JEWS FOR JESUS: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

by

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JEWS FOR JESUS: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

Juliene G. Lipson

This study focuses on Jews for Jesus, a small Hebrew Christian missionary group that grew out of the Jesus Movement in the early nineteen-seventies. Using what it calls "confrontation evangelism" the group attempts to spread the message that Jews who become Christians not only remain Jews, but are better Jews for it. The majority of group members are Jewish young adults who retain their Jewish ethnic identities despite their recent Christian commitments; however, the group also includes a number of Gentile young adults committed to the group's cause.

The dissertation describes and analyzes the social organization and membership of Jews for Jesus. The data were gathered over a twenty-two month research period using methods of participant observation and interviewing. In addition, intensive life histories on all members and a small sample of their parents were collected. Selected theoretical concepts from anthropology, sociology, and psychology are used in the analysis. The concept of integration was found to best characterize the group and its members, integration being observable in the group's origins, ideology, and social organization, and in the identities of its members as a result of their participation.

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As a social phenomenon, Jews for Jesus is a small community having a multiple-function orientation. It is a social movement led by a charismatic spokesman, a missionary organization providing full-time work and career training, an ethnic group that resolves the dilemma of being a Jew who believes in Jesus, and a surrogate family that functions as a human support system.

A common approach in the literature explains recruitment to social movements by reference to a common negative or deprived characteristic in individuals recruited. The majority of published studies of the Jesus Movement, and the one in-depth study of the Hebrew Christian Movement, assume that recruitment occurs because of relative deprivation, deviance, or alienation of individuals recruited. However, the members of Jews for Jesus do not fit these descriptions. Rather, they vary widely in personality, family background, religious identification, and former lifestyle, and are typical of their generation.

Instead of common inherent weaknesses in the individuals involved, predisposing conditions to recruitment would seem to be found in current social and cultural influences in American society, of which generational influences, the current religious revival, and an increased emphasis on ethnic pride are the most important. These factors interact to produce in young adults a state of receptiveness that assures consideration of the

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Three models of identity are used to examine the manner in which participation in Jews for Jesus affects individual members. From a social perspective, the group allows members to move rapidly toward assumption of adult roles at a time when many of their peers continue to postpone adult commitments. From a cultural perspective, members are seen to have altered their world views to include a comprehensive belief system and have reintegrated or are now exploring their Jewish ethnic identities. And in the psychological sense, both the existence of a supportive surrogate family and the legitimation of faith afforded by religion encourage members' self-acceptance, self-exploration, and rapid personal growth. All these changes are made in the name of a new ideology, an authority that is seen as more acceptable than the rejected values of members' parents' generation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		iv
INTRODUCTION		1
Chapter		
I.	JEWS FOR JESUS -- SYNCRETISM IN THE HEBREW CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT	15
	The Hebrew Christian Movement	16
	History of Jews for Jesus	20
	The Setting and Facilities	25
II.	THE MEMBERSHIP	29
	The Population	30
	Selected Members	36
	The Leader	60
III.	BELIEFS AND MISSION	69
	Ideology	69
	Evangelism	75
	Relationships with Friends and Families	85

		Page
IV.	THE MISSIONARY ORGANIZATION	93
	The Organizational Framework	94
	Roles and Authority	97
	The Leader	100
	Recruitment and Socialization of New Members	104
	Missionary and Character Training	106
V.	THE FAMILY	113
	Spheres of Relationship	114
	Group Dynamics	117
	Rituals and Social Events	124
VI.	THE COMMITMENT PROCESS	132
	Predisposing Factors	133
	Elements of Commitment	147
VII.	THE PATHWAY TO ADULTHOOD	156
	Forces for Growth	156
	Personal Growth and Change	160
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS		173
APPENDIX A.	Postscript	180
APPENDIX B.	Literature and Methods	183
BIBLIOGRAPHY		186

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INTRODUCTION

Periodic religious revivals are a colorful part of American history. The current religious revival, which has followed a decade characterized in part by political protests, a concern for civil rights, and youth involvement in the counterculture, is diverse in the types of religious groups and people involved. During the early seventies, the most obvious and highly publicized examples were to be found in the Hare Krishna, Reverend Sun Myung Moon, Sufi, Meher Baba, Maharaji and Jesus Movements. These movements have as common elements youth membership, their eclectic ideologies, and their merging of the Protestant work ethic with a "hip" or expressive youth style. On a larger scale, however, Pentacostal and other fundamentalist Protestant churches are experiencing rapid growth, and charismatic movements have developed in Catholic, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches. Even popular singers and well-known political figures now publicly announce that they are "born-again Christians."

This religious revival has developed in the context of a broader change in the American cultural mood, a change characterized by the acceptance of eclectic combinations of often divergent values and ideas, a willingness to experiment with human relationships and institutions, and an emphasis on non-

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rational, expressive and communal experience. This change is illustrated by a number of current "movements" including "the Human Potential Movement," "the Expansion of Consciousness Movement" and, most recently, "the Holistic Health Revolution," all of which had their inception on the West Coast (see e.g. Kempton 1976, Leonard 1976, Thomkins 1976). The infusion of Eastern concepts into middle-class America has now advanced to the extent that "women's magazines" sold in supermarkets contain articles on Transcendental Meditation.

Jews for Jesus[1] is part of the current religious revival and exemplifies the broader cultural changes noted above. A missionary group in a West Coast metropolitan area, Jews for Jesus is composed of about twenty-five young adults, two-thirds of whom are Jewish by birth, and their middle-aged leader. Its members are committed to spreading the message that Jesus is the Messiah and that Jews who commit their lives to Jesus not only remain Jews but are better Jews for it.

Jews for Jesus was originally inspired by the Jesus Movement that began in the late sixties. This movement consists of diverse collections of young people, ranging from tightly structured communes to loose networks of people who gather in Christian coffee houses or at Bible studies. Typically, participants are adolescents or young adults who have made recent commitments to Christ, who believe the Bible is literally true,

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and who attempt to live their lives according to a strict interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus. Seeing their mission as evangelism, and combining this fundamentalist ideology with an enthusiastic youth style, they call themselves "Jesus People," "Jesus Freaks," or "Street Christians."

Jews for Jesus originated through the attraction of Jewish Jesus People to a Hebrew Christian charismatic leader. Hebrew Christians are Jews who have made commitments to Christ yet choose to retain and assert their Jewish ethnic identities. In this regard, it is important to note that fundamentalist Christians make a careful distinction between "Christian" and "Gentile." A Christian can be either Gentile or Jewish; however, a Gentile is not a Christian until he is "saved."[2] Thus, Jews for Jesus is a part of Hebrew Christianity, a segment of the larger community of fundamentalist Christianity.

In this dissertation, I describe and present an analysis of Jews for Jesus as a social phenomenon and discuss its functions for individual members. I have divided the study into three main sections. Chapters I and II, the first section, provide an orientation to the group. Using a historical perspective, I describe the Hebrew Christian Movement and Jews for Jesus from its 1970 inception through December 1973. I then introduce the population through a profile and selected life histories.

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The second section, Chapters III through V, focuses on Jews for Jesus as a small community as I observed it in the six-month period from January to July 1974.[3] I discuss such topics as ideology, work activities, social organization, and interpersonal relationships. The third section, Chapters VI and VII, focuses on individual group members -- the nature of their recruitment to the movement, the commitment process, and personal changes observed in members as a result of their involvement in the group.

I now turn to a brief discussion of some concepts I found useful in my study of Jews for Jesus. As a social phenomenon, the group can be viewed as both a community and a social movement. And to explain why individual members have been attracted to the group, it is necessary to examine such concepts as deviance, deprivation, and ethnicity, as well as the effect of generational values and peer-group influences.

Social Concepts. Jews for Jesus constitutes a small community with a multiple-function orientation. The concept of community as I will use it suggests not only a body of people sharing common interests, organization, and geographical location, but also a property of human behavior -- a "dimension of human interaction which consists of a sense of common destiny" (Hewe 1964). Jews for Jesus is similar to other alternative religious or therapeutic communities to which young adults currently are being attracted in that it provides close and constant contact among persons who share an ideology and work together in the name of their cause.

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The primary purpose of Jews for Jesus has been evangelism from the group's inception. Integrated with and supporting this purpose, however, three other important functions have emerged as the group has developed:

(1) Strengthing the organization. Organizational growth, discussed in detail in Chapter IV, allows the group to expand its evangelistic activities, add facilities and equipment, and recruit and train new staff.

(2) Providing fellowship for members. The group is a human support system and surrogate family, supporting individual members in the face of opposition from their families and others, and encouraging personal growth. These functions are discussed in Chapters V and VII.

(3) Developing the Hebrew Christian ethnic identity. Such development, discussed below and in Chapters I and V, imparts to the group's evangelism a unique style and allows individual members to resolve identity dilemmas.

Besides constituting a community, however, Jews for Jesus is part of a larger social movement.[4] It exemplifies some characteristics of a revitalization movement; indeed, Bookman (1974) labels the entire Jesus Movement as such. One function of revitalization is cultural innovation, the new culture being composed of

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Such a synthesis or integration (I will use the terms synonymously) accurately characterizes Jews for Jesus and is reflected in all aspects of the group and its membership. I use the concept to describe the nature of the group's origin, its ideology and multiple-function orientation, and the identities of individual members.

According to Aberle's (1966) classification of social movements, Jews for Jesus is a blend of transformative (revolutionary) and redemptive types in that it aims at <u>total</u> change in both supra-individual and individual systems. While awaiting the millenium, members concentrate their efforts on influencing as many people as possible, both Jewish and Gentile, to commit themselves to Christ because they believe that only an inner change in the individual assures his salvation.

The Jesus Movement identifies with early Christianity, and members of Jews for Jesus, both Jewish and Gentile, want to restore the revolutionary practices of early Christianity (originally a mission to the Jews) by engaging in face-to-face evangelism and living their lives simply according to the teachings of Christ. However, the Jesus Movement is also a youth movement. Dissatisfied with the "sinful state of the world," organized Christianity in

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America, and the lack of fervor and spirituality in the older generation, participants in the movement are essentially saying "We want Jesus back from the Establishment." In Jews for Jesus, the same message is apparent in regard to traditional Hebrew Christianity; the group's "confrontation evangelism" is a style of radical activism that contrasts sharply with the methods of mainline missionary organizations.

Concepts Relating to the Membership. Because one of my primary purposes for studying Jews for Jesus was to determine how the group affects the lives of its members, an important question must first be addressed: Why have these urban Jewish and small-town Gentile young adults joined together to "convince the world that Jews can believe in Jesus"? Or, more succinctly, what has attracted these particular individuals?

Deviance or deprivation. Most published studies on the Jesus Movement, and the one in-depth study of the Hebrew Christian Movement, assume that recruitment occurs because of a common negative characteristic or inherent weakness in the individuals recruited. Peterson and Mauss (1973) and Bookman (1974) suggest that relative deprivation is the predisposing factor. Others suggest adolescent identity crises, alientation, or deviance as being causative (Adams and Fox 1972, Adler 1974, Sobel 1974, Robbins, Anthony and Curtis 1975). And some Jewish media writers suggest that young Jews who become Christians do so because of

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Members of Jews for Jesus are in fact "deviant" by Becker's (1962) definition which, in essence, is that deviant behavior is behavior so labeled by a community, in this case the Jewish community. As individuals, however, members do not represent a particular type of person or family background. They in fact vary widely in personality, past lifestyle, religious background, and family integrity, and are typical of their generation. I did not find them to be psychologically damaged or suffering a common deprivation. Instead, if members of the group share a common problem, it is the same identity struggle faced by most young adults of their generation. I propose that young adults have joined Jews for Jesus because of several individual and social factors, the most important of which are discussed below.

Generational values. Members of Jews for Jesus are part of the immediate post-World War II generation, which has reached adulthood at a time in history characterized by increasingly rapid social and technological change. A common response to such rapid change is the questioning of parental values and resistance to making a commitment to a permanent career, ideology, or way of life. Keniston (1968) suggests that despite differences in actual behavior, ideologies, or goals, young adults of this generation often approach the world in a similar fashion. He describes this style as fluid,

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personalistic, and nonviolent. These people attempt to be open to their feelings, impulses, and fantasies; they seek integration and synthesis rather than repression and dissociation. They include in their movements eclectic combinations of ideas and people. They remain open to change, but at the same time, they seek an "anchor in the cross-tides of history." These generational themes are clearly illustrated in the Jews for Jesus ideology and in the personalities of group members.

Ethnicity. Ethnicity has become increasingly important in primary group participation, especially among young adults. However, Jewish and Gentile members of Jews for Jesus differ in basic orientation and allegiance to the group. DeVos (1975) suggests that individuals who identify with a universalistic religious movement, such as Christianity, are primarily future-oriented. For example, early Christians -- converted pagans -- constituted a new identity. In contrast, ethnic identification is past-oriented; being descended from Abraham defines one as a Jew. DeVos notes that future and past-oriented identities may overlap, or at times a dual identity is encouraged. This is true of Jewish members of Jews for Jesus. These members, having observed their parents striving to assimilate to meet social and financial goals, refuse to give up their Jewish identities for the sake of their Christian commitments. And although Gentile members' participation in the group is primarily in the name of face-to-face evangelism,

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Hebrew Christians assert their dual orientation rather than assimilating into Christian churches or keeping their beliefs secret from other Jews. Accepted by neither Christians nor Jews, they so redefine themselves that they need no longer identify completely with either by identifying with their "ancestors," the first Christians. They see themselves as a distinct ethnic group, or as DeVos has stated,

> . . . a self-perceived group of people who hold in common a set of traditions not shared by others with whom they come in contact. Such traditions typically include "folk" religious beliefs and practices, language, a sense of historical continuity and common ancestry or place of origin (DeVos 1975:9).

Peer-group influences. One of the most important factors in the attraction of young adults to Jews for Jesus is a recent trend in which generational peer-group pressure may outweigh individual family dynamics in determining individual choices. Most of the Jewish members of Jews for Jesus are avant-garde young adults who, disillusioned with political movements and the counterculture[5] of the sixties, have turned to religion in the seventies. For some counterculture participants who were uncomfortable with their drug use, irresponsibility, and promiscuity, the new religious movements have provided regulation that is acceptable because it is perceived

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Gentile members, on the other hand, were not involved in the counterculture. Rather, they were attracted to the youth-oriented Jesus Movement from quite conventional "straight" lifestyles. For these members, the movement provides an opportunity for identification with peers of their generation, yet within an acceptable ideological framework with traditional morals. The attraction of Gentile members to Jews for Jesus is discussed in Chapter II.

The Jesus Movement provides a vehicle for "identity synthesis," an integration of opposed social roles (Gordon 1974). Gordon suggests that this movement offers a solution of identity problems of young people caught between two social worlds -- the youth culture and the "straight world" -- affording within the Christian system of symbols and rituals the conventional view of ethics and morality, while also providing the subjective, expressive, and ecstatic qualities of youth culture. For young Jewish Jesus people, Jews for Jesus is an ideal arena for the solution of identity struggles, not only socially, but culturally and psychologically.

