerning his own existence, where the focus is the individual life, in particular the story of the personality."[48] Only a few societies and religious groupings produce autobiographies. Those that do tend to value the individual, and to expect or, at least, accept a public personal confessions. These works belong to a genre of spiritual autobiographies. America's early Shaker and Quaker spiritual narratives are in this tradition. The fundamentalist Protestant movement, emerging in the 1920*s*, made conversion and public proclamation of conversion, whether within or between faiths, an expectation.

The autobiography is not only a personal statement but is the self's social statement and its social mirror or even a vehicle for expressing the state of the cosmos. Fichtelberg (1989: 51), a student of Puritan testimonies, says that the authors "see local events as aspects of a cosmic drama: to be saved is to sense one's world-historical mission."

The conversion narrative tends to be formulaic in its depiction of the experience preceding and following the conversion (Bereton 1991). The formula models a myth of sin and redemption in the version of the receiving group, including, generally, that group's conception and evaluation of the faith which the convert has abandoned. The reader, thus, identifies with the narrative structure, accepting its validity. Bereton (1991: 3ff.), writing on

nineteenth century American conversion narratives describes their formula: "they typically open with the convert's early life, went on to describe a period of increasing sense of sinfulness, climaxed with conversion proper, concluded with an account of the 'fruits' of the experience—usually zealous conduct of evangelistic activity." Formally, we have the structures of the novel with the protagonist/antagonist conflict, a resolution and denouement. The content inserted in the formula, the concrete examples of the author's specific life experience, is governed by the ideology.[49]

Every conversion is also a deconversion. The latter may express the alienative motive called by Max Scheler "ressentiment." The rhetoric of the autobiography explains the abandonment of a prior faith telling how a person is freed from an oppressive or nastily hedonistic religious system.[50] Converts from Judaism typically begin with problems they have with Judaism and end with the new life in Christ.

The conversion narrative is a rhetoric of persuasion. "Spiritual autobiographies . . . are not simply conversion accounts but the witnessing of life wrought by the conversion" (Shea 1968: ix). The act of writing deepens the certitude of the convert, while persuading the receiving group of the convert's commitment. Members of the abandoned group who are, themselves, on the road to conversion may adapt these confessions as their model for self-understanding. At the same time, their ecstatic rhetoric may weaken any appeal to former co-religionists who are not far along the road to conversion but, then, the unconvinced are not likely to read these works.

Autobiographies of Jewish Converts to Christianity: The following examples are taken from thirty-six autobiographies of individuals who were born Jewish and later adopted Christianity. Most of these were written in English and published between the early nineteenth century and 1993. Some two-thirds of the authors are males. Over half of the books were published by sectarian presses, usually, of the groups that received the converts. Twenty two percent of these former Jews converted to liberal Protestantism, 44% to conservative Protestantism (including a few Hebrew-Christians) and 31% to Roman Catholicism. This certainly does not reflect the distribution of the general population of former Jews among the receiving denominations. Conservative Protestants are more likely than are liberal Protestants to encourage autobiographical writing.

Over half of the autobiographies were written by individuals raised in orthodox homes, but keep in mind that many of the conversions preceded the Second World War when orthodox affiliation was the norm. A fourth of the authors were Holocaust survivors. About a third were unmarried at the time of their conversion. About half were married to a Jewish spouse, who also converted, and the other half were married to a gentile spouse whom they joined religiously. None mention marrying an unconverted Jew. Their households were, thus, entirely Christian. Some four fifths of the converts

continued to affirm a Jewish ethnicity and some of these sustain social relations and family relations with unconverted Jews. Slightly more than half became leaders in the Christian community, some as clergy and some as lay evangelists. About a third of the potential converts experienced a vision just prior to their conversions, evidence of a mystical element. The others converted after some contemplation and study, a more evolutionary experience.

Their authors' major interpretations of their experience are sometimes expressed in the titles of conversion narratives. Esther Bronstein's (1980) *Beyond the Pale: From the Ghettos of Czarist Russia to a New Land and a New Faith* records how a Yiddish speaking immigrant couple in the late nineteenth century was drawn to the Baptist and later the Presbyterian Church. The Bronsteins also established a Hebrew-Christian Congregation in the 1970s to fulfill their mission of bringing the news of the Jewish messiah to Jews. Vera Schlamm (1972), author of *Pursued,* survived Bergen Belsen to become a pediatrician practicing in Los Angeles. She writes, "Joyfully I yielded my life to Him, to my Jesus, to my Messiah." Jesus is her refuge. Father M. Raphael Simon (1948) writes *The Glory of Thy People: The Story of a Conversion.* As a child in the early part of the century he had attended a Reform temple in New York, and later, at the University of Chicago, was drawn to the study of St. Thomas Aquinas, learning that "truth, eternal changeless truth, existed." His book is dedicated to St. Bernard, Cistercian Abbot, Father of Contemplatives and Protector of Jews. Judy Wurmbrand came to Israel as a Displaced Person from Romania where she had already fallen in love with the son of a pastor. With the help and guidance of Brother Ostrovsky, a Russian Jewish convert, she was baptized in the Mediterranean off Tel Aviv and now serves a Lutheran Church in California. Her (1979) autobiography entitled *Escape Form the Grip*, traces her spiritual journey from subordination to Jewish law to freedom in Jesus.