The above-discussed influences produce a state of "openness" in young adults which encourages exploration of various generational movements. And if recruitment to the Jesus movement is to occur, this state of receptiveness must co-exist with close contact with

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Rather than going through "just another fad," however, it appears that Jewish members of the group will remain in the Hebrew Christian Movement because of the strong character of their commitments and because involvement resolves the ethnic dilemma of being a Jew who believes in Jesus. And for all members, Jews for Jesus provides a cohesive solution to a generational conflicted social situation.

In summary, Jews for Jesus has developed as a vital group and experienced rapid growth since its origin because of the interaction of a number of factors: the historical influences of Christianity and the Hebrew Christian Movement which have set the stage for this movement today; a charismatic leader (to be discussed in later chapters); and the contemporary processes in American society today discussed above. In the chapters to follow, Jews for Jesus will be shown to be a community with multiple functions, that is, a community providing for many needs of its members. It demands commitment and full-time work while providing career training; it encourages re-identification with Judaism while allowing participation in a new Christian youth movement; it provides a comprehensive ideology and a surrogate family in which friendships are emotionally intense and supportive. In meeting a variety of needs,

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the group fosters socialization and rapid personal growth in its members. It allows the members to move rapidly toward assumption of adult roles in American society at a time when many of their peers continue to postpone adult commitments. However, these young adults have made these changes in the name of a new ideology rather than because of parental expectations. They have found a new reason to achieve, to be disciplined and work hard, and to use their talents and abilities.

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NOTES

1. "Jews for Jesus" is used in the singular to refer to the subject group itself; "members of Jews for Jesus," "individual Jews for Jesus," or the like refers to two or more members, Gentile as well as Jewish. To protect individual identities, all personal and organizational names are fictitious, except the title and slogan "Jews for Jesus." At present, the media uses this slogan with respect to any young Jewish believer in Jesus, or, indeed, almost any group of young Hebrew Christians, making identification difficult.

   "The group" consists of those people who work in the office and attend staff meetings on a regular basis; the term does not include a number of associates who attend Bible studies or participate in occasional evangelical or ceremonial activities. The group had grown to twenty-five members by the end of the research period.

2. I use "Christian," "born-again Christian," and "believer" interchangeably in this dissertation, as the people, themselves, use the terms, to refer to a person who has willfully accepted Christ as his personal savior -- an act that assures his "salvation."

3. Research methods used are outlined in Appendix B.

4. Jews for Jesus clearly illustrates Gerlach and Hine's (1970) definition of social movement as ". . . a group of people who are organized for, ideologically motivated by, and committed to a purpose which implements some form of personal or social change; who are actively engaged in the recruitment of others; and whose influence is spreading in opposition to the established order within which it originated" (p. xvi).

5. The term "counterculture," first used by Theodore Roszak, has been defined by Westhues (1972) as "a set of beliefs and values which radically reject the dominant level of a society and prescribes a sectarian alternative." On the ideological level, it is characterized by non-rationality, the experience of otherness, and transcendence. On the behavioral level, it is characterized by economic communism, deviant kinship and sexual norms, elitism and apoliticism, a measure of economic deprivation, non-rational leadership styles, and social isolation from the dominant society."

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CHAPTER I. JEWS FOR JESUS --
SYNCRETISM IN THE HEBREW CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

Jews for Jesus is a missionary group, most of the members of which are young adult Hebrew Christians. The group was formed in 1970 as the northern California branch of a large Hebrew Christian missionary organization. Starting with just two employees and four volunteers it had, by 1976, developed into an independent, incorporated national organization boasting a full-time staff of sixty in a main office and three branch offices.

Jews for Jesus is of hybrid character, having grown out of both the Jesus Movement, which began in the late sixties, and the Hebrew Christian Missionary Movement, which has been organized in the United States since 1915. In its early stages, the group was identified chiefly with the Jesus Movement, with which it shares the youth and middle-class status of its members, its fervor, and its activist approach to evangelism. As Jews for Jesus has developed, however, it has emerged as a unique youth segment of the Hebrew Christian Movement. Indeed, it shares with the rest of the Hebrew Christian Movement its theology, emphasis on ethnic identity, organizational structure, and means of eliciting financial support.

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A Hebrew Christian is, literally, a Jew who has accepted Christ as the Messiah and his savior, but who nonetheless chooses to retain his identity as a Jew. Hebrew Christians explain this apparent contradiction in terms by reference to Old Testament Scriptures[1] which are interpreted as prophesying Jesus. They also identify with the first Christians, all of whom until the time of St. Paul were Jewish. Hebrew Christians are not formally affiliated with any specific Protestant denomination, although several Hebrew Christian ministers have been trained in Baptist seminaries. However, they identify with other fundamentalists in their literal acceptance of the Bible, and reinterpret fundamentalist Christianity from a Jewish perspective. They are encouraged to join local churches to avoid separating themselves from Gentile Christians, but they are also encouraged to participate in Hebrew Christian fellowships to retain their ethnic identity and culture. In the Durkheimian sense, Hebrew Christianity constitutes a church in that it sees itself as a distinct moral community within "the Body of Christ."[2]

The existence of Hebrew Christianity is anomalous in light of the complex relationship of Christians and Jews throughout history. Judaism has constituted a perennial challenge to the fundamental tenets of Christianity, which claims to be the true fulfillment of the covenant. In the name of protection of the faith, Jews have been

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the victims of persecution and discrimination by dominant Christian governments since the fourth century. Jews have also been a continued target of evangelical efforts by Christian missionaries since the advent of Christianity.[3] Such efforts have resulted in individual conversions, but they have failed to convince Jews to convert in large numbers. Also, from 135 A.D. until the nineteenth century, most Jews who converted became assimilated Christians.

Although in modern times some converts continue to assimilate, many do not. Thus, Hebrew Christianity as a distinct movement is recent. Sobel (1974) traces the beginnings of the modern Hebrew Christian Movement to the late nineteenth century in England, followed by parallel developments in the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century. A series of conferences culminated in the creation of the American Hebrew Christian Alliance in 1915, the first constitution of which stated the following goals:

1. To encourage and strengthen Hebrew Christians and to deepen their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. To propagate more widely the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by strengthening existing Jewish missions, and fostering all other agencies to that end.

3. To provide for the evangelical Christian Churches of America an authoritative and reliable channel how best to serve the cause of Jewish evangelization.[4]

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In tracing the movement goals over time, Sobel says that the first goal has remained intact over the years. However, the second goal expanded from "only a methodological device" to a reevaluation of the role of Hebrew Christianity as a distinct religious path.

Fruchtenbaum (1974) suggests that the origin of the modern Hebrew Christian Movement coincides with the national reawakening of the Jewish people about one hundred years ago, attributing its growth to historical factors. I concur with his idea that modern Hebrew Christianity can be attributed more to ethnic affiliation and desire to share common burdens than to Sobel's implication of a "brilliant missionary idea" after years of unsuccessful attempts to convert the Jews.

The entire Hebrew Christian Movement is experiencing a surge of growth in the seventies, but it is impossible to determine its numerical strength. The American Hebrew Christian Alliance estimates that there are about 50,000 Hebrew Christians in the United States, one percent of the Jewish population. The leader of Jews for Jesus thinks that between 14,000 and 30,000 Jews have become Hebrew Christians since the late sixties. And in 1972, one alarmed rabbi guessed that young Jews are converting to Christianity at the rate of six to seven thousand a year.[5] Sobel suggests that this last number is exaggerated, concluding that:

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> The new campaign reflects a sophistication and a skill previously absent in the movement, and this together with the verve and enthusiasm of groups of young, vibrant Jews for Jesus could presage a new period of growth...but the evidence...does not yet warrant an assertion of revolutionary change....The fruits remain slight and the converts...were and remain marginal people with respect to a wide spectrum of sociological variables (Sobel 1974:316, 317).

More important than the Hebrew Christian Movement's numerical strength, however, are the reasons for its growth. The Movement has grown in response to changes in American culture, changes exemplified by the rapid growth of a variety of non-institutional, movement-oriented religious groups. The Jesus Movement in particular has been a major stimulus to growth, as is the current "ethnic revival." The increased activity and assertion among Hebrew Christians corresponds to an increased self-awareness and community identification among American Jews. The shattering tragedy of the murder of six million Jews and the post-war campaign to establish the state of Israel have combined to change the attitude of countless Jews who previously had felt little kinship with the Jewish people. And in a new climate of tolerance, most Jews no longer try to hide their identities or to become totally assimilated. Rather, Jews -- and especially young adults -- vociferously demand to be recognized as Jewish Americans, just as members of other ethnic groups demand recognition as "Chicanos," "Blacks" or "Afro-Americans," or "Japanese Americans."

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Because of its continuing growth, the Hebrew Christian Movement is, for the first time in its history, seen as a threat by the Jewish community. The Jesus Movement's success in attracting young middle-class Jews is a major concern. More alarming yet to the Jewish community are the highly visible tactics of Jews for Jesus, which generate frequent attention in the news media and imply the existence of an even greater threat than in fact exists.

History of Jews for Jesus

The origin of Jews for Jesus can be traced to changes in self-perception and missionary style of Mordecai Steinberg, the group's founder, a Hebrew Christian missionary with the Jewish Missions of America (JMA). By 1968, Mordecai had become "an uptight religious organization man" who was beginning to resent his "Gentilization." He also felt that the JMA was not adequately speaking to the ethnic needs of its Jewish members and that he should change his missionary approach to more effectively reach counter-culture youth, many of whom were Jewish. At this time, he came in contact with the budding Jesus Movement and was impressed with the enthusiastic and assertive activities of its participants. He drafted the prototype of the first "broadside,"[6] and gathered several young adults to help distribute literature at peace demonstrations in New York.

In 1970, Mordecai established in a San Francisco suburb a new JMA branch that would attempt to reach young "street people."

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For the first nine months, only Mordecai and Marie, his Gentile secretary, worked in the office full time. However, four other young adults, two of them Jewish, the other two Gentile, volunteered spare time from Bible college or secular jobs to participate in Bible studies and street and campus evangelism. During this period, the new group acquired its name. "Jews for Jesus" is attributed to a local college Hillel rabbi who, in a piece prepared for the campus newspaper, so described the Jewish Jesus People he observed. Liking its ring, Mordecai enthusiastically appropriated the phrase for his group as both name and slogan.

Early in 1971, Mordecai met Stella, a Jewish "young Christian,"[7] who was a talented writer and artist; she began to work in the office full time in May. Meanwhile, in San Francisco, radical changes were occurring in a counterculture communal group of old friends from New York. One member of this group "got saved" at a Christian commune, and one by one, the others also made commitments to Jesus, becoming self-labeled "Jesus Freaks." One day a member of this group was sitting on a rock near San Francisco Bay, praying, "God what do You want me to do today?" As he ended his prayer, he observed a Jews for Jesus broadside floating by him. After fishing it out of the water and reading it, he hitchhiked to Mordecai's house, announcing his arrival with "God sent me." That summer, three young Jewish men from the commune distributed broadsides and enthusiastically saturated the Bay Area with Jews for Jesus posters, and in the fall of 1971, one of them joined the

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two women working full time in the office. This counterculture network was eventually to be the source of seven members of Jews for Jesus.

During the first nine months of 1972, eight more young adults joined the group's activities. Six of the new members were Jewish and had become believers through the Jesus Movement. Mordecai encouraged attendance at the local Bible college, a highly conservative and strict school, to develop discipline as well as for Bible teaching. Since housing was a problem at this time, enrollment at the college also had the salutary effect of providing members with living quarters. Stella directed several members of Jews for Jesus in a Purim play at the college. The success of this effort inspired the formation of a performance group, later to become "the Singing Group," which presented songs, skits, and testimonies at a local church. The activities of Jews for Jesus at this time -- primarily street evangelism and Bible studies -- were similar to those of other segments of the Jesus Movement. However, specialized work roles had already begun to evolve.

From October 1972, when I first contacted the group, to August 1973, there was a proliferation of new activities stimulated by the talents and interests of members who had recently joined. A growing emphasis on developing the Hebrew Christian ethnic identity was evidenced by creation of a special Passover Seder and marriage ceremony for an intragroup marriage. Mordecai, with a penchant for technological devices, spearheaded the purchase of

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varied and sophisticated office equipment, including an old printing press. A drama group was created and begun to do performances and street theater. The Singing Group took its first three-month cross-country tour, which entailed setting up a "church relations department" to handle booking and publicity. Media coverage was sought in an aggressive and sophisticated manner through press releases, alerting television news stations about upcoming activities, and careful grooming of members in the art of being interviewed effectively.

A crisis occurred in August 1973. JMA had intended that its California branch remain a geographically-bounded concern with a low profile. It became increasingly alarmed at the Jews for Jesus "radical hippies" image and national publicity, and finally took action by abruptly terminating Mordecai's position. At issue was survival of Jews for Jesus, and everyone reacted with intense anxiety. The eleven members on JMA salaries decided to resign to remain with Mordecai and began to look for part-time secular jobs. Immediate efforts were instituted to solicit donations; for example, appeal letters were sent to churches and personal friends, and group speakers sought donations in local churches.

The period between September and December, 1973 marked a turning point for Jews for Jesus. I observed a qualitative change in the ethos of the group, the earlier expressive orientation shifting to a more instrumental one. Money emerged as the dominant symbol;

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ample funds coming in was equated with success, and money coming in too slowly was considered a crisis. Jews for Jesus devoted most of its effort to setting up an organization that would receive adequate support to function. A nonprofit corporation, originally formed to cover the Singing Group and the ministry of a Gentile friend of the group, was expanded to cover the entire group. Except for Mordecai's speaking engagements and Singing Group performances, both financially lucrative, evangelistic activities were severely curtailed.

During the same period, a concern for "setting policy," regularizing work roles, and formalizing the organization gave rise to arguments over basic goals and values; some members angrily objected to Mordecai's total emphasis on bureaucratic procedures. Another change occurred with respect to basic group goals and means of achieving them. Under JMA policies, evangelistic activities had been directed primarily toward Jews. After dissociation with JMA, Jews for Jesus broadened its approach to make a major effort in what it labeled "Jewishizing the church" -- teaching through drama, song, and testimonials about what it means to be Jewish. Since the majority of financial support was expected to come from the churches, a concern with image became paramount. Members of the group became more careful of dress, toning down their youth culture image to be more acceptable to conservative congregations.

Another problem with image arose with respect to the Gentile members of Jews for Jesus. Developing the Hebrew Christian ethnic identity and presenting a Jewish image had become increasingly important. As the proportion of Jews grew from one half to two thirds,

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Jews for Jesus spent the first six months of 1974 adding new vocational and volunteer staff (bringing the total to about twenty-five), improving the mechanisms for generating income, continuing to formalize work routines, and planning for a massive month-long evangelistic campaign in New York during August. Descriptions throughout the rest of this dissertation are based on the group as I saw it during this period. I have selected this period, at the end of which I terminated field research, because it was then that the character of Jews for Jesus was beginning to crystalize as the group organizationally matured.

The Setting and Facilities

The center of the Jews for Jesus community is "the office," located in a two-story office building in a San Francisco suburb. The San Francisco Bay Area is highly cosmopolitan and known for its tolerance of deviant lifestyles, social movements, and marginal religious groups, as well as for the number of ethnic and immigrant populations that co-exist with relatively little tension. Its character as a business and transportation center, as well as its tourist attractions and several college and university campuses, make the area ideal for Jews for Jesus since many group evangelistic activities are carried out in areas of heavy pedestrian traffic.