The Autobiographic Formula: Stages in Personal Religious Change: Autobiographies may be examined from a large number of perspectives: literary, psychodynamic, their projection of social roles and norms, among others. Here, we take one of the more superficial approaches and simply identify their common formula with a few illustrations. The narratives all tell of a journey from spiritual "darkness to a great light," from sin to redemption, a processural structure. They all center on a caesura, a sharp break from an old to a new personality. The formal steps in the conversion narratives and, perhaps, in the conversion experiences will be termed 1) disengagement, 2) emotional estrangement, 3) propaedeutic, 4) transformation, 5) consolidation, and 6) enactment. These recall the formal stages of Van Gennep's (1960) rites of passage. The meanings selected by the authors to illustrate each step, the content, are drawn on the basis of cultural criteria for interpretation. A few sentences will describe each of these stages. Since

this paper is intended simply as a sketch of concepts, not all of the stages will be developed here with examples. Examples will be given of but two of the stages, emotional estrangement and transformation.

DISENGAGING: In the first stage, disengagement, the Jewish social and cultural system ceases to be authoritative for the individual. This occurrence may be signaled by antipathy to Jewish practice or by a personally alienating experience with their family or community. Disengagement may derive from a failure of bonding or desiccation of bonds, Alternatively, the group may reject the person on the basis of some characteristic or behavior, a kind of excommunication. At the same time that authors are antipathetic toward Jews or Judaism they may also be antipathetic toward Christians or Christianity. Initially, conversion is inconceivable. In the retrospective writing, this anti-Christian sentiment is projected onto Jewry. The image of an alternative legitimate authority, here a Christian one, is presented. Jewry may be de-legitimated in the eyes of the individuals because of its subordination, powerlessness or lack of spirituality as the subject becomes aware of the possibilities of personal enhancement and moral and spiritual uplift through membership in a more powerful group perceived as possessing a deeper truth. Material opportunism is less obvious as a motive than is achievement of a sense of normative order and meaning. It is relevant that most conversions take place in or near adolescence when one's status is still in flux. With disengagement, the group of origin is confirmed as a negative reference group.

EMOTIONAL ESTRANGEMENT: The second stage, emotional estrangement, is a consequence of the first. The author may tell of physical symptoms or depression without consciously relating these to separation from faith and family. The depression may be reactive to aggression against an internalized aspect of the self. The Jewish self, the severed emotional components of earlier attachments are bound to be a source of pain. It may be a morbid depression in the face of existential anxieties, especially those associated with the "meaninglessness" that follows when Jewish answers have ceased to be authoritative. Such moods may be accompanied by a burden of guilt, or sense of sin, a "dark night of the soul," and thoughts of suicide. Conversion may be thought of as social or spiritual suicide in preparation for rebirth. It may function, in extreme cases, to deflect personal physical suicide. Anger against Jews or Judaism may explode as a way to manage this stress, as an abreaction or catharsis or, in part, to rationalize the break. Rejections and accusations by members of the alienated group, especially family, may increase torment and the sense of alienation. Traditional mechanisms of defense and adjustment may come into play. The stress may be confronted and tapped as a source of energy to continue the struggle to liberate the self from its Jewish fetters.

The autobiography of Leopold Cohn (1911) provides an example. Born in 1862 to an orthodox Hungarian family, he writes that he was sent to study for the rabbinate. Though he lived in close proximity to Roman Catholics, he claims that his early interest in Jesus as the messiah neither derived from his knowledge of the New Testament nor from any positive association with Christians but was developed from traditional Biblical and Talmudic sources. Only later, did he discover allies in the gentiles. At first, he was repelled by the thought that gentiles had co-opted the Jewish messiah. "A voice whispered in my heart. No matter what others do in His name, you must do as He teaches" (Cohn 1911: 20). Cohn moved to Scotland where he learned to accept gentiles and there he was baptized. On the Sunday morning of the scheduled baptism, June 25, 1892, he recalls his emotional struggle. He awakened with a shiver and someone spoke to him saying.

> What are you doing today . . . You are going to be baptized, aren't you? Do you know that as soon as you take this step, you are cut off from your wife whom you love so dearly. . . your children will never call you Papa . . . your brothers, your sisters, all your relatives will consider you dead (Cohn 1911: 23ff.).

Leopold Cohn realizes that the speaker was Satan.

> I felt ill as I approached the baptism. I was determined to delay it . . . but as I realized that all my fears were a fabrication of lies from the greatest enemy of my soul. . . . . Satan was defeated by the power of Jesus, who is the mighty God (Cohn 1911:25ff.).