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The office is located near a freeway, which is both convenient for and symbolic of Jews for Jesus. Cars, and especially vans, are very important in the group, and they are often the subject of prayer -- for God's help in finding a new car or money to repair the old one. This highly mobile group uses evangelistic teams that may take extended national tours or stage a single performance at a church twenty miles away, a situation demanding that each member be able to drive.

The office consists of two suites of seven grossly overcrowded rooms. Ideally, each person has his own desk, but in fact, most spaces are shared by two or three people, and only the leader, office manager, and information officer have permanent areas not used by others. The office houses a variety of sophisticated equipment, including expensive electric typewriters, an addressograph, tape-recording equipment, a printing press, and a folding machine.

Most of the members rent apartments within a ten or fifteen minutes' commute of the office, either alone or with roommates of the same sex. Generally, housing arrangements for single members are temporary, and minimal time, effort, and money are devoted to furnishing or decorating. The group's work is so time consuming that little time is spent at home.

Mordecai occasionally expresses the desire that the group purchase a large house in which many of the members could live communally, a house that would also serve as a location for social gatherings, Bible studies, and other "family affairs"

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NOTES

1. Isaiah, chapter 53, is a particular favorite among Hebrew Christians, and is often used in evangelism. For example, Isa. 53:5 says "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed."

2. Fruchtenbaum (1974), a Hebrew Christian theologian, bases this distinctiveness on four lines in the scriptures: Galatians 3:15-18, which stresses the continuity of the Abrahamic Covenant; Romans 11:1-7, which states that throughout Jewish history only a remnant believes (Hebrew Christians are seen to be this remnant); Romans 11:16-21, which suggests that Jewish Christians are the natural branches on the olive tree and Gentile Christians are the wild branches grafted on; and Romans 9:6-8, which stresses the narrow use of "Israel," used only for Jews, never Gentiles.

3. Christianity began as a sect within Judaism. The split between Judaism and Christianity began in 79 A.D. when Jewish Christians refused to join Jewish Zealots in the revolt against Rome and fled to Pella; they were called Meshumeds, or traitors, by other Jews. Despite tension, Jewish Christians continued to live among Jews until the second revolt against Rome, led by Bar Kokhba in 135 A.D., which resulted in the death of half the Jewish population and its banishment from Jerusalem. Jewish Christians, called Ebionites and Nazarenes, refused to join the revolt, resulting in a complete break between Judaism and Christianity.

4. Hebrew Christian Alliance Quarterly, 1917.

5. Time magazine, June 12, 1972.

6. "Broadside" is the Jews for Jesus version of the Christian missionary tract. This literature is cleverly written, colorfully illustrated, and based on a number of contemporary topics. The receiver is not aware of the religious message until the last page, where he finds an invitation to consider Jesus and to contact Jews for Jesus for further information.

7. "Young Christians" or "babes in Christ" are commonly used to refer to those who have been believers only a short period; these phrases are so used in this dissertation.

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CHAPTER II. THE MEMBERSHIP

Jews for Jesus has a unique style and spirit that distinguishes it from other groups in the Jesus and Hebrew Christian Movements. This style results from a combination of youthfulness and Jewish ethnic identity that is imbued with the lively personalities of the members, and it makes a lasting impression on observers wherever the group is seen. The group's style is perhaps most strongly influenced by nine assertive, articulate, and cosmopolitan Jewish New Yorkers; the other Jewish and the Gentile members have been less influential.

Since the character of Jews for Jesus is shaped in large part by the personalities, backgrounds, and generation of its members, it is appropriate to introduce the membership of the group in some detail. In this chapter, I will present a profile of twenty-seven members of the group and a short discussion of differing lifestyles and backgrounds. This profile is followed by summaries of seven life histories. These summaries have been selected to represent the range of differences among members -- in families, former lifestyles, religious training and experience, ethnic identity, education, social class, and geographical location of home.

Thus, Sarah is a Jewish New Yorker who grew up in a lower middle class strained family, and graduated from college at the age of 19. Marie, from a rural Midwestern fundamentalist Protestant family and a lifelong Christian, is a Bible college graduate who

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Rebecca, a former cheerleader from a small-town Protestant family, became a believer during adolescence and became active in Jewish evangelism while in college. And Stephen, raised in Brooklyn, was a conservative and intellectual 18-year-old immersed in music when he made his Christian commitment. Finally, I describe Mordecai, the leader of Jews for Jesus, who is a 44-year-old Jewish Baptist minister and long-time Hebrew Christian missionary.

The Population

As is seen from the profile below, nearly two-thirds of the members interviewed are female. Ten of the women are Gentiles; the other seven women and all the men (except one who left the group) are second-generation American-born Jews. Nearly two-thirds of the members are between twenty-three and twenty-six years of age. Most are single and well-educated, graduated in the top third of their high school classes, are well-traveled, and grew up in urban or suburban areas. Based on fathers' occuptions, parents' education, and family income, social class varied from lower-middle to upper-middle class.[1] However, all families held middle or upper-middle class values and aspirations, and most were upwardly mobile. All members were raised in nuclear families, and most mothers were housewives during members' childhoods.

TABLE 1.

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TABLE 1. SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF JEWS FOR JESUS MEMBERS (n=27)*

Age

17-22	5
23-26	17
27-29	5

Sex

male	10
female	17

Marital Status

single	17
married	6
divorced	4

Education

high school	2
1-2 years college	9
B.A. or Bible college degree	10
grad. school or M.A.	5
Ph.D. candidate	1

Grades

A's	10
A's and B's	11
average	3

Family Income Level

lower middle class	7
middle class	9
upper middle class	11

Former Lifestyle

ultra-straight	7
straight	4
counterculture	14

Childhood Neighborhood

urban	9
suburban/small city	11
rural/small town	5

Work Experience

little or none	2
summers, part time	4
full time, 1 year or more	20

Religious Background

Jewish	17
Orthodox	3
Conservative	9
Reform	5
Protestant	10
Miscellaneous	6
Fundamentalist	4

Length of Time a Believer

whole life	4
adolescence	4
3 years	10
2 years	7
1 year or less	3

Ethnic Background

Jewish:	
grandparents -- Russian and Easter European	15
Gentile:	
many generations U.S. -- German and English	8
Other -- mixed	4

Length of Time in Group

4 years	3
3 years	3
2 years	8
1 year	7
less than 1 year	9

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Most members have been believers three years or less and joined the group after having become Christians, rather than having made commitments through contact with the group.

The profile shows that members of Jews for Jesus vary widely in former lifestyle and religious background; the group includes young adults from "ultra-straight," "straight," and "counterculture" backgrounds.[2] Indeed, one finds Jewish former hippies from New York closely allied with Gentile fundamentalists from the rural Midwest.

The latter phenomenon suggests a question that must be addressed: what has attracted the Gentile members to this group? All Gentiles I interviewed are female and from middle-class families; all but one have ultra-straight backgrounds and have been committed Christians since childhood or adolescence. Four grew up in Fundamentalist families, two attended mainline Protestant churches regularly, and three had little contact with church. Five grew up in rural areas in the Midwest, Oregon and Pennsylvania, and the others grew up in California cities or suburbs.

These women have in common strong Christian commitments and dedication to evangelism, but the nature of their commitments to Jews for Jesus falls into three distinct categories. In the first category are four women with long-standing interest in Jewish evangelism. Three were recruited by Mordecai and graduated from his New York training program in the late sixties. They were instrumental in beginning Jews for Jesus and are considered part

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of the "family," and two have married male members of the group. Two of these women identify as Jews. One converted at the time of marriage; the other, although having grown up with a Gentile mother and Jewish father who denied his ethnic identity, is now exploring her Jewish heritage.

In the second category are three women who became associated with Jews for Jesus through friendship with group members they met at the local Bible college. Attracted to the lively spirit and active evangelism of Jews for Jesus, they volunteer their time because the group provides an arena and opportunity for evangelism, as well as an attractive social group with which to identify. Donna, for example, reports that

> I've wanted to be a missionary for a long time. I figure God knows what He's doing by putting me with a group of Jewish believers, but I do enjoy the cultural flavor of the whole thing and the family feeling in Jews for Jesus. Although I'd like to go to Israel, I have no desire to convert to Judaism.

In contrast to members in the first category, the commitments to Jews for Jesus of category-two members are weaker and less permanent, and relationships with other members are less close. However, the group offers acceptance in a peer group that is quite different from the usual church or missionary organization, a group that provides challenge, some danger, and a sense of adventure. Compared to the personable and articulate members of Jews for Jesus, for example, Donna finds her fellow Bible college students narrow,

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conservative, and dull. Many of the Gentile members were socially awkward or experienced peer group difficulties in high school, some because of excessive shyness, others because many social activities were seen as "sinful;" they were labeled "goody-goodies" or "squares" because they were Christians. In Jews for Jesus they are accepted for themselves, and if quiet or shy, are encouraged to assert themselves in evangelist activities.

The third type of Gentile commitment is that of an employee. The two Jews for Jesus employees see their role in the group as filling worthwhile jobs in a Christian evangelical organization; however, their primary relationships are with members of a local Jesus Movement church. Both of these women joined the group recently and have not formed close relationships with other members.

Finally, the only male Gentile member left the group before I could interview him. He joined Jews for Jesus through friendships with members at the Bible college and had a very important role in the group. He seemed to "want to be Jewish" and converted at the time of his marriage to a Jewish member, but early in 1974 he abruptly left the group, accompanied by his wife. Reportedly, he felt pressured to conform and said that he wanted to pursue the ministry.

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Selected Members

Sarah Schwartz

Sarah, 22, is a petite and attractive brunette with a radiant smile. She is the information officer of Jews for Jesus, does much of the group's writing, and is active in the drama group. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, she is intense, articulate, and somewhat moody. Sarah is typical of most of the Jewish women in the group in that she is bright, assertive and achievement-oriented, and the Movement provides numerous opportunites for recognition of her talents.

Sarah's grandparents were Russian and Polish immigrants. She grew up in a four-room apartment in a lower-middle-class mixed Jewish, Black, and Puerto Rican neighborhood. Sarah calls her family "nominally Orthodox" because, while they attended an Orthodox synagogue on High Holidays, lit Sabbath candles, and kept a kosher kitchen, she "felt only the ceremony, not the substance."

Mr. Schwartz was an upholsterer for a time, later drove a bread delivery truck, and was a steady gambler. Sarah suspects that he had always wanted sons and did not know how to relate to the daughters he got instead -- he was distant, bad-tempered, and never expressed affection or approval. He died suddenly of a heart attack when Sarah was 12.

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Sarah describes her mother as being very bright, but having come from a family too poor to allow her to use the college scholarship she had been offered. She stopped working to become a housewife when Sarah was born, and was highly dependent on her husband and her own mother. Sarah has two younger sisters, but was never close to either and says she hated and fought with the older of the two all through childhood. She describes her family life as having been strained, tense, and distant, with no mutual activities. Her struggle to maintain self-esteem despite perception of inadequate parental love and appreciation is reflected in a common childhood fantasy:

> I used to imagine myself as someone whose whole life was being studied. There were cameras all around and all these brilliant authorities from different fields were scribbling notes on everything I was doing. They knew what a deep intense person I was and how much I was feeling, and they would appreciate the things that others couldn't see.

Sarah always had high standards. As a child, she resented her mother's inadequacy and would not bring her friends home because of her embarrassment at their "tiny, messy apartment." Sarah would do all the housework, screaming at the others for the disorder. When her father died, her mother became depressed and non-functional. Sarah then took over management of the family.

Although an avid reader, Sarah never saw herself as doing well in school -- she was hurt and angry at being "at the bottom of the smart class," even though she skipped the third and eighth grades

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by passing proficiency tests. Among her peers, Sarah was "marginal to the in-group," but never really was accepted in it; she avoided the other students because they "repulsed her." She had only one close friend, a girl from whom she drew away when she failed to support Sarah after her father's death. She felt different from her classmates, thinking "they have no idea of what it's like having only one parent." Yet, she still desperately wanted friends.

In high school, Sarah achieved the goals she set for herself -- those that would give her recognition and status. Thus, she became a cheerleader and was accepted into "the best sorority." She sought ways to break tradition, dating interracially, becoming the first female member (and later captain) of the school patrol, and being named the first female assistant coach of the men's swimming team.

Rather precocious, Sarah began dating college students at age 13 and had her first sexual experience at 15. She graduated from high school at 15 and entered Hunter College in New York, graduating with a degree in communications. All through high school and college, she worked part time and summers, talking her way into jobs for which she was too young and inexperienced, but succeeding by learning quickly.

Beginning her many political and community activities at the age of 13, she participated in peace activities, worked in local political campaigns, and performed in a radical street theater group.

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She looked with disdain on most of her peers who were involved in rock music and psychadelic drugs, thinking that "getting stoned was childish" and that those who were involved in Eastern religions "weren't doing anything about all the suffering in the world." Her success and many activities, however, did little to bolster her shaky self-esteem:

> They were all things that gave me recognition, but I didn't have it in myself. I see how important status was to me, and still is. But there was no satisfaction on my part. I felt that if people really knew who I was, they wouldn't like me, that they liked me for the things I was doing.

When, at 19, Sarah graduated from college, she took a job writing advertising copy in a large department store. She lived in a large flat with three roommates, was involved in Phoenix House encounters and Gestalt therapy, and saw herself as a "female Errol Flynn" who slept with dozens of men, without commitment. By this time she was relatively happy with her life and friends; she says, "I wasn't looking for anything -- I was just going along doing this and that, and things just presented themselves to me." One day, she "picked up a blond California Jesus Freak" on a Manhattan street. He invited her to a church where he was to sing during his visit to New York, and intrigued with him, she attended. When his visit ended, Sarah felt torn and confused; although drawn to the Bible, she resisted the attraction. Finally, she "just had to find out the truth" and returned to the church she had visited, and it was there, in a tearful prayer experience, that she made

her commitment. Later she met several other Hebrew Christians and together they joined a predominantly black evangelical church. She was recruited for Jews for Jesus at Rebecca's suggestion, and joined the group in July, 1972.

Thus, for Sarah, Christian commitment and participation in Jews for Jesus has allowed her to meet various affective needs, and several themes are apparent. God has taken the place of the fantasized "experts" of her childhood who appreciated her depth of feelings and commendable thoughts and actions. The close and supportive surrogate family in Jews for Jesus contrasts markedly with her own strained and distant family. And finally, her life theme of "if its hard, I want to do it" and enjoyment of "tradition-breaking" continues in her activism in a challenging non-establishment movement that engenders considerable resistance.

Rebecca Sanders Epstein

Rebecca, 27, is one of the Gentile members of Jews for Jesus who has converted to Hebrew Christianity. She is a petite, energetic, and attractive woman with long tawny hair. She is articulate, competent, and practical, and has a good, husky singing voice. She was one of Mordecai's JMA trainees in 1968, and at present is the leader of the Singing Group. She changed her name from "Roberta" after spending a year in Israel.