One senses a "counter phobic" attitude. Cohn provokes the anxiety of baptism and then, leaning on the power of God, he absorbs the anxiety into the euphoria of the new faith. His wife, the daughter of Rabbi Teitelbaum of Sziget, after consulting rabbinical authority, remained with him. He sailed for the United States and, to anticipate the later stage of "enactment," he opened a mission in Brownsville and later in Williamsburg in Brooklyn with funding from Baptist ministers. The Christian mission community has not been welcoming to sectarian missionaries but he persuaded them that, with his Jewish knowledge, he knew best how to reach his people.

PROPAEDEUTIC: In the third stage, the propaedeutic, the prospective convert continues to deal with his fear of disengagement. Socialization to the new authority begins in earnest. The individual may live with a Christian family, a chrysalis for the new self. A Christian family ready to accept a Jew is bridging the two cultures, reducing the sharpness of the boundary separating them. In such a setting the candidate becomes familiar with Christian religious symbols. In all likelihood he has already been assimilated to the polity and economy of the new society. This kinship assimilation, which may be non-marital, eases the way into the religion of the receiving society.

Religious socialization may be formalized during a catechumen status with more systematic ideological and educational preparation. Mission stat-

ions, for example, may assist the convert in finding a means of economic support, especially with the dissolution of his previous economic ties. This period is also an occasion for establishing new friendships which reduce the likelihood that the candidate will renege.[51]

TRANSFORMATION: Stage four, transformation, may involve a dream or vision followed by confession of sin and submission to the saving Grace of Jesus. Sometimes public confession will proclaim the rebirth into a new self. Unlike one's original birth, living in parental memory, religious rebirth is a conscious act of creation by the individual. Converts tend to recall and report the precise date of their baptism. In the Christian version, the transformation appears less as a self-directed alchemy than something that happens to them. A contemporary example is provided in a spiritual auto-biography by Sid Roth (1976), a Washington bureaucrat and a leader of Jews for Jesus in that city. He begins with a search for mystic enlightenment by attending mind control classes before considering conversion. At that time he believed his mind could control external events. A woman, also participating in those classes, admires him for having found his astral soul. At the same time, he feared that his involvement with the occult meant that he had cast in his lot with the devil. He writes,

> That was the afternoon of increasing terror. That was when I went to bed with the mezuzah around my neck, the Bible under my pillow, fear enveloping me and a broken heart inside. That was the night I prayed to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and asked him to help me. That was the night I asked Joy [his wife] to entreat her God in my behalf . . . The next thing I knew it was morning. Sunshine streamed through my window and woke me up. I was alive, really alive. The fear was gone, completely gone, and in its place was an indescribable joy. It was as if I had died in my sleep and had awakened brand-new, in a brand-new world. And I wasn't alone. Someone was with me. It was Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel. He had made the perfect atonement for all my sins, and I didn't have to feel guilty any more (Roth 1976 107ff.).

For Sid Roth, mind control, the devil, the occult, an astral soul and Yeshua all form a single complex, a kind a continual war between Ormuzd and Ahura Mazda, between malevolent forces and salvation in which the boundary between self and the environment shifted and dissolved. His efforts to control guilt turned into magical rituals. The pain recedes as he blends submissively with Yeshua. The world of nomos dissolves into the antinomian world of the spiritual act as a new soul is born.

A striking example of Transformation is that of Eugenio Zolli, Rabbi in Rome, a graduate of a rabbinical School and a Ph.D. from Florence. He reported a vision of Jesus in 1917 when he was 36. In 1938 he authored an exegetical study of the New Testament, *The Nazarene*. He taught Judaism

and Hebrew in a Catholic seminary and mixed with the Princes of the Church.

With the Nazi occupation, fearing for his life, he went into hiding. The leadership of his Rome congregation had mixed feelings about this man who had preferred the life of the academy to the pastorate and who abandoned them during the war years. Following the allied conquest of Rome, the American occupation reinstalled him as rabbi of the Temple. He writes that while conducting the Day of Atonement service in the fall of 1944,

> My heart lay as though dead in my breast. And just then I saw with my mind's eye a meadow sweeping upward, with bright grass but with no flower. In this meadow I saw Jesus Christ in a white mantle, and beyond His head the blue sky. I experienced the greatest inner peace . . . within my heart I found the words: 'You are here for the last time.' I considered them with the greatest serenity of soul and without any particular emotion. The reply of my heart was: So it is, so it shall be, so it must be (Roth 1976: 183).

This conversion is like that of the New Testament apostles, a new relation to God defined through a Jewish midrash. As the heavens open at the conclusion of the Day of Atonement to receive the congregation's final supplications, he peers through to a vision of the Messiah. His is a Holocaust survivor's conversion following years of mortal fear, separation from his people and the miraculous "resurrection" of his status and freedom. The vision is not simply transformative but seals, to use to term of the closing service, the transformation with its assurance of forgiveness. In the image of the beckoning Jesus, he accepted the redeemed soul. After his conversion he wrote, "Christianity represented for me the object of a longing from above which should temper my soul's winter, an incomparable beauty which should quench my thirst for beauty"(1954: 112).