Rebecca grew up in rural Pennsylvania. Her family, English and German Protestants, had been in the United States many generations, and her many relatives gathered regularly for holiday

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celebrations. Rebecca was the youngest of five children in a close family; she describes her parents as being giving, affectionate, and comfortable people who raised their children well. Before he retired, Mr. Sanders was a civilian clerk at an Army supply depot, an unambitious man who liked to stay home with his family. Rebecca's mother supplemented her husband's meager income by teaching piano and serving as organist and "janitor" of the Methodist church next door, a church attended regularly by all the family except Mr. Sanders. Of her family Rebecca says, "I always resented my mother always taking the lead and that my father didn't become more -- he could have."

Rebecca was an "outdoorsy kid" who spent her time hiking and swimming. She attended a tiny rural elementary school in which she was always the "teacher's pet." She found the transition to a large junior high school in town very difficult, and for the first two years was very unhappy and lonely. However, in the ninth grade she became a cheerleader and began her career as a popular school leader; later she was elected to many offices and was prom and football queen, "a big deal in a small town."

Rebecca had become disillusioned with the hypocrisy of church in junior high school. But when she was 16, her mother was invited to play the piano at a new evangelical church in town and invited Rebecca along. Rebecca became very excited at the spirit and enthusiasm of this new church and began to attend regularly.

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By her senior year, she saw "popularity as a farce" and "freaked out her friends by talking about God."

Rebecca sees herself as being inherently lazy and lacking drive. On graduation from high school,

> I supposed I'd go to college. It was better than working and I didn't know what else to do. My expectations of myself were always sort of low, but I knew I could make it in elementary education.

She attended a Baptist college because she was recruited by the school's representative. As a freshman, she became close friends with Aaron, a Hebrew Christian who was to become an important influence in her life. She says, "I still wasn't interested in letting God rule my life; I continued to play games." However, Aaron helped her learn to pray and to trust that God would fulfill her needs. She describes having been perpetually short of funds, but money would always appear at the last minute "in answer to prayer." Aaron encouraged Rebecca to spend the summer as a counselor at a Hebrew Christian children's camp in the Poconos, an experience she so enjoyed that she counseled for the next four summers. At camp, and under Aaron's influence, she became increasingly involved in Jewish culture.

When Rebecca graduated, Mordecai recruited her for the JMA training program in New York, at Aaron's suggestion. She says of her feelings at that time:

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> I didn't know if I wanted to be a missionary to the Jews. But I enjoyed the camp and I thought Jewish things were far out. Talking to Jewish people about Jesus turned me on.

She enjoyed the intense enculturation. Trainees read twelve novels about Jewish life and learned to prepare traditional Jewish foods, among other assignments. She then worked with Mordecai as part of his missionary team and was instrumental in influencing several young women in her boarding house to become believers. When Mordecai moved to California in 1970, he arranged for the JMA to pay Rebecca a half-time salary to go to Israel as a missionary for a year. While there, she studied Hebrew, took classes at the university, and helped to open a Christian coffee house.

When Rebecca returned to the United States, the JMA asked her to remain in New York for another year, during which she helped organize a Hebrew Christian community of young adults. She was finally allowed to join Jews for Jesus in September 1972 and immediately took over leadership of the Singing Group.

Rebecca was drawn into the Hebrew Christian Movement because of close relationships with Aaron and Mordecai at a time when she was considering a career. Significantly, it was these Hebrew Christian leaders who helped her deepen her commitment and become an activist in the name of her beliefs. She said:

> I look back and see these people helping me at strategic points. I probably would have been too lazy to do it myself. Finally, I got motivated.

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She has now married Sol, a third Hebrew Christian of strong character. She became a Hebrew Christian by conversion in marriage, and is as enculturated as any Jew of her generation.

Ben Cohen

Ben, like the majority of Jewish members of Jews for Jesus, became a Christian following involvement in the counterculture. He seems to have floated along with the popular trends among middle-class urban youth, and illustrates the strength of generational peer-group pressure in influencing a young Jew to turn to Jesus.

Now 26, Ben grew up in a Jewish neighborhood of the Bronx, New York, the oldest of three sons. He is of stocky build and very strong, with black hair, a full beard, and typically Jewish facial features. Energetic, friendly, humorous, self-confident, and a complete extrovert, he is hardworking and well-respected. He is a responsible group leader despite his inability to communicate in grammatically correct English and lack of a college degree.

Ben's grandparents were Russian and Hungarian immigrants, and he spent much time with them. He reports that his parents are indulgent and loving. His father, with whom he was very close, is described as a "Jewish Archie Bunker -- conservative and bigoted, hard-working, and proud of his strength." Mr. Cohen successively owned several small bars and restaurants, the last of which went bankrupt. He then bought a taxi, a more successful venture that occupied him until his recent retirement. Ben's

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mother has always been a housewife -- loving, concerned, and a "typical nagging Jewish mother."

As a child, Ben was a "street kid," obnoxious, energetic and aggressive. He had a rich imagination and would play by himself for hours. An unmotivated scholar, he found school difficult, rebelling at the high expectations of parents who wanted their sons to be doctors, lawyers, or musicians. Ben says of this period:

> I had a really fun childhood. My upbringing was so normal, so typical of post-World War II, that it makes me laugh. My parents tried to show their love with material things -- but I also knew emotionally that they loved me. I didn't take things too seriously; all I was concerned with was having a good time.

Ben's family attended a Conservative synagogue on High holidays and celebrated all family occasions with grandparents in the Catskills. He attended Hebrew School, Cheder (Jewish parochial school) for four years, and celebrated his Bar Mitzvah. He began to work with his father on weekends at the age of 9, and continued to work part time through high school, although he spent summers in the Catskills.

Ben attended an all-boys' high school and rapidly became part of the most popular clique. He spent much of his time "partying", using marijuana and other drugs. He says,

> My values then? Girls, clothes, status. I was apolitical. I went to a Peace March once to pick up chicks. I guess high school was my most rebellious time. I didn't want to do anything with my parents, just my friends. But I stayed pretty close to my parents, I didn't hide too much from them. Perhaps part of my rebellion was

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> telling them some of the obnoxious things I was doing -- not to hurt them, but so they wouldn't find out from someone else.

Ben flunked out of college after one semster. Suspecting that the Army had its eye on him, he volunteered for the draft. He was sent to Viet Nam after basic training, and six weeks later he was wounded and sent home. He spent the next eight months in and out of military hospitals for surgery. As a result of this experience, he lost a thumb and finger, gained a lifetime monthly disability income, and discovered hard drugs.

In 1969, Ben came to California and became totally immersed in the counterculture. With his regular income, he could spend all his time and money on drugs (including heroin), women, and pleasure-seeking -- the life of a "total hedonist." He lived in a commune in San Francisco with his brother and a few other old friends from New York, including two who would later join Jews for Jesus.

Later, one member of this commune hitchhiked to Oregon and "got saved" at a Jesus commune. Ben's brother became interested in her story, and he too visited this ranch and was saved. When Ben decided to travel for awhile, his first stop was Oregon to find out what had happened to his younger brother. After reaching the proper town, but with no address or telephone number, Ben arrived at the remote ranch by a series of "supernatural coincidences," which he now interprets as "God's leading."

After several weeks at the ranch, Ben, deciding that he had to find "the truth" for himself, began reading the New Testament. He soon made a commitment to God in prayer. He flushed his dope down the toilet in a symbolic gesture and began to make radical behavior changes. He remained at the ranch several months, reading the Bible and working in the fields. He then returned to San Francisco, where he found that most of his friends had also become Jesus People, and one friend had met Mordecai. Ben went to work in the Jews for Jesus office in August 1971. He met Marie and began to date her, and ten weeks later they were married. He now attends Bible college full time and has excellent grades.

Ben says of himself,

> I'm the kind of person, no matter what situation I'm in, no matter where I am, I'll make the best of it and I'll enjoy myself -- that's where my head is at.

This theme has run through his childhood and adolescence, his counterculture experiences, and except for Viet Nam, even the Army. He totally immersed himself in the Jesus Movement when he found himself in its environment, and again, is thoroughly enjoying his work with Jews for Jesus. Through this Movement he uses his abundant energy, and substitutes a "religious high" for a "drug high" among a close group of congenial friends -- but all for a cause he sees as highly meaningful.

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Marie Barnes Cohen

If one were to pick two characteristics common to the four members of Jews for Jesus who grew up in fundamentalist families, they would be a highly family-centered childhood and a paucity of typical adolescent peer relationships and activities. Marie, 25, is blond, blue-eyed and slightly plump. In the assembled group, she is introverted, quiet, and passive. On an individual basis, however, she is friendly and talkative. Marie helped found Jews for Jesus, having arrived from New York with Mordecai and served as his capable secretary for the initial two years of the group's existence.

Of German and Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry, Marie's family have been Midwestern farmers for many generations. Her parents were born 14 miles from the Indiana town of 20,000 in which she was born. She describes her father as "narrow and conservative," a frugal, hard-working man who, except on the subject of religion, is "silent and negative." Mr. Barnes, a high school graduate, ran a magazine subscription business that eventually became quite successful. Marie's mother attended beauty college, but became a housewife after marriage. She is described as being very shy and quiet, a capable homemaker, and also "typically rural Midwestern" in her negativity about unfamiliar subjects. Marie never saw her parents fight, and considers the family closely knit. She has an older sister (28) and a younger brother (19).

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The family shared many activities, with church being prominent in their lives. Mr. Barnes taught Sunday school and Bible studies, and helped found three new churches. Marie reports that the family "always had a house full of young married couples from the church -- they were our friends and almost like family." Her family held daily devotions and prayer, and Christian music was played constantly on the phonograph. Marie remembers committing her life to Christ at the age of nine.

As television and movies were thought to be a "bad influence", the family spent their evenings playing such games as dominoes and monopoly. All five family members did the housework and gardening and worked in the business office located in the house, Marie and her sister having learned clerical skills and begun working in the office summers and after school from the age of ten.

The Barnes family moved to a rural area when Marie was nine. She describes her childhood as happy, even, stable, and placid. She was an A student but was very shy; she played mostly with her sister or spent her spare time reading -- on the bus to school, at lunch when working, and by a crack of light under the bedroom door after she had gone to bed. In contrast to many Christian children, she was never rebellious; she complied with her parents' strict limitations, yet vicariously escaped through romantic and historical novels.

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Except for two close female friends in junior high and high school, Marie was socially isolated. She did not know how to relate to non-Christian peers, and parental restrictions and fundamentalist proscriptions cut her off from many school activities. Marie remembers herself as being dumpy and plain, shy, naive, and negative during high school -- a person who refused activities because "my parents won't let me" instead of due to her own convictions. She never learned to dance and still feels physically awkward and self-conscious.

Marie's interest in Jews began at Bible conferences the family attended every summer. Each year she was fascinated by presentations on the subject of Old Testament prophecy and how it related to modern Israel. She said

> I had heard about Jews all my life, but I didn't know any. It was the conference, and reading Biblical novels, that really turned me on to Jews. Then, for my high school speech class, I did my final speech on Jewish persecution -- a chronology of all the horrible things that happened to the Jews. It really sobered me and made me realize I wanted to be a missionary to the Jews.

Marie attended Moody Bible College in Chicago for three years, earning a diploma in Jewish studies. She blossomed during college, forming new friendships, beginning to date, and attending her first movies. Although she hated such Bible college work assignments as "house-to-house visitation," playing the piano in slum rescue missions, and teaching Sunday school in store-front churches, she now appreciates the effect these activities had in broadening her view of the world.

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When Marie was a senior, one of her professors suggested that Mordecai recruit her for the JMA six-month missionary training program in New York. During this intense Jewish enculturation experience, Marie found her beliefs becoming increasingly more meaningful as she witnessed the people on New York streets.

After a year, during which Marie manned the new Jews for Jesus office in California almost single-handedly, Ben joined the work. He began to court Marie, and a few months later, they were married.

Marie is a lifelong Christian who chose Jewish evangelism as a career. Although always outwardly compliant, she was eager for more excitment than her rural and family background offered and for other peer group experiences of her generation. She says of her first year in California,

> Paula and I were determined to become hippies -- we wore blue jeans and I didn't wear my gold watch. We just never made it.

Jews for Jesus allows participation in a peer group of young adults who are more typical of her generation, many former "hippies," yet who are acceptable in values and behavior because they are Christians.

Kezia Kaufman

Several members of Jews for Jesus have been political activists throughout most of their adolescent and young adult years. They have demonstrated publicly in support of the Civil Rights Movement, protested the Viet Nam War, and been involved in other New Left activities. This theme has continued in their involvement in

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Jews for Jesus, the most activist branch of the Hebrew Christian Movement, Kezia, who most clearly illustrates this continuity, stated that members of Jews for Jesus are very similar to those with whom she worked in a chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). The ideology is different, but the energy and activities are similar.

Kezia, 25, is one of the newest members of Jews for Jesus, and is presently exploring different roles in the group. She has long brown hair and blue eyes, and wears glasses; she is slightly overweight, quiet, mature, and very bright. Her given name is "Karen," but she assumed her grandmother's name on joining the group.

Kezia's grandparents arrived in the United States from Russia and Lithuania somewhat earlier than those of other group members. She describes her family as being one generation removed from those of most other members in terms of upward mobility, wealth, education, and general social prominence. Kezia's father, introverted, intellectual, and passive, is a philosophy professor who loves the outdoors. Her mother, competitive, bright, and creative, has a master's degree in political science and has been a full-time volunteer all her married life -- she has written many grants, organized anti-poverty programs, and has been active in countless political activities. Kezia has been very close to and strongly influenced by her mother. She has a younger brother (23) and sister (19). Although her parents' marriage has been strained of late, she considers the family to be generally close.

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Kezia was born in Boston, but the Kaufmans moved to Oregon when she was four. As a child, she was always the "smartest kid in the class," chubby and never physically active, and an avid reader -- "a serious introspective kid who related well to adults." She was a Girl Scout, took violin lessions for six years, and always lived in Gentile middle- to upper-middle-class neighborhoods. Her parents are totally secular intellectuals and atheists who participated in no Jewish rituals. However, Kezia feels that a Jewish identity was imparted to her through a sense of moral responsibility and the necessity of fighting for the "underdog." Until recently, Kezia had been in a synagogue only once.

When Kezia was in junior high school, the Kaufmans moved to Seattle. Kezia began her political involvement at the age of 13 as the youngest member of the local chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality; she stood on picket lines and worked with her mother in community organizing, always enjoying the excitement of such activities. Although she felt "ugly and socially insecure," she made a conscious effort to move into her school's social elite, and succeeded in becoming a "semi-big wheel." She was editor of the high school paper and received the award for the "brightest girl student." She was one of the few white students who was accepted by militant blacks and was instrumental in starting black/white encounter groups. Remaining close to her family, Kezia said

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> I was always sensitive to what my parents wanted and I never stepped out of line. I never lied to them or stayed out late without calling them.

Kezia was disappointed by a lack of intellectual stimulation in her freshman year at the University of Washington. Disliking the "liberal white groups" and not accepted in the Black Student Union, she sought a cause for which to work. Grape Boycott activities in her sophomore year led her to a group of "bright Jews" with whom she could relate; she had rarely associated with Jews in the past.

Kezia joined a women's liberation group, and later a branch of SDS that eventually evolved into a chapter of the terrorist-oriented Weathermen. She then dropped out of school to participate in Weathermen activities full time, moving into its communal house. However, she found stressful such social demands on members as the prohibitions against monogamous relationships. She said

> You had to have commitment, and I really didn't want to give my whole life to the revolution. The three or four months that I was intensely involved was a breaking point in my life. I had always been the obedient child, and all of a sudden I was almost calling my mother a pig to her face. One reason I quit was that I saw that I was being separated from my family and I couldn't totally separate. I felt a lot of guilt that I couldn't make it when I quit.

Kezia was arrested several times for minor offenses in the name of her political activities; her parents, although hurt, paid her legal fees and "never turned her out."

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Kezia's brother introduced her to psychedelic drugs, and she began to participate in his counterculture group of friends. She smoked marijuana every day, worked at babysitting for her $100 monthly income, and became involved in yoga and meditation. Not totally comfortable with this younger group either, she started working as a volunteer in a women's clinic. She found doing counseling and gynecological examinations very rewarding and decided to return to the university as a pre-med student.

Meanwhile, Kezia's brother and his wife had become Christians, as had her younger sister. When they presented her with the Christian message, she was cautious:

> Because of my experience with Weathermen, I knew I couldn't become a Jesus Freak -- I couldn't become a rhetorician again and didn't want to hurt my parents. But when I visited their church, I felt the Spirit of God really strongly. It was a Pentacostal church, half older blacks and half young white hippies, and I was impressed with the lack of racism.

She made her commitment on her first visit to the church and eventually became very active. However, her lifestyle and behavior changes proceeded more gradually. She changed her major to English and graduated from the university, and then entered a master's program. She moved from a commune back into her parents house. Her parents, while not understanding her spiritual commitment, were pleased with her academic success and rejection of drugs and hippie lifestyle.

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Mordecai met Kezia when he visited her Hebrew Christian fellowship in Seattle, and invited her to join the group. She accepted the invitation several months later after seeing a performance of the Singing Group, and joined Jews for Jesus in April, 1974.

Kezia, always an activist, had endured several disappointments in the causes toward which she had worked. She had been hurt by Black Power militants after years of Civil Rights activities; a family-oriented and compliant daughter, she found Weathermen demands very stressful; and the counterculture did not provide the meaningful cause she needed. Finally, in Jews for Jesus, she has committed herself to a challenging movement that allows her to remain close to her family and their values, yet to explore her Jewish identity in a supportive community of similar young adults.

Stephen Rosenthal

Nearly all the Jewish members of Jews for Jesus have become Hebrew Christians directly or indirectly through the Jesus Movement, and are relatively new believers. An exception is Stephen, who made an individual Christian commitment as an adolescent rather than being swept into the recent large-scale peer-oriented Jesus Movement. Late adolescence is normally a time in which a serious interest in religion and ethics plays a part in seeking one's own values and standards. Conversion experiences, or acceptance of comprehensive ideologies that explain and predict the world are common.

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Stephen is one of the few members of the group who can be said to have been experiencing a typical adolescent identity crisis when he made his commitment.

Stephen, now 29, was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and is the Jews for Jesus "resident musical genius" -- a fine composer, pianist, and vocalist. Tall, lean, and bespectacled, with reddish-brown hair and a full beard, he is verbal, witty, and charming.

Stephen's paternal grandparents were strict Orthodox Jews who immigrated from Austria-Hungary; his maternal grandparents were Sicilian Catholic immigrants. Stephen's mother converted to Judaism at marriage when the senior Mrs. Rosenthal threatened suicide if her son married a Catholic. Stephen describes his father as domineering, aggressive, and argumentative -- a perfectionist who prides himself on his intelligence. Because of poverty, Mr. Rosenthal dropped out of high school to become a bookkeeper, and still works as one at the age of 69. Stephen describes his mother as warm and supportive, passive, overprotective and nervous, and a humanist -- in short, "a very good mother." Stephen has a 35-year-old sister with whom he has never been close.

Stephen was an intelligent and bookish child who was poor at sports. He had Jewish, Irish Catholic, and Italian Catholic friends in his neighborhood. In school, he was a clown, always the one to come out with the clever pun or humorous aside. Although he feels he was "typical" until he was 12, junior high school was emotionally difficult, as reflected in poor grades

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in every subject but English. He had begun piano lessons at eight, but his mother had discontinued them when he began Hebrew School, feeling that both activities would be "too much." During this period, his parents encouraged synagogue attendance and lit Sabbath candles, but otherwise neither parent was interested in religion or religious rituals.

At 14 Stephen began to work in the Catskills during the summers, and these interludes became the happiest times of his life. Listening to the bands, he was inspired to begin piano lessons again. By the time he was 15, he was earning money playing dance music at clubs, and music had become his main interest. During this period, he saw himself as skinny, ungainly, and very shy socially -- a "romantic, mature, serious and tragic figure," as he eloquently put it. He said of himself "I was very straight; I always wanted to avoid disapproval." He experimented with marijuana and alcohol only briefly, lived at home until he was 23, and did not begin to date until he had nearly completed college.

While a freshman at music college in Manhattan, Stephen's relationship with his father began to deteriorate. He said

> I felt unplugged from life -- that life should be something more to me than it was. I was unhappy about the lack of relationships with my father and others, and I was frustrated and resentful. Inwardly, I couldn't come to terms with life and people as they were. It wasn't that I behaved better than others; I couldn't come to terms with myself either.

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He began psychotherapy, which allowed him to cope to some extent with his despair and frustration. At the same time, however, an evangelical Christian classmate invited him to a Bible study and suggested that he read the New Testament; he was especially intrigued with the way "Jesus managed to extricate Himself from situations in which people tried to trap Him." Stephen was also impressed with the Christians he met -- with their concern and caring for each other, and with the fact that their beliefs had "intellectual integrity." After several weeks, he made a commitment to Jesus and perceived a "sign" that God had heard him. He said

> When I came to believe in Christ, the way I felt about myself and the world, and the way I was capable of relating to others was so different, that I no longer felt I needed any therapy.

Stephen had not questioned his Jewish identity before becoming a Christian; "I always felt I was a Jewish kid whose mother came from a Catholic family." As a way of resolving this problem as a Christian, he considered evangelism among Orthodox Jews. He did not identify as a Hebrew Christian, disliking the implication of "exclusivity." However, when he began to attend services at the JMA and met Mordecai in 1968, he began to realize that "a person can say he's different without saying he's better." At this time, he was enrolled in a master's program in music education and was teaching junior high school music and English full time,

a job he disliked. Mordecai encouraged him to take over leadership of the JMA choir and to begin to write Hebrew Christian music. He also helped Stephen decide to move out of his parents' house and eventually to quit teaching. After completing his master's program in March 1973, he moved to California to become music director of Jews for Jesus.

At the time of Stephen's exposure to Christianity, he was struggling with his identity, experiencing alienation and frustration, and attempting to separate from his parents -- an intensification of typical late adolescent concerns. In his mother's words, "Stephen clung to that religion like a drowning man -- he must have really needed it." Since then, however, he has maintained and strengthened his Christian commitment, using it as a center for emotional growth for the past 11 years.

The Leader

The originator, spokesman, and leader of Jews for Jesus is Mordecai Steinberg, 44, a Jewish, ordained Baptist minister. He is tall and heavyset, dark of hair and complexion, and wears a thick moustache. One is immediately struck by his level, penetrating gaze. Mordecai and his wife, Sharon, have been married 26 years.

The Steinberg family is close, and Mordecai and Sharon have maintained a comfortable middle-class home through the years of their marriage. Sharon was a homemaker until their two daughters,

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now 20 and 25, were in school. At present, she works part time as a legal secretary. Other than close friendship with members of Jews for Jesus and attendance at all social events, Sharon's involvement with the group is limited to work as a typist two mornings each week. The older daughter is a college graduate, married to a Gentile, and she and her husband are active in Jews for Jesus. The younger daughter is a student in Bible college and active in the Los Angeles group. Although they grew up in a Hebrew Christian home, both daughters have become active in the work of Jews for Jesus only in the past three years.

Mordecai's grandparents were Russian and Austrian Orthodox Jewish immigrants who settled in Denver and Kansas City, Missouri. His father dropped out of school in the eighth grade to help support his family. Mordecai describes him as wise, well-read, and capable -- an "explainer" who would spend with Mordecai and his younger brother up to three hours every evening reading aloud and discussing newspaper items and teaching his sons his philosophy of life and business principles. Mordecai describes his mother as also an "explainer" and a reader -- a warm, loving, and home-centered woman who was ill for periods during his childhood.

The family was tightly knit and close, cooperating in the housework when Mrs. Steinberg was ill, and all working together to "make ends meet." Mordecai remembers impoverished times when meals were meager and clothing scarce, and the house was heated by

burning old tires. After the Depression, Mordecai's father began a scrap metal and junk business, which became successful through very hard work. The Steinbergs lived in a two-bedroom house in a Jewish lower-middle-class neighborhood in Denver. The house became quite crowded when Mordecai was 11 and his mother's sister and her husband and daughter moved in.

Mordecai describes himself as having been a quiet child, a daydreamer who was an "underachiever" in school for lack of attention. Until he was 12 or 13, he read a great deal; thereafter, he worked in his spare time. He preferred his father's company to that of his peers, working with him and accompanying him on errands.

In the Steinberg household, Sabbath candles were lit weekly, Jewish festivals were celebrated, and only kosher meat was allowed. Mr. Steinberg, although of the opinion that "religion is a racket," attended weekly Sabbath services with his own father until the senior Steinberg died. Mordecai began Cheder at 8½, celebrated his Bar Mitzvah, and continued to attend synagogue regularly until he was 14.

Mordecai's adolescent years were busy ones. At the age of 12, he began working for his father every weekend. He was expected to pay his room and board out of his wages "to teach him responsibility." When he was 15, having developed an aversion to work that "dirtied his hands," he acquired a job evenings and Saturdays in a sporting goods store, and continued to work with his father on Sundays.

During high school, Mordecai used his cousin's name and G.I. benefits to enroll in Colorado College; within a year after his graduation from high school, he had earned a certificate in business administration. During this period, the late forties, both Mordecai and his father became active in Socialist causes.

At 14, Mordecai had met Sharon, also 14, when she moved to his neighborhood. She became his girlfriend and they were married at 18. Two years later, their first daughter was born. With marriage and the McCarthy era, Mordecai's social concerns shifted. Although, today, he still admires the idealism and dedication of the political left, he decided then to concentrate on making money. He enjoyed being a father and felt very responsible for his family. He continued to work full time in the sporting goods store as manager of the camera department, and devoted his spare time to photography and fishing.

In 1953, Sharon, who had been a militant atheist in rebellion against her strict Jewish Orthodox family, became curious about the New Testament. She secretly obtained a copy, read it, and finally prayed to God to show her whether Jesus was the Messiah. After Sharon had prayed for someone to talk to, a Hebrew Christian missionary appeared at their door. Following several months characterized by annoyance with and intolerance of Sharon's Bible verses and descriptions of her experiences, Mordecai was finally convinced to question his own beliefs. He ultimately decided that what Sharon had been saying might be true, and they prayed together.

Mordecai accompanied Sharon to a Baptist church where he made his commitment public. A great life change followed. Mordecai began to center his life around the church, describing himself during that period as having been fanatic in his eagerness to learn. He describes vividly the difficult and sometimes embarrassing process of enculturation. He offered to donate the salary of a Hebrew Christian missionary. When no one responded to his offer, he asked God if he should become a missionary himself; he reports feeling strongly led by God to do so.

Mordecai's parents disowned him because of his commitment, and did not communicate with him for a year. As he was about to leave for Northeastern Divinity School, however, his father initiated peace through a rabbi and insisted that Mordecai see a psychiatrist at his expense. As Mordecai recalls the incident, "I'm probably one of the few persons who has a certificate from a psychiatrist saying that I'm sane."

As a seminary student, Mordecai became an activist. He organized the nine other Jewish students and convinced the school to offer Jewish history and Hebrew; through his efforts, two teachers of Jewish studies were hired from the nearby main branch of the JMA. Contemporaneously with his being trained as a Baptist minister, Mordecai served an apprenticeship as a Hebrew Christian missionary through the JMA. This training included learning to preach in Yiddish. On graduation in 1957, Mordecai was

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hired by the JMA and sent to Los Angeles to open a new branch of the organization.

Mordecai remained in Los Angeles for ten years. For the first two years, he did little but knock on doors with literature and hold weekly Bible studies, but by 1967 he had established a congregation there with its own building. Dissatisfied with his own apprenticeship, Mordecai trained his assistant so effectively that the JMA began sending him other apprentices. Finally, the organization insisted that he return to the New York headquarters to develop and direct a training program.

Having gained considerable experience, Mordecai became increasingly dissatisfied with several aspects of the JMA, believing it to be out of touch with the ideas of most of its contributors and of those to whom it was intended to minister. Also uncomfortable with the extent of his own "Gentilization," he adopted "Mordecai" in place of his given name, a reflection of his reidentification with his Jewish background.[3] At this time, he became enthusiastic about the budding Jesus Movement, as well as with young counterculture Jews he met.

Mordecai says that when he first established Jews for Jesus on the West Coast, he was acting out his resentment of the JMA by running the group loosely, by whim and intuition. After four years during which he has borne responsibility for the organization, he has changed. He now feels that he must be more an executive,

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more directive. Just as American secular work values, Judaism, political activism, and fundamentalist Christianity have contributed to Mordecai's values, they are reflected also in Jews for Jesus. In addition, Mordecai's personal characteristics have shaped the group. His sense of discovery, love of a challenge, and innovative pragmatism makes him open to new experiences and exploration of differing frameworks for new ideas. When asked to describe his life theme, he responded:

> The idea is to see how much you can do. I've always liked problem solving -- how to buy a hat cheaper -- particularly problem solving in interpersonal relations. That still persists. Where can we take Jews for Jesus?

Thus, although members of Jews for Jesus have some characteristics in common, being middle-class young adults committed to the same ideology, they differ significantly in personality and family background. This variation illustrates Wallace's (1967) "organization of diversity" theory in which he postulates that a basic personality need not necessarily be shared in a group or society but rather, that behavior must be mutually predictable.

Now leaving the history of Jews for Jesus and introduction to some individual memebers, I move in the next three chapters to a consideration of the social organization of the group and its operations. In Chapters VI and VII, however, I will return to analysis of individuals in Jews for Jesus and the role the group plays in their lives.

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NOTES

1. I used the following criteria to determine social class:
   (a) Occupation of breadwinner. Seven fathers were professionals, eleven owned their own businesses (small and 1 large), and the remainder were clerical workers and deliverymen.
   (b) Educational level of parents. Educational level ranged from 10th grade to M.D. and Ph.D.
   (c) Income. Although I did not collect explicit income data, I estimated income level from informants' description of lifestyle. No family required public assistance; a few families lived in luxurious houses with hired help.
   (d) Lifestyle and values. All parents stressed the importance of education and financial security, and hoped that their children would achieve better jobs and enjoy a higher standard of living than had the parents. Most families provided their children with such amenities as music or dancing lessons.