CONSOLIDATION: In the fifth stage, consolidation, pre-conversion tensions reemerge. Again, as with a "return of the repressed," the convert deals with pain and guilt of leaving and being left by family and community. He or she may also be abused by former co-religionists. All of this, reported to the new community in the autobiography, demonstrates the sacrifices he or she has suffered to join them. These are tests of his faith. The tension abates, in some cases, as the new Christian declares he or she is the old Jew in a new synthesis, a completed Jew, a Hebrew-Christian.

THE ENACTED CHRISTIAN: The enacted Christian, the sixth stage, affirms life in the new faith. The convert engages in Christian education and, in some cases, seminary training. The spiritual journey, by this stage, has turned guilt into the euphoria of a spiritual liberation. As an enacted Christian, the convert may become an evangelist to the Jews. Here we have Cohn in his Brownsville Mission and Gartenhaus serving the Southern Baptists and the Brownsteins' Hebrew-Christian congregation..

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Mass religious conversion has been examined from three perspectives: historical, institutional and personal and concepts have been developed from the data at each levels of generalization. Some of the concepts used in the discussion are the standard and common intellectual tools of the social sciences: social and structural assimilation, plausibility structure, occupational specialization, authority, social order and anomie, rhetoric of persuasion and mechanisms of defense. Others are more or less specialized for the topic under consideration: mass religious conversion, hegemonic religious control of society and culture, social shock, benign versus coercive policies, mission as political-religious organizations, social control of converts, ambivalence of attitude toward target groups, religious transition groups, institutional mechanisms of conversion, apostasy variable and apostasy types, index of holiness acts, emotional estrangement accompanying religious change.[52] One of the methodological challenges is to integrate ideas on societal, institutional and personality levels. That discussion is beyond the scope of this paper but, as a contribution to it, let us link up narratively a few central ideas and then use some of them to assay the mass religious conversion of Ameri-can Jewry in narrative forms.

There is no single model of changing religious institutions. The exemplary case with which the discussion opened is that of a society politically controlled by another with a different religion. The hegemonic religio-political regime's "plausibility structure" redefines the bases of cultural and social legitimation for the encompassed population. Habermas might term this "colonization" of social institutions of a subordinated by a dominant polity. The conditions for colonization may be conquest, migration or a crisis internal to the subservient polity which results in a weakening of the integrity of its social patterns and the delegitimation of its social authority. Such a decline of internal social control, a crisis on the structural level, might precipitate a crisis on the level of meaning and, thus, a loss of sense of social order on the part of a population. To the extent that the minority and majority societies are bound by a Durkheimian "organic solidarity," an interdependence of professions and occupations, sharing the financing or defense of a transcendent civil society, cultural and structural assimilation of the subordinate society is more likely. This may begin with the institutions of secondary association, such as the economy and the polity, and later spread to those of primary association, such as family and religion.

Under such institutional circumstances, the subordinated religious institution may adapt values and forms, or even legal institutions, of the superordinate religion. Religious boundaries become more permeable. Flows of population may go in either direction but, when there is a clear hierarchy, the

dominant flow is in the direction of the more powerful. In polytheistic systems, the adjustment may be relatively easy since new deities may be absorbed and adapted to the existing pantheon. In monotheistic systems, such as in the confrontation of Islam and Christianity or of Judaism and Christianity, by and large, choices must be made. Individual conversions follow the institutional adaptation and continue over some extended period. The meaning of the conversions to both groups varies with the rate of flow and the proportion who have converted to a point in time. Early converts experience a sharp and painful break as they shift allegiance. After some large number have already made the transition, the attitudes of members of the subordinate society become more flexible and ecumenical. Toward the end of the process, we have a smaller, but perhaps more culturally severe, minority religious population maintaining a degree of structural and cultural segregation. The rate of flow is also important to the receiving society. A rapid shift can strain the receiving society's ability to socialize the newcomers and presents it with problems of social control, both of the newcomers and of the receiving population. Again, at later stages the converts present less of a problem to the receiving society since the rate of flow will have declined and the converts will already have been well-socialized to the new institutions.

The difference between the relatively benign Islamization and the sometimes more coercive mission-based Christianization is instructive in relation to the place of persecution in the process. Persecution may affect the rate of conversionary flow more than the fact of that flow. Perhaps, the most rapid flow occurs when periods of persecution and liberal ecumenism alternate.

The situation of American Jews seems to fit this model. The initial social shock was, at first, the isolation of the small colonial community and, later, the socio-cultural break associated with the mass immigration. Bi-valent policies of Jewish communal organizations have given much attention to the assimilation of Jews into the American political and economic mainstream. Anti-discrimination programs have been designed to integrate Jews into the economy and polity. On the other hand, identity and educational programs have been designed to stem assimilation into the Christian kinship and religious systems.

The American process is modified by the special character of a democratic political system, its encouragement of voluntary organizations and the implied freedom of confessional association within a shared political framework. The dominant role of civil personal status law requires civil marriage even when religious marriage takes place. This facilitates freedom of religious intermarriage, though it has not always supported interracial marriage.