2. "Ultra-straight" refers to those members who either grew up in fundamentalist homes or became believers in adolescence, and were raised in rural or small town settings. In general, their closely knit families were relatively authoritarian, and most were strongly religious. These members were committed to family values and did not "rebel" in adolescence; they did not indulge in any alcohol, drugs, or premarital sex.

   "Straight" refers to those members who subscribed to a combination of parental and generational values. Most continued college through graduation, and began working full time after receiving their degrees. Some experimented with drugs or alcohol, or used them occasionally.

   "Counterculture" as used here lumps together several lifestyles. Political activists are included with "hippies" because among members of Jews for Jesus, a "pure type" is rare; most moved from one variant of the counterculture to another, or combined elements. Involvement varied. Being a "political radical" ranged from holding leftist values and participating in peace marches to militant anti-social activities. Among former drug culture participants,

some were "weekend hippies" who attended college or worked; others dropped out entirely for a few years, used drugs heavily, traveled and/or lived communally, and supported themselves by selling drugs.

3. DeVos suggests that reaffirmation of ethnic identity can be a positive resolution of psychological stress, and that "ethnic identity movements therefore are usually led by individuals who, at given points in their careers, manifest in their own personalities some resolution of previously disturbing internal states, which are also experienced by many other members of the group at large" (1975:373).

CHAPTER III. BELIEFS AND MISSION

Hebrew Christians see themselves as constituting a distinct ethnic segment of evangelical Christianity. Since most people react with disbelief to Hebrew Christian identification with both Jews and Christians, Hebrew Christians are accepted comfortably in neither group. Jews for Jesus enlarges on and uses this distinction in its evangelistic activities. Both these activities and the ideology on which they are based elicit a strong response among Jews. This response, although welcomed when it comes from the Jewish community at large, poses problems for members when it comes from significant others.

Ideology

Members of Jews for Jesus identify more strongly with the group itself than with any church, using this identification as a license and mandate to develop the group's unique ideology.[1] The ideology illustrates syncretism in that it reflects an attempt to combine or integrate elements from four recognizable sources which are discussed below: American fundamentalist Christianity, mainstream American secular values, American Judaism, and youth culture values. This attempt has not yet crystalized into a coherent whole.

Different aspects of the group's ideology reflect its different sources. For example, the beliefs are primarily Christian,

moral behavior is fundamentalist, although heavily influenced by Jewish values, and work values are Protestant ethic. And the group's expressive style originates in the youth, Jewishness, and personalities of its members. This expressive style makes a lasting impression on persons coming in contact with it and is an important influence in attracting other talented young adults to full-time work in the group.

American fundamentalist Christianity provides the basis for the group's theology. The corporate charter includes the following doctrinal statement:

> We believe in the Divine Inspiration, infallibility, and authority of the Old and New Testament.
> We believe in the Triune God and the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God.
> We believe in His sacrifical atonement at Calvary, His bodily resurrection from the dead, and His premillenarial second coming.
> We believe that the New Birth by faith and obedience to Christ places each believer in the Body of Christ of which the local congregation is an expression.
> We believe that it is necessary for the Christian to be separated from the worldly system of sin and to resist the person of Satan.
> Finally, we believe in the lost condition of every human being, whether Jew or Gentile, who does not accept salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore in the necessity of presenting the gospel to the Jews.

Important Christian values are commitment to evangelism and to the group's mission. Mordecai has suggested that members' commitment priorities should be first to God, then to the ministry, the group, career development, and personal interests, and only then to "things that give you pleasure." Other Christian values include an emphasis on spiritual and personal growth with Jesus as the model, faith, love, humility, kindness, and submission to authority. Nor is martyrdom ignored since, as Mordecai has said, "it is good to be killed for the right reason -- better killed than injured. With a martyr, 10,000 people would come to Christ."

Although its basic theological position serves as a raison d'etre of Jews for Jesus, the members vary widely in their comprehension of the belief system and in the way in which their behavior is affected by it. For example, lifelong Christians who have graduated from Bible college differ from Jewish members who have been believers two or three years. Also, the group includes both charismatic and non-charismatic Christians, a rare combination.[2] Despite these differences, however, members cooperate and are able to work toward common goals because Jews for Jesus relegates theology to a matter of personal choice. Spirituality is seen as a private matter and is submerged in the day-to-day concerns of the group's practical goals. In contrast to the tone of charismatic groups of Jesus People, that of Jews for Jesus is markedly secular,

or as one member stated it, "We don't sit around and pray all day, waiting for God to tell us what to do." Action, commitment, and simple faith in God, precepts on which all members agree, are evident in the group, while sophisticated theological arguments are not.

American secular values, which include achievement, competition, profit, mobility, and expansiveness (Henry 1965), are illustrated in various statements of Mordecai. For example:

> We're an achievement-oriented group; I'm concerned with the results, not the methods.
>
> Competition: to recognize it is one thing, to use it is better.
>
> Everyone is upgraded. Things that were permissible a year ago are not now; whoever is in the same place has fallen behind.
>
> Respect and esteem are the basis of love; one is respected for self-control, discipline, and abilities.
>
> Opposition is healthy and a symbol of success; it weeds out the weak people.

In addition, the personal characteristics of individual members reflect many of these values; members are generally assertive, cosmopolitan, articulate, and action-oriented, and individuality is valued. As a new member observed:

> Each member has a really strong personality -- they're real individual characters. This group is looking to creativity, so personality is important.

American Judaism is the source of such group values as importance of family, community, and education. Living a moral life is considered more important than doctrine. In Mordecai's opinion, Jewish Christians differ from Gentile Christians in morals and behavior in that

> Jews are freer to express anger and more comfortable quarreling, use more physical contact, and are brighter, or at least more articulate than Gentiles. Hebrew Christians are more worldly than other fundamentalists, and not as other-worldly; we read books, attend shows, drink wine at meals, smoke, dance, and accept and enjoy sexual feelings (in marriage).

Instead of being governed by explicit church-imposed prohibitions, Hebrew Christians feel that the individual is responsible for his own behavior. While an act can be carried out in a sinful manner, few acts are inherently sinful, and each situation is judged on the basis of the particular circumstances. As Mordecai remarked, "We declare our faith, but we're known by our work; frankly, I don't value the prayers of people who won't commit themselves to action."

The Jewish component of its ethnic identity is dominant in Jews for Jesus, and members identify with other Jews in several important dimensions. Strongest is the "tribal" dimension -- the feelings by which Jews experience a consciousness of kind. Mordecai describes the group as tribal, a structure he attributes to the merging of the "hippie" and Jewish tribal traditions. "Yiddishisms" appear frequently in conversation, and members appreciate Jewish humor,

Israeli folk dancing, and Jewish food. It is preferred that those members who have a more stereotyped Jewish or Semitic appearance (e.g. dark hair and eyes, prominant nose) be most conspicuous in media photographs. Many of the men have grown beards and wear their hair in "Jewish naturals." Members attend synagogue, and many participate in such Jewish rituals as keeping kosher kitchens and lighting Sabbath candles. Members who grew up with the strongest Jewish ethnic heritage play an active role in teaching the more assimilated and Gentile members about "Yiddishkeit."

Finally, youth culture values that have contributed to the Jews for Jesus ideology include dedication to personal growth and self-actualization; directness, interpersonal honesty and feedback in relationships; commitment to social change; and disinterest in financial success or technology for its own sake. Members stress creativity, the desirability of expressing their feelings, and the importance of interrelating in a holistic rather than role-related manner (Keniston 1968, Berger 1971).

The expressive style of the group is that of youth. When members visit or perform in churches, they are referred to as "kids," an appellation also used by Mordecai and some members at times. Individual Jews for Jesus are spontaneous, energetic, venturesome, and physically demonstrative. They are possessed of vivid imagination, keen sense of humor, and love of nonsense and clowning. Meetings are frequently punctuated with quips and laughter,

and an element of playfulness is part of evangelistic activities, combining "the funky with the serious," confrontation with humor.

The attempt to integrate values from the four sources discussed above results in contradictions and occasional conflict. For example, in terms of personal characteristics, the Christian value of humility conflicts with assertiveness and self-appreciation. Mordecai sometimes criticizes members for exhibiting too much pride, but on other occasions he encourages members to know themselves, and to appreciate and use their abilities. A clear example of Mordecai's attempt to integrate disparate values is his maxim, "Turn the other cheek -- but only after you've shown your strength. Show (the enemy) you are strong enough to hurt him, then offer him the chance to hurt you."

Evangelism

Members of Jews for Jesus have criticized the effectiveness of traditional missionary methods, labeling such activity as no more than "Christians talking to each other." Instead, the group has developed its own innovative techniques for evangelism. Whether directed toward the general public, the churches, or the Jewish community, the underlying strategy is based on confrontation tactics which the group defines as "confronting the world with the claims of Christ." Accordingly, a high premium is placed on all forms of communication. Highly pragmatic, the methods reflect the writings of political radicals. For example, Saul Alinsky's Rules for Radicals has been an important source of inspiration. As adapted by Jews for Jesus, the strategy is to

1. Attract attention: In being highly visible and vocal, members of Jews for Jesus can say anything they want, once sufficient attention has been attracted. Use of the media, of costumes or identifying jackets, or of street theater are all ways of doing so. It may be necessary to embarrass or antagonize the audience to avoid being ignored.

2. Present the message in an effective manner: The group uses clever and attractive literature, high quality performances, and speakers trained for street and rally work.

3. Use the opposition creatively: A favorite maxim is "make the enemy live up to his own book of rules."

4. Learn from experience: A period of debriefing and discussion follows every evangelistic activity.

Efforts to reach the general public, Jew and Gentile alike, include putting up posters in conspicuous public places and passing out broadsides in tourist areas, airports, campuses, and business and shopping centers. Large amounts of literature are distributed quickly, and more people accept than refuse it; it is difficult, however, to judge the number of people who actually read it. Discarded broadsides, if in good condition, are retrieved and used again. In absolute terms, the response rate is low, but in a small percentage of the persons exposed to it, the literature sparks enough immediate interest to allow brief "witnessing" (telling how God has bettered one's life), or to stimulate a later inquiry.

Other types of street evangelism include street drama and street preaching. These activities are carried out skillfully and effectively.

Members receive special training in how to draw and hold a crowd, tell a forceful story, and deal with hecklers.

Because of the desirability of reaching young adults with the Jews for Jesus message at a time in their lives when they are most open to it, evangelism on college campuses is another important part of the group's activities. Considered most desirable is the right to register Jews for Jesus as a campus organization, which allows the group to put up posters and maintain a book table on campus. These activities usually require that the group have a student representative. On many campuses, however, evangelism is limited to passing out broadsides or holding the occasional rally. Regardless of the methods used, there is great excitement when a student becomes a believer as a result of the group's efforts, and especially if that student is Jewish.

In planning these kinds of activities, Jews for Jesus is aware that new individuals are not recruited to a movement through mass media or literature alone, but through face-to-face contact. Its "propaganda" is designed to spread the message broadly; the possibility of recruitment begins with a telephone call or letter to begin a relationship in which the interested party can be influenced.

In addition to evangelism by direct contact, the group seeks media publicity as an indirect method of spreading its message. As a result of timely press releases describing upcoming performances

and demonstrations, the group has appeared in the evening news on local television and in newspaper articles all over the United States. In demonstrations, members of Jews for Jesus carry large placards, sing, play tambourines, and chant their message. A "group leader" is responsible for street evangelism; as spokesman and monitor, he takes great care in seeing that law and order is maintained. The overt purpose of such demonstrations may be to protest "immorality" (in front of topless nightclubs and pornography shops) or "religious blasphemy" (in front of theaters showing the film Jesus Christ Superstar or the play, Godspell). But the covert purpose in each instance is to put the group's name in the news, a technique particularly effective in angering Jews, who state their opposition in editorials and articles in Jewish newspapers, further publicizing Jews for Jesus.

Publication is also used for broad-based communication. Mordecai has written two books for general audiences, as well as several "how to" pamphlets for missionary purposes. Other members publish articles in Christian magazines. In addition, the Singing Group has produced two records of original music which have sold very well among evangelical Christians and in the churches at which the group performs.

In the churches, confrontation evangelism entails challenging members of a congregation "to think," Jews for Jesus using its shock value to encourage new commitments to Christ. Another goal

is "Jewishizing the church." In an attempt to provde a bridge between the earliest Christians and the present, members try to teach what it means to be Jewish so that Gentiles can better understand and appreciate the cultural and spiritual roots of their common heritage. Church evangelism is carried out by the Singing Group, the Drama Group, and speakers, all of whom have been enthusiastically received in churches throughout the United States. After each performance, an "altar call" (an invitation to make a public commitment to Christ) is given, and the number of those sufficiently inspired to make this commitment is seen as a measure of success. The group also requests donations in the form of cash offerings; the total amount offered is perhaps a more valid measure of success.

The Jews for Jesus stance toward the Jewish community is ambivalent, and its use of politically radical strategies and terminology puts the group in the odd position of unconsciously defining those it seeks to influence as "the enemy." Because of the unreceptive, if not overtly hostile, Jewish reaction to Jews for Jesus, the group finds it difficult to establish the dialogue it desires, and its approach to the Jewish community reflects this difficulty.

Part of the strategy is to create situations such that Jews see the moral inconsistency of their position; in the words of Mordecai:

> Jewishness should not be a liability in a free society, and Jews have always had to struggle for acceptance and tolerance. Yet, having won freedom from oppression, there are many Jews who will not accord the same tolerance to others who want to express and promote their beliefs, simply because they are Jews who believe in Jesus.

Activities range from those that can be regarded as hostile to others that support Jewish causes. Some of the more abrasive and annoying acts are designed to avoid the group's being ignored, since in the words of Mordecai, "Jews treat us like enemies and won't talk to us at all; if we keep banging and clattering and making enough noise, they'll be too embarrassed not to acknowledge us." Mordecai and Stella are the chief strategists, proposing inventive activities that put Jews in "double bind" situations. For example, a letter was sent to all American rabbis inviting a dialogue with Jews for Jesus; it ended with

> You haven't given us a chance to show you what we are....Here's an opportunity, it would be stimulating.
>
> Signed,
> Jews for Jesus Speaker's Bureau

The rationale was that if fewer than three out of one thousand rabbis accepted this invitation, the group would publish that fact; if more responded, the group would have a hearing -- either way, the group would win.

Other activities annoying to Jews have included sending broadsides to all Jewish-sounding names in the county telephone directory,

attending Jewish events in "uniform" (denim jackets embroidered with "Jews for Jesus"), and staging a demonstration in front of a synagogue at which the featured speaker had published derogatory remarks about the group.

Jews for Jesus vigorously supports its few friends in the Jewish community. For example, members make a point of attending holiday services of a Hillel rabbi who attempts to maintain an open line of communication with the group. Similarly, the local committee that organizes support for Soviet Jewry counts on the group to support demonstrations in full force, incognito. At one point, the committee chairman attended a Jews for Jesus council meeting to request assistance in supporting a Russian trade bill that included a freedom clause for Soviet Jews; Jews for Jesus mobilized quickly and efficiently to spearhead a letter-writing campaign that resulted in hundreds of letters to Congress from all over the country.

The public reaction to Jews for Jesus' evangelistic activities ranges from positive acceptance to bitter opposition, depending on the particular audience. Among those accepting broadsides or watching street preaching or drama, I have observed wholehearted support, sincere interest, amusement, curiousity, total disinterest, disbelief, and anger. Articles on the group from newspapers throughout the United States are eagerly collected and counted as a symbol of the group's success in attracting attention.

In the churches, the effect of Jews for Jesus is reflected in the ease with which its performance groups and speakers obtain bookings, the sincere appreciation and inspiration voiced by congregation members after performances and speeches, and the fact that offerings generate enough income to provide a substantial portion of the group's budget.

Regardless of its questionable impact on the general public and the churches, Jews for Jesus has clearly had an effect on many Jews. The group's highly visible and aggressive activities have stimulated strong opposition to the entire Hebrew Christian Movement, and have instigated a degree of social change in the Jewish community. Responses among Jews vary. Some are affectively neutral and desire communication. Others minimize the importance of the group or try to ignore it. Still others try to counteract the attraction of the entire movement by attempting to make Jewish institutions more responsive to the needs of young Jews. A different approach is taken by recently formed anti-missionary groups, a few of which use methods similar to those of Jews for Jesus.[3]

Finally, there are the Jews who work for suppression of Jews for Jesus. Some opponents have attempted to pressure Christian campus groups to exclude Jews for Jesus speakers. Others have tried to prevent the publication of articles on or the sale of advertising space to the group in college or general newspapers. A more physical

approach to suppression is illustrated in the statements of one Jewish Defense League (JDL)[4] member I interviewed:

> The Jewish Defense League is going to hassle the Jews for Jesus until they quit. No Jew should be subjected to the personal affront of having contact with these people. It's an insult. We are trying to show all Jews that they don't have to put up with this obnoxious phenomenon. When we go to a demonstration, we kick some shins, we hassle them, rough them up some, take away their literature. Its a bit juvenile, I admit, but the message to Jews is, "Stand up for yourselves, fight back, don't turn the other cheek."

Jews for Jesus is not intimidated by the opposition it has encountered. Indeed, its members, in their identification with the first Christians as well as with Jews throughout history, see themselves as inheriting a tradition of opposition. They view it as both a challenge to be overcome and a sign of success. Part of the group's strategy is to exploit the opposition to generate publicity to aid in spreading its message, as Mordecai explains:

> The strategy is to be out front. If they want to fight Jesus People, let them fight us. The Messianist[5] Jews don't get newspaper articles like we do. We didn't decide we'd frustrate the Jewish community, but we don't want to be ignored. When the brickbats are thrown, we're offering ourselves as the first target. The impact brings the focus of attention; then you can speak what you want to say. Anyone who is for God will get shoved; if not, you're not doing enough.

Gerlach and Hine (1970) suggest that perceived opposition is essential to a movement's success. Without such opposition,

there is no risk required for participation; conversely, an escalation of opposition evokes a corresponding escalation of commitment. Mordecai has an intuitive understanding of the use of opposition to motivate stronger commitment in members of the group:

> The anger is pumping up. If someone's shot -- I hope it doesn't happen -- we'll exploit it to the fullest. They want to get us out of public places. Tract passers and outdoor speakers will get hassled to put us on the defensive. What's our answer? Extra effort, greater boldness, a willingness to bear any pain or discomfort. To do less is to encourage intimidation. Every knock will be a boost, an occasion for preaching more of the Gospel in that community.

To maintain a high level of commitment, a movement leader may need to engineer opposition through use of artificially provoked situations (Gerlach and Hine 1970). In Jews for Jesus, the free speech issue has been used for this purpose. For example, several members of the group, arrested for distributing literature at the local airport, challenged their arrest on the ground that there is no current legal proscription against such activity. Members have gone to court on several occasions asserting "discrimination" or "suppression of free speech," and have sought legal assistance from the ACLU.

At the present time, Jews for Jesus appears to be encountering the optimal level of opposition for rapid growth. There is enough opposition to maintain and increase personal commitment, to "radicalize" new recruits, and to stimulate imaginative new approaches to make the Jewish community take notice. Some of this opposition is engineered by Jews for Jesus tactics, some is not, but opposition is eagerly sought and used. However, the group is careful not to

encourage too much opposition. The members do not taunt their opponents or the police, nor do they break any clear-cut laws. Also, they stop short of actions that might engender legitimate social control, and depend on more moderate members of the Jewish community to speak out against violence.

Relationships with Friends and Families

Self-definition as a born-again Christian has implications for social relationships. In the acknowledged division between Christians and "the world," a "brother" who is a distant acquaintence is seen to have a closer bond than a good friend who is not a believer. Members of Jews for Jesus maintain some relationships with non-believers, particularly families and a few old friends, but these relationships are often strained by ideological differences despite outward attempts to be "tolerant." The strains exist since, as one member put it:

> There are things in my friends that I was very accepting of before that I'm not now; there are things I want for my friends now that I didn't want before. I've lost a number of friends, but I've kept several. But I don't feel that any of the relationships I had are as intense and thorough as the ones I'm making now.

Relationships with their families have been particularly difficult for Jewish members of Jews for Jesus. Considering the fact that all but two families identify as Jews on more than one dimension, one might expect a uniform negative response to a child's or sibling's having become a Hebrew Christian. In fact,

however, families' initial reactions and subsequent adjustments varied and there is no correlation between such reactions and extent of Jewish identification. Family response also varies with the quality of family relationships, but, due to the effect of parental values, no clear pattern emerges. For example, some parents are more concerned with acceptable outward behavior than with the beliefs underlying that behavior. Among close families, positive and negative responses were evenly divided. More families I characterize as average in relationships reacted negatively than not. And families in which relationships are strained tended to be slightly more inclined to react positively, probably because of the sustained effort of the new believer to improve family communcation. Even among parents who react negatively, however, most show gradual moves toward acceptance over time. And siblings are generally more tolerant than their parents; in fact, several siblings of members have also become believers.

Four patterns of parental response are discernible, and are evenly divided among members' families: (1) enthusiasm, (2) avoidance or affective neutrality, (3) initial hurt or anger, followed by attempts to understand, and (4) continued hurt or rejection.[6]

Most enthusiastic responses stemmed from parents' perception of a positive behavior change in a child as a result of commitment. Raphael's parents, at the time I interviewed them, became tearful

when describing their son's incarceration in prison, which had preceded his commitment:

> It was the most painful and excruciating thing parents have to go through, and we'd like to bury it for the rest of our lives. But we know we still have a son, and he's going to be healthy. He's with new-found friends that are good for him, that have religious feelings. No matter what he was born, what he becomes now is entirely in his own favor. It will make a man out of a boy, it will give him all the better things to look forward to, and a new life to start with.

In a few families, however, a parent has also made a Christian commitment.

The second type of reaction involves either avoidance or affective neutrality. Bernie's parents were very hurt at his initial announcement, but now, "My parents, we get along well -- I don't flaunt my beliefs at them, I don't talk about them." Sol, who had been deeply involved in the counterculture, described his changes as a result of his commitment and his disappointment at his parents' lack of response:

> My relationship with my parents up to that point had been poor. But after I came to the Lord, I found myself wanting to be responsible for being their son, and I asked their forgiveness. I was very careful and tactful -- in the first letter I wrote that I had come to believe in God, then the Messiah, then Jesus. I kept looking for some indication that they were interested in knowing more about Jesus, but they could care less.

The third reaction is the attempt to understand and to deal openly with the member's new beliefs. Basically, initial hurt or anger is followed by eventual, if limited acceptance. However, many parents in this category took the first announcement in stride as a temporary fad, but later, in an "aftershock," began to acknowledge the seriousness of the commitment as they observed significant behavior changes. For example, Alison's parents did not take her beliefs seriously until she began to work for Campus Crusade for Christ, after she had been a believer six months. At that point, her father disowned her, although he apologized soon afterward. He expressed his current feelings when I interviewed him three years later:

> Initially, I was truly shocked. I was born and raised to believe there was no such thing as Jesus. But my wife and I talked it over and there was really nothing to be shocked about. When they were small, we taught our girls to make their own decisions after teaching them the fundamentals -- we wanted them to reason for themselves. We never preached religion, but we felt it and we lived it. If she's a believer in Jesus, fine, because I'm sure Jesus never told anyone to steal anything or take heroin. We accept anything in the world, today as it comes along. Don't misunderstand me, I don't believe in Jesus, but I do feel it was the will of God that we raised a fine family.

The fourth type of reaction, one of continued non-acceptance, hurt, and anger, is illustrated by Stephen's father:

> I am vehemently opposed to it, truthfully. Not to Stephen, he's a very fine boy. I told him, "Why not wait till I'm gone, don't shame me." Then he can do whatever he pleases. We have eleven rabbis in the family; my oldest nephew is a rabbi, the second is principal of a Hebrew school. I'm not a practicing Jew -- my father tried to ram religion down my throat -- but I'm a Jew at heart.

Jewish members who experience parental rejection are aware that their parents reject their beliefs and lifestyle, rather than themselves as persons. No family has totally rejected a member or engaged a deprogrammer.[7]

That almost all Jewish members made their commitments as young adults who had already established their independence has made their situations easier. The youngest member of the group, who made her decision at fourteen, experienced more difficulty:

> They laid a guilt trip on me so bad! My father said, "Look what you're doing to your mother." She was so upset she almost went to the hospital with high blood pressure. So I just went underground. I kept my Bible in my school locker and had my mail sent to a friend's house. They censored my phone calls and threw away my mail. For six months, they checked my purse when I went in and out of the house. My mom would search my room periodically. I couldn't read the Bible at home, they took it away. They just didn't know how to handle it; they took me to a psychiatrist and a rabbi. But they calmed down after a while.

Despite variations in family response, all members of Jews for Jesus report that they have made vigorous attempts to improve family relationships. If they were estranged when they became believers, they sought forgiveness and reestablished a relationship.



In addition to the theological charge "honor thy father and mother," members report changes in their feelings toward their parents. Rather than relating as adolescents who want to live their lives free of parental interference, members attempt to relate as responsible adults, willing to compromise and accept their parents as "people." Communication has been initiated by members rather than parents, and in most families, parents have responded positively to these efforts. For those few who do not respond, members keep their distance and continue to pray for improvement.

NOTES

1. In this dissertation, I use "ideology" broadly and neutrally to refer to the ideological realm of Jews for Jesus, including religious beliefs, values, and ethos or expressive style.

2. Charismatic Christians believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is accompanied by glossalalia and other supernatural gifts, such as the ability to prophesy, to heal, or to interpret tongues. Except for Jews for Jesus, the Hebrew Christian Movement is ideologically split into charismatic and non-charismatic factions.

3. For example, an organization calling itself "Jews for Judaism" staged a demonstration and passed out literature near a large Jesus rally at which Mordecai was the featured speaker. Another example is "Hineni, Inc.," formed in 1973 by Esther Jungreis, a ". . woman revivalist . . (who) seeks not to convert gentiles, but rather to bring fallen Jews back into a hard-line, fundamentalist faith. Fighting groups like Jews for Jesus with their own pressure tactics. . . ." Newsweek, March 17, 1975.

4. The Jewish Defense League was formed in the last decade for the purpose of enhancing Jewish pride and self-esteem through educating Jews to stand up for themselves, rather than passively accepting anti-Semitic affronts. This militant group has been accused of harrassment of Soviet diplomats, demonstrating Arabs, and, of course, Jews for Jesus and other Hebrew Christians.

5. Messianist Jews claim to be a messianic movement within Judaism, the "4th branch of Judaism." They are committed to Christ but object to the use of Christian terminology, substituting the Hebrew "Yeshua Hamaschiah" for "Jesus Christ." They are a charismatic segment of the Hebrew Christian Movement and generally avoid the church.

6. I have defined these categories on the basis of what members told me when I interviewed them. Ideally, parental response would be studied and categorized as of a constant time after members' commitments. However, this was impossible because, at the time of the interviews, members had been believers for varying lengths of time. Were I to interview the members now, it is likely that some parental responses would fall into different categories; indeed, the categorization itself might be somewhat different.

7. The best known deprogrammer is Ted Patrick (see, for example, Time, March 12, 1973). He has been engaged by the parents of a number of adolescents who have become involved in Jesus communes or Eastern religious groups to "rescue" their children. Patrick justifies his actions on the grounds that the children have been brainwashed or hypnotized, and parents have a legal and human right to rescue their endangered children. After kidnapping, the young person is held in one room with Patrick, often kept awake for days, until he repudiates his beliefs and admits his error in joining the group.

More recently, parents of several members of the Unification Church (Moonies) tried a slightly different approach. Arguing in a California Superior Court that their adult children had been brainwashed and hence were incapable of caring for themselves, the parents were successful in applying for temporary conservatorships for their children. In this way, the parents were able to avoid having to kidnap their children for deprogramming (see, for example, Time, April 4, 1977). Subsequently, the California Court of Appeals reversed this decision, and the California Supreme Court later denied a hearing on the matter.

CHAPTER IV. THE MISSIONARY ORGANIZATION

> Work in this group is a privilege.
> You get into the group by hard work;
> you find yourself out of it by not
> handling your responsibility.

Jews for Jesus is a missionary organization with a bureaucratic structure. It differs from the usual business organization in that its members work through it primarily for evangelism and to further the goals of the movement, rather than for enrichment of the organization. The members are committed to the work values of the group not merely because of organizational demands, but because they see such commitment as God's will. The organization is further influenced by its emphasis on missionary and character training of members. In the words of one member:

> In a normal organization if someone were
> fouling up, it would be dealt with directly,
> by firing or calling on the carpet. That's
> not what goes on here. A lot of your
> growth as a Christian comes from conflict
> with other people, so they let things go on
> a lot longer, not worrying much about the
> efficiency of the organization. They do,
> but they wait till you face up to your
> problems and get them solved. The
> emphasis is on character development.

The Organizational Framework

As noted earlier, Jews for Jesus operates as part of a nonprofit corporation. The corporation requires each voting member to subscribe to the fundamentalist doctrine and contribute $100 or more in funds or property each year; some members of the group are voting members. Corporate policy -- hence Jews for Jesus policy -- is set by the five-member board of directors. The group holds two seats on the board, one occupied by Mordecai, the other by the Jews for Jesus "council," represented by a member of the group. Despite Jews for Jesus' minority position on the board, however, Mordecai is usually able to bring about favorable decisions on matters affecting the group. One such matter is approval of the group's annual budget, which consists of a general administrative fund, a "paper" fund (for production room expenses), and separate funds for the Singing Group, the Drama Group, and each individual evangelist. The necessary income is generated from three main sources: donations from churches and regular contributors, offerings after speeches and musical and dramatic performances, and the sale of records, literature, and silk-screened shirts bearing group slogans.

A typical day in the Jews for Jesus office begins at 8:30 A.M. and ends about 5 P.M., although during especially busy periods, members sometimes put in extra hours in the evenings or over weekends to complete their tasks. Despite informal dress and

comfortable relationships, the atmosphere is businesslike and sometimes pressured. Daily activities include typing, writing and correspondence, artwork, bookkeeping, printing, filing, and "church relations" (scheduling performances). At any given time, some members will be engaged in evangelism outside the office. The two performance groups rehearse on a regular basis.