Public ideology in America seems to support a "cultural pluralism." More precisely, it is an open door policy for admitting diverse elements into the general civil society, defined by a liberal Protestant civil religion. In this sense, it is consistent in spirit with the idea of Christian mission. Motifs of tolerance represent a moratorium on pressure for conformity. The system tends to deliver on its promise of equality for all admittees, a fact that encourages the candidate groups to accept the invitation to assimilate, in general, and convert religiously, in particular.

Two socialization settings seem important in the American context: mass culture and education and work. Mass aesthetic culture, especially youth culture, with its musical expression, pop artists and openness to equal-status sexuality across ethnic and religious boundaries becomes an embracing form. The universalistic character of politicized mass culture in the '60*s* produced an increased consensual trend in morality and religious relations which both blurred religious boundaries and eased the emergence of religious sects that recruited across the religious spectrum. It is no accident that this movement also politicized American evangelical Protestantism and so gave additional impulse to its missionary aims at the expense of ecumenism.

On the American scene, the capitalist basis of education and occupation tends to separate work from particularistic forces. Occupation tends to become an all-consuming factor in the lives of the most mobile, pushing aside, though not entirely eliminating, ethnic and religious particularisms, though less successfully with respect to race. Educational and occupational groups are also culture producing groups. Since they are embedded normatively in the dominant religious system the culture they produce is embedded within that religious system. The social and cultural relationships in these become a force moving a number of Jews in the liberal Christian direction and a smaller number toward evangelical Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Capitalism also implies an achievement orientation in the occupational world tied to status and prestige allocation in the wider society. These forces place the elite in the vanguard of mass conversion. A small Jewish fundamentalism has emerged as a counter movement to these agents of modernity, though the origins and social functions of ultra-orthodoxy are more complex.

Within a Christian "plausibility structure," including that of the liberal Protestantism of America's civil religion, the status of the Jews remains morally ambiguous. This sets a psychological climate in which the phenomenon of Jewish self-hatred continues to play a part encouraging the assimilatory shift.

It would be important to know something of flows in both directions in American society, Christian converts to Judaism as well as converts from Judaism to Christianity. We do not have good data even with those available from the 1990 Jewish Population Study. A supposition that four Jews be-

come Christian for every Christian that converts to Judaism might not be far off. Given the immensely larger pool of Christians in the United States this would be an infinitesimal proportion of Christians who convert to Judaism. The reverse flow[53] has a significant impact on the Jewish community.[54]

NOTES

[1] Appreciation is expressed to the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry for the honor and opportunity to prepare this paper as the Marshall Sklare Memorial Lecture of 1996 and the courteous and constructive comments of Deborah Hertz, Bernard Reisman and Robert Seltzer, discussants. The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute graciously provided me its good offices for revision of the text for publication. My colleagues Harold Bershady, Allen Glicksman and Shmuel Eisenstadt commented helpfully on an earlier draft.

[2] The numbers depend on the definitions of "a Jew" and of "a Jewish household." Estimates of the 1990 Jewish population varied from 1.8% to 2.7% of the general population. If the count is restricted to those currently identifying as Jews by religion, the Jewish population increased by 1.8% between 1970 and 1990 (from 5,420,000 to 5,519,000) while the U.S. resident population increased by 22.4%. A good discussion of these data is found in Goldstein and Goldstein (1996: 34ff.).

[3] Societal conversion, social reconstruction, is not unlike revolution which includes a new philosophical anthropology affecting the definition of what is and is not subject to human control, what is nature and what is culture.

[4] This general model which will be applied to describe the conversion of American Jews to Christianity would also account for the Christianization of the Indians of North and South America and of American blacks and of Chinese immigrants to the United States, among others.

[5] Historical method seeks deep and textured descriptions of each historical moment. Here a sociological lens will be aimed at the comparative historical material to arrive at general concepts. Particular events are abstracted from their immediate contexts and related to similar events in other contexts.

[6] Muslim tradition holds the Qu'ran to have been uncreated, existing before the creation of the world, and attributes to Abraham the earthly founding of the faith.

[7] Henri Pirenne's (1939) Mediterranean history, aptly titled *Mohammed and Charlemagne* describes these events.

[8] The mass conversion of Hindus and Buddhists to Islam in India offers another example in which Islam was responsive to local structural tensions. Muhammad Ibn Qasim conquered Sind, largely Buddhist, in 711. Islam was presented as a tolerant and egalitarian faith and, as such, appealed to the lower castes among Hindus. Cultural compromise played a role in easing the acceptance of Islam among subject peoples. Two centuries after the conquest of India Isma'ilis, a sect derived from Shi'ite Islam could depict 'Ali as an incarnation of Vishnu. When Sufis arrived a century or so later, they offered mystical approaches which transcended specific cultural content. Both Hindus and Isma'ilis were drawn to Sunni Islam through this mystic approach. The attraction needed to be quite strong since individual converts endangered personal or familial ties. Converting groups severed their links to caste and tribal associations (Hardy 1979: 91).

[9] Weber, dealing with corporate groups, was concerned with formal control of one group's norms by another. In Muslim Egypt, the control was by informal influence excepting at the margins.

[10] In fact one way of estimating the number of conversions to Islam is based on changes in revenues from the *jizya*.

Under 'Umar, a "rightly guided caliph," for example, in the seventh century, income from taxation was 100-120 million *dirhams*. Fifty years later, under 'Abd al-Malik, it had sunk to 40 million (Arnold [1913]1984: 81).

[11] He went to Egypt in the service of the Sunni Abbasid Caliph Kafur. After the death of Kafur he fled to the court of the Fatimid Caliph Mu'izz (952-975) in Qayrawan and advised him on the conquest of Egypt. That conquest installed Fatimid Shi'a rule. Ya'aqub and other dhimmis or former *dhimmis* remained in an advisory role to the government. By this time, Ibn Killis had become knowledgeable in Isma'ili jurisprudence.

[12] Christians, Jews and Muslims were in different marriage sets. Yet, some conversions, such as through an elite intermarriage, as in the above example, were treated as political events. As with royal marriages, they established relations of obligation between groups and guaranteed friendships which facilitated economic undertakings (Staffa 1977: 70). At the other end of the social spectrum, a slave, a quasi-member of a family, acquired through conquest or through indebtedness, could obtain freedom through conversion. During military conquests, captive women were inducted into the families of the conquerors. Their children were raised as Muslims (Arnold [1913]1984: 79).

[13] A contemporary example of economic relations impinging on religious identity is that of the Islamization of Dār Fūr in Africa. Keira rulers were drawn to espouse Islam to facilitate long distance trade with fully Islamicized areas. The Keira ruler had been a Divine King. The *ulema*, in accepting such a conversion, were careful not to weaken the form of the polity but to use Islam as a "catalyst transmuting ethnic solidarity into a centralized yet institutionally diversified monarchy. Islam adapted to this political system. The royal ceremony of the drums for accession was retained and the king was now defined as *amir al-mu'minim*, the leader of the faithful, following the caliphal model" (O'Fahey 1979: 195).

[14] The leaders of a subject religion who witness abandonment of their faith, or the emergence of heterodoxies, may comfort themselves by delegitmating it as treason and desertion or by attributing it to persecution and directing ire at the oppressors.

[15] This was observed in modern Hungary following the fall of the Bela Kun regime (McCagg 1987).

[16] Thus, African slaves in North America become Protestants. Nineteenth century German Jews join the Lutheran Evangelical Church. Sometimes, the oppressed may turn to a third religion. The acceptance of Presbyterianism by Koreans under Japanese occupation is a case in point.

[17] Christians in Mesopotamia were persecuted under Harun al-Rashid (786-809) who was distressed by what he perceived as their support for the Byzantine emperor Nicephorous. Harun saw Nicephorous as treacherous and sympathy for him "caused the Christian names to stink in the nostrils of Harun" (Arnold [1913]1984: 76). Coptic Christians were to suffer a similar fate four centuries later during the Crusades, especially following Louis IX's invasion of Damietta (1249).

[18] As mentioned above, Christians, Jews and Muslims belonged to separate marriage sets. Each community, under its own personal status law, could celebrate marriages only according to its own canons. A Christian man was not able to marry a Muslim woman, but a Muslim man

could marry a Christian woman in a Muslim rite and the children would be considered Muslim. Similarly, inheritance could flow from Christian to Muslim, but not in the opposite direction. The expectation is that in the case of an intermarriage, one of the spouses, usually the woman, converts and, in so doing, severs ties with the family of origin. Thus, the biographical dictionary tends to be patrilineal. Family is so powerful a bond that pre-Islamic ancestors are not sequestered from memory.

[19] Itinerant monks and preachers carried the doctrine, first from northern India to Central Asia and China in the fifth century BCE. After the seventh century CE, Buddhism spread through China, Southeast Asia and Japan. In all of these cases, it established itself alongside the indigenous religious systems. None of them being exclusivist, as were Christianity and Islam, the political challenge was more muted.

[20] An exception was the imposition of Islam on polytheists in the Arabian peninsula at the inception of Islam (Poston 1992).

[21] Its initial thrust came from Hellenized Jews in Antioch who proclaimed the Gospel to non-Jews, as is expressed in Paul's self-understanding as an apostle of gentiles.

[22] Boniface worked with the support of the Pope, but with his death in 754, Papacy and missions went, to some extent, their own way. Between the ninth and the twelfth centuries missionary initiative shifted to the rulers while Papal influence in the mission field declined. As Sullivan (1994: 104) points out, for this early medieval period, "the viability of a new Christian establishment depended on the strength of a Christian ruler backing missionary work or of a newly converted native king or a dedicated and persistent and persuasive band of missionary monks, but never on the Papacy. Rome could only assist those agencies and usually admitted its limitations by a waiting their request for assistance."

[23] Muslims, it will be recalled, replaced the governing elite and, heteronomously, influenced the culture. Christian monarchs left the leaders in place but, by bringing them into alliance, gained control over them. Such a governing structure is what Weber termed "heterocephaly," political subordination. Within it, cultural independence of subpopulations was limited.

[24] Mission activity of this sort has continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Missionaries introduced native peoples to the Gospel and insisted upon Christian norms of family relations. This practice has been documented in the course of the conversion of the Inuit to Christianity in the early twentieth century (Klausner and Foulks 1982).

[25] Formal arrangements of these types for new Christians already were provided in the fourth century Roman Empire. Hilgarth ([1969]1986) describes instruction of candidates for conversion in Christian Europe throughout Lent. Group baptisms of adults took place on Holy Saturday.

[26] For instance, Protestant missionaries in Cuba sponsored vocational and domestic instruction, agricultural and industrial training, elementary and secondary schools, business schools, higher education, English language programs, adult education, orphanages, dispensaries, clinics and hospitals. By the 1950*s*, 400,000 Cubans were Protestant and Protestant preachers outnumbered Catholic priests and Protestant chapels outnumbered Catholic Churches (Pérez 1992: 107). To account for this we need to consider the shift in political control. Spanish rule in Cuba ended with the Spanish-American war. The independent Cuba that emerged was closely tied to its American liberators. The Protestant missionaries were implementing the new culture.

[27] Syncretism assists a transition from one faith to another especially in the monotheistic settings. In polytheistic systems where religions are not exclusivist, the merging of traditions and

rituals is less likely to be a basis for change of religious identity. The symbiotic relation between Shinto and Buddhism in Japan is an example.

[28] The Pope, reflecting the tension between ecumenism and mission, has delivered confusing messages regarding the conversion of the Jews. In addressing Jews, he recognizes the dignity of other traditions but reasserts the "right to missionary activity of Christians . . ." (Schreiter 1988: 105). In his Venice Statement of 1977, he rejected "any action aimed at changing the religious faith of Jews. "In 1984, the Vatican secretariat for Non-Christians affirmed the right to proclaim the Gospel and seek the conversion of others" (Schreiter 1988: 106).

[29] That such institutional forms exist in Christian, but not in Muslim, societies is further evidence that only Christianity has formal social organization for mission. (The Muslim form may be changing, however. A center for converts to Islam has been established in Kuala Lumpur.)

[30] The shock of crossing a religious boundary is limited to the three related, but exclusivist, monotheistic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The movement led by Ambedkar which led to a conversion of Hindus to Buddhism, seems to have produced less of a shock, possibly because of the polytheistic nature of the two faiths than of a shift from Judaism to Christianity which, on the surface, seem like more closely allied religions. Nevertheless, the diffusion of ideas and practices across their boundaries has been consistent. Elements of caste emerge in Indian Islam. European pagan observances, as testified in Frazer's (1952) *Golden Bough*, survive in European Christianity such as incorporating the Druid Oestrous in the Anglican Easter. The influence of Mu'atazilite rationalism in Jewish Karaism attests to such diffusion, as well. The model of the Protestant minister has been co-opted by sectors of the American rabbinate. None of which causes much formal difficulty as long as the religious hegemony remains in place.

[31] Such an anthropology assumed a spiritualized form for the Maharal, Rabbi Loew of Prague, who, in the sixteenth century, considered the distinction between Edom and Israel as God established. Later, as in German National Socialist thought faith is considered a state of nature, a racial matter.

[32] At the organizing conference of the Hebrew Christian Alliance of America in 1915, one of its leaders, Max R. Reich, said, "the burning question is how to stop the constant leakage of some of Israel's noble sons and daughters getting Gentilized though their conversion and thus becoming a dead loss to their nation . . . ." (Rausch 1982: 30ff.).

[33] Alphonse was educated in a Jewish boarding school in Frankfort, studied philosophy at the University in Strasbourg and, subsequently, worked as a director of a Jewish community school in Strasbourg. His philosophical mentor persuaded him, if he needed persuasion, that he "could lead the younger generation to the 'true' road" (Isser 1988: 95). Alphonse had some ambivalence about his role as a Jewish educator, but his philosophy degree did not open other employment opportunities for him. It did, however, place him in a gentile social milieu. After a visionary experience in a French Catholic church in 1827, following which he fainted, he was baptized and received his first communion. He thought of himself as an Israelite going from slavery in Egypt to the promised land. He entered seminary and was ordained a priest in 1893, wrote a history of twelfth century St. Bernard of Clairvaux and was received by Pope Gregory XVI.

[34] "Cultural assimilation" refers to the adoption of symbol or meaning systems and "structural assimilation" refers to the fading of boundaries between social groupings.

[35] An intermarriage system is one of the primary direct mechanisms of religious structural assimilation in the American community. Intermarrying couples tend not to be involved in

religious organizations and these marriages are increasingly non-conversionary, with both parties remaining formally identified with the faith of their family or origin. A minority of such couples affiliate with synagogues or churches. A rather high proportion of the children of non-conversionary intermarriages in which one partner is Jewish marry Christians. Those Christians tend to be more traditional in terms of church affiliation. Some Protestant churches have not been inquiring into baptism before permitting the individuals to take communion, thus, facilitating the absorption of such persons into Christian religious life. In this way, actual individual conversion may occur in the second or third generation following intermarriage.

[36] An apparent secular sphere, which Katz (1978), in his studies of Jewish emancipation in eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, has termed the "semineutral society," is better considered as a bridge between the religions of a society, a trucial space which several religions may inhabit. Such "semineutral" settings were a facilitator of "the defecting fringe" of European Jewish culture.

[37] For a more extended discussion of these data see: Klausner (1997).

[38] The sample was selected by random digit dialing of residential telephones in selected areas across the United States. Respondents were retained in the sample if the household had at least one Jewish member. The interviews were conducted by telephone.

[39] The NJPS was not designed for the study of apostasy and, so, lacks a number of measures that would be desirable for this analysis. This article, then, reports, a "secondary analysis," that is, an analysis for a purpose not necessarily envisioned by those who designed the data collection.

[40] The seventy-six percent of the 2,441 respondents classified as claiming to have been born Jews include 18 who were raised, but not born, Jewish. Those born to parents who both identified as Catholic, Protestant or of some other or of no religion, or raised in those traditions are excluded from this analysis as were those where the informant was under the age of 18. With all of these restrictions, only 1,713 of the original 2441 households remain for analysis.

[41] These conversions are not all official baptisms. Some respondents have simply declared themselves to be of another religion without official sanction.

[42] Obviously, a Christian scholar could be educated Jewishly with no thought of identifying Jewishly.

[43] Salience could imply negative significance, but it was not anticipated that respondents would interpret the question in this way.

[44] Perhaps a Christian marrying a Jew may become more liberal as a result of absorption into the liberal sector of Jewish society. Recruitment to the wider society may be through a liberal sector of that society. Yet, the recruit, once a member of the wider society, may defend the status quo.

[45] It is not clear whether support was understood by the respondents as advocating intermarriage or simply accepting any decision a child might make.

[46] Traditionally, the Jewish milieu has been integral to living Jewishly, providing access to Jewish facilities such as a synagogue, kosher meat, a *mikva* (ritual bath) and an educational facility. Dispersed suburban living styles, associated with the automobile, break these territorial ties but, at the same time, permit social circles to transcend locality. Jewish residential clusters, albeit less compact, have emerged in suburbia.

[47] Black nationalist Islam in the United States offers an example on the group level. The emerging ideology of the Nation of Islam, for example, is a captive of the Black Baptist and Methodist origins of its members. Klausner's (1994) analysis of Khaled Abdul Muhammad's Kean College speech illustrates the relevance of Protestant interpretations of New Testament traditions to the formation of Black Muslim symbols. Another example is of faiths, traditionally missionary, becoming so when their sectarian versions emerge in a Christian milieu. The role of mission in the American Hare Krishna and the Jews for Jesus movements is illustrative

[48] Other forms of life history writing include :the "biography" which may also trace a life with broad themes but in which the narrator is not the protagonist; the "anamnesis," a life history in which a thematically narrow case history is prepared by a professional for professional purposes; and, the "diary." A diary is recorded near the time of the reported events, is less thematic and less likely than either the biography or the autobiography to be forced, as a whole, into a literary structure.

[49] Sasson (1983: 14ff.), writing on Shaker narratives says

> they recollect past errors, remember warnings which prevented them from falling into sin, and recall guideposts which, when properly interpreted, allow them to progress on a path leading to a community of Believers . . . . Shaker writers often describe confrontations with false religions, trials that tested their faith, and their successes in overcoming the devil's temptations . . . . After conversion, believers looked primarily to gifts of the spirit, including dream and visions, for evidence of spiritual progress.

[50] A sub-genre takes the form of an exposé of the new religion and appeal for a right of return to an original faith. A young Jewish woman, drawn to Jews for Jesus, who later relented, wrote of her sense of exploitation by that movement (Kamentsky 1992). Barbour (1994: 179) cites a case of a person leaving the People's Temple which like "most stories of deconversion from cults are written soon after the loss of faith and express an outpouring of anger, grief, guilt and moral outrage."

[51] Studies of socialization of recruits to new cultures or sectarian movements show the conversion processes in microcosm (see: Lofland and Stark 1965; Snow, Zurchin and Eklund-Olson 1980).

[52] Some of these are existence concepts, "mass religious conversion," for example, which draw attention to an area of concern. Others, are the classificatory concepts needed for analysis, "rate of mass religious conversion," for example.

[53] This is but one of the directions of development of this work. The counter-assimilation trend of Jewish fundamentalisms also need to be assessed in this context. The further development of this study into book form will, of course, treat these matters as well as a review of American Jewish historical experience, the fuller quantitative analysis of findings of the NJPS and a deeper look at the autobiographic material.

[54] Nothing has been recommended in this paper regarding social policy. The effort has been to sustain an image of relatively neutral intellectual clarification. Both Jewish communal and Christian missionary policy may have something to learn from this analysis.

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