Other regular activities include weekly evening Bible studies and weekly council meetings. At council meetings, various subjects are discussed, announced, or decided, according to an informal agenda, and the tone of meetings ranges from serious and orderly to humorous and chaotic. Most matters are decided by a show of hands, but secret ballots are used for sensitive issues. A typical meeting includes discussion of future plans. For example, at a council meeting held in the spring of 1974, the members approved goals for the coming year:

Staff: Increase paid staff to twenty-five, each new staff member to be intertrained and certified as a professional evangelist; recruit high quality people so that three mobile evangelistic teams can operate full time.

Support and Budget: Aim for 1,000 regular supporters, and to be placed on the budgets of 150 churches for regular support; annual budget of $350,000.

Facilities and Equipment: Seek larger quarters with a desk for each person. Obtain new equipment. Transfer title of all cars to the ministry and purchase vans. Open new branch of Jews for Jesus in Los Angeles; branches in other cities to be established later.

Procedures: Codify all office procedures and policies; prepare written job descriptions.

The list of goals concluded with a statement of intent, to be signed by each member, as follows:

> I have read and understood the goals. I will serve as a volunteer if I cannot be paid, or in a vocational status. I will be loyal to the leaders over me. The ministry will take priority over personal interests, and I will serve for a period of one year.

The statement of intent reflects another practice of Jews for Jesus differing from that of the usual bureaucratic organization. Staff members are not generally hired for a specific job, with a corresponding salary range; instead, people are hired at a base salary with the understanding that they will do whatever job needs to be done. The salaries of administrative personnel are paid from the general fund. Also "paid" are members of the "vocational staff," who raise their own support through speaking engagements, performances, or regular donations from a "home church." Indeed, Mordecai's speaking engagements and the Singing Group's performances often generate excess receipts; after salaries and expenses have been paid, the balance is transferred to the general fund or applied to offset deficits in other funds.

Volunteer workers are also important to the group's work and comprise about one-half the group. They function at three levels. Three full-time volunteers are supported through other missionary sources to work through Jews for Jesus; these members are highly respected personally and hold some of the most responsible positions. Mid-level volunteers devote at least twenty hours a week to the work and support themselves by part-time secular jobs; they are responsible for less time-consuming or lower status segments of the work. Finally, there are occasional volunteers, recruited from Bible studies, the local Bible college, visitors and other friends of members, and even nearby churches, who work a few hours per week on a regular basis or are drafted for an emergency mailing or a demonstration; they are relegated to simple clerical tasks.

Roles and Authority

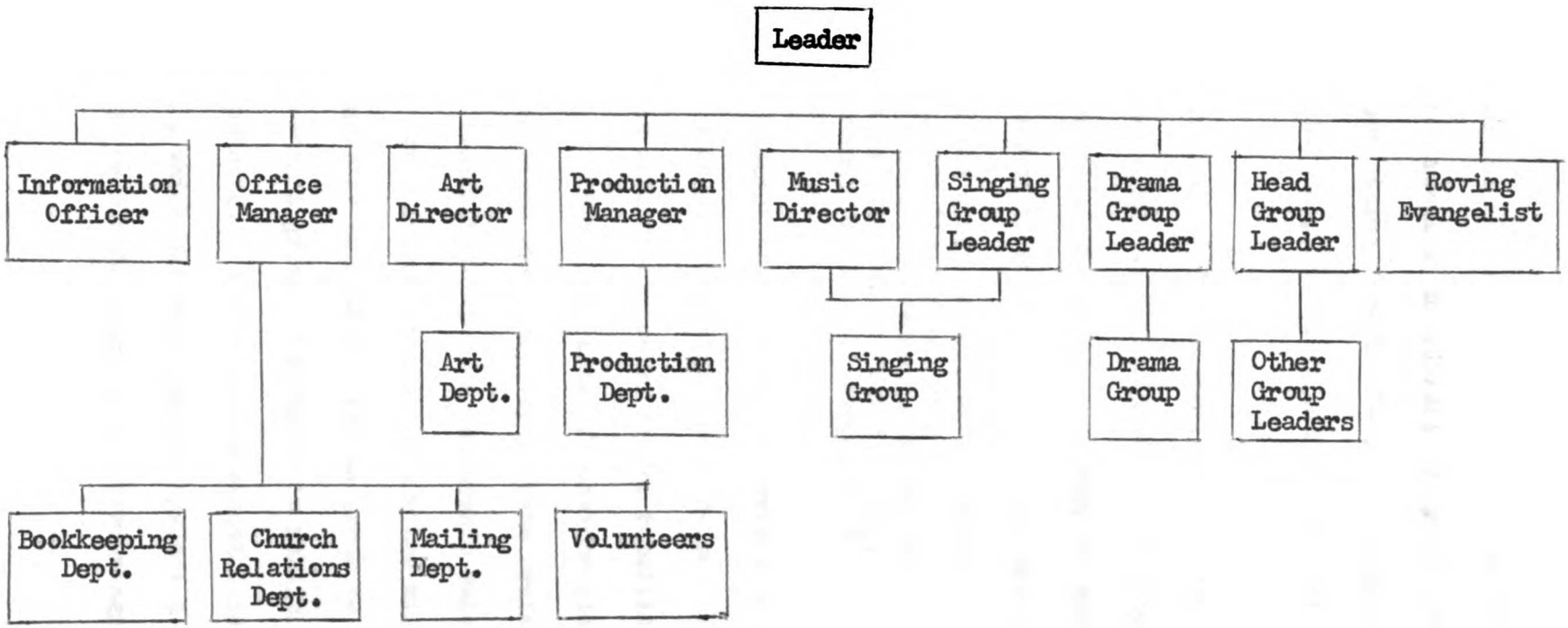
Early Jews for Jesus goals were intertraining of all members and equality of men and women in work roles, as well as allowing members to do the work that interested them, specially training for it or changing roles as desired. In actual practice, however, some roles have become specialized -- not everyone is blessed with singing talent, mechanical aptitude, or whatever. And most clerical tasks are performed by women who have office skills, while most of the group leaders are men. Still, except for the two administrative staff workers hired specifically for that purpose, all members participate in both organization work and

evangelism. For example, members of the Singing Group, home from a cross-country tour, can be seen typing letters, printing, or stuffing envelopes.

Although the group has not prepared a formal organization chart, had one existed in 1974, it might have looked somewhat like Figure 1 on the following page.

Task status in Jews for Jesus is not equated with functional importance of the work role or whether one is a volunteer or paid staff member. Rather it is associated with the desirability of the task, the amount of responsibility, or the prestige of the person performing it. Movement-oriented tasks are seen as more desirable than organization-maintenance tasks, as is typical of any movement group, and members of Jews for Jesus much prefer evangelism to office work. Considered most desirable is work that involves direct

FIGURE 1


Leader
Information Officer
Office Manager
Art Director
Production Manager
Music Director
Singing Group Leader
Drama Group Leader
Head Group Leader
Roving Evangelist
Art Dept.
Production Dept.
Singing Group
Drama Group
Other Group Leaders
Bookkeeping Dept.
Church Relations Dept.
Mailing Dept.
Volunteers

contact with potential converts or results in personal attention in the media. As a result, the Singing Group has especially high status. The lowest status work is clerical, production, and emptying the trash. Envy is not voiced openly, but I sensed its existence.

The member in charge of each specific area has authority over those working under him; one disinclined to defer to such authority is rapidly made aware of the norm. Some members are more refined in their use of authority than others. As one new member observed:

> Some of the group leaders are insecure, and they use their power when they shouldn't, just to reassure themselves. We just have to put up with it. They are growing, and it will happen less and less.

The members attempt to actualize the values of the group and freely criticize each other for failure to do so. Undesirable personal qualities include excessive pride, rebelliousness, disingenuousness, laziness, and lack of consideration for others. Among positive sanctions are public or private praise, and being assigned greater responsibility or a leadership role. Negative sanctions vary. For a forgotten task or a minor mistake, a member might be quietly confronted; for an error or emotional scene that affects the entire group, the member is publicly criticized or asked to "do penance." A more severe sanction is engineered group disapproval, which has been imposed against a few members whose behavior has been characterized as passive aggressive,

being a "troublemaker" (turning members against each other), or demonstrating lack of responsibility in the work. Mordecai initiated one such period of disapproval during a meeting at which the member involved was present. Referring to a previous meeting at which he had described the member as selfish, irresponsible, and uncooperative, Mordecai declared:

> The purpose of humiliating Maury in public is to avoid firing him. We can help by being intolerant. Watch him like a hawk; it's your duty for his character development. If he gets caught getting out of responsibility before August, he's out. Don't let him get away with anything.

By secret ballot, this member was divested of his role as a group leader until he could prove himself responsible. The most severe sanctions are being barred from the office (although social relations are allowed), and, finally, total ostracism.

The Leader

Mordecai's role as leader of Jews for Jesus is powerful and multifaceted. His power stems from his acknowledged position as leader, his administrative abilities, his personal charisma,[1] and his multiple roles in members' lives. Even though authoritarian, he is nonetheless a "brother" who is seen as "conceptually and emotionally equal with the humblest new convert;" in this regard, he exemplifies a *primus inter pares* leadership style that is typical of movement leaders (Gerlach and Hine 1970:35).

Mordecai might best be called a "charismatic bureaucrat." He says of himself, "I'm an excellent administrator; I was trained as one and it comes naturally." According to Christian tenets, his position as leader gives him the final authority in all group decisions:

> No one in the group can grant to another what I would not grant; I reserve the right to take over any function at any time as leader of the whole group, except for something that takes special expertise, like running the press. I'm the only one I consider an elder; an elder has to be married, and I prefer to reserve eldership to those trained as ministers.

However, members of Jews for Jesus also trust and respect Mordecai personally:

> If Mordecai says "jump off the bridge," you do it without questioning because you trust him enough. It's a change for everyone. I don't think there are too many people here who are used to taking authority, but no one questions Mordecai's authority -- you can gripe about it, but you trust him enough. It says very clearly in the Scriptures that you put yourself under someone's authority and you listen to him.

Such trust is inspired by Mordecai's excellent record in planning effective strategy, predicting results, and handling difficult interpersonal situations.

The charismatic aspect of Mordecai's leadership is more subtle. His charisma stems in part from his ability to synthesize and articulate the group's ideology, to inspire members in the name of the cause, and to use a higher authority (the Bible) to support

his statements. Another important factor is his close relationship with members of the group and his personal influence over many aspects of their lives; there are no distinct boundaries between his functions as leader, friend, counselor, role model, and father figure. Equally important is Mordecai's shrewd use of individual and group dynamics. On an individual basis, he uses his counseling skills to stimulate members to think about themselves. Being told about oneself is flattering and seductive, especially to young adults intent on personal exploration and growth. One member confided that

> The first time I met Mordecai, he scared the wits out of me. He told me what I was thinking and where I was going, and I thought he was God and he knew everything. I felt that way for several years.

And on a group basis, Mordecai, a confessed manipulator, has a keen sense of timing and is adept at using existing crises or creating new ones to meet his needs. He justifies such efforts as being in the group's best interests. For example, after a particularly stormy meeting, Mordecai explained his actions to me as follows:

> I got everyone mad at me for a reason -- they've all been fighting each other and refusing to help each other. Now they'll support each other. Did you notice how I picked on each one? I wasn't making up my anger, I just planned to let it loose at the meeting instead of taking it home with me and bringing it back tomorrow.

The members may be annoyed at such antics on the part of their leader, but most of them are quite aware of what he is trying to do.

In exercising his authority, Mordecai is more autocratic than some Hebrew Christian leaders, but more democratic than others. When Jews for Jesus became an independent organization after its split with the JMA, it planned to institute a more democratic decision-making policy. A group leader, conducting a weekly meeting at which Mordecai happened to be absent, announced:

> From now on, the name of this meeting is the "council" meeting instead of the "staff" meeting. It's not only a name change, but a psychological change. Mordecai's vote doesn't count more than ours; the group alone can't authorize something, but neither can Mordecai.

The name change was successfully carried out. However, the more important "psychological change," while acceptable to Mordecai in principle, was difficult for a leader accustomed to making the decisions. Indeed, Mordecai's ambivalence toward delegating his authority sometimes manifests itself in such contradictory statements as:

> I'm willing to cancel meetings for July and meet from 8 to 9 A.M. You can vote on it, but I'll still do what I want ... but I'd like your opinions.

Members' reactions to Mordecai's autocratic style, conflicting messages,[2] and obvious manipulation are mixed. Resistance is evidenced in non-cooperation, complaints, angry value conflicts, and once, even a rash of somatic problems among members.

At the same time, however, members freely argue with Mordecai, question his judgment, and offer suggestions. Mordecai's response is continual testing of his authority and frequent lectures to the group that reflect an apparent obsession with rebellion. This sort of interplay notwithstanding, though, the members are remarkably acquiescent to his demands and attitude. I was initially puzzled by this compliance, as these assertive and bright young adults are hardly passive automatons, but I came to realize that in choosing to accept Mordecai's leadership, they accept conflicting statements and manipulation as part of the reality of the group. It is a challenge to growth, and in light of the larger purpose of serving God, a mere ripple in the stream.

Recruitment and Socialization of New Members

In its first few years of existence, Jews for Jesus welcomed into the group any Christian who wanted to help. During the last six months of the study period, however, the group became increasingly more selective. It prescribed as minimal requirements that a prospective member be Jewish, be able to earn a living (or have a supporting spouse), be willing to travel, have a usable skill, and be personally compatible with the existing members. Beyond that, the group came to desire prospects who are talented, personable, and totally committed to an activist style of evangelism and willing to take risks to carry it out.

Prospective members are recruited from the ranks of persons recommended by other Hebrew Christian leaders, visitors to the group and, more recently, persons responding to an invitation in the prayer letter to "apply for work." Mordecai screens interested persons by sending them letters designed to "scare off weaklings" and encourage those who seem suitable. Likely prospects are invited to visit the group, put to work, and included in all activities. A few weeks' time is usually sufficient for a feeling-out process. If the prospective member wants to join, and the group members vote their approval, he is asked to make a time commitment of either a summer or an entire year.

New members must "earn their stripes," as Mordecai explained prior to the arrival of one new member;

> We need leaders who have gone through the struggle with us. I don't think that anyone can become part of us unless he does the work at the bottom. Bernie Simon is coming out. There's a definite way I want him handled and it will be up to Alison and Ben. Give him humble work to do, take him to campuses with broadsides, teach him to work and see how he does. Jacob, audition him for the Drama Group, he may have talent. Alison, give him cleanup tasks. The rule is, keep him busy, deeply involved, don't be too easy on him; give him deadlines, check up on him. We're talking about someone who will probably be a leader; he's bright, talented, but he needs to learn to fit in.



Mordecai's arbitrary assessment is important in determining how quickly a new member is integrated, and there is some degree of favoritism. A few new people have been actively "courted," spending much time with Mordecai and being assigned responsibility early. Others are more-or-less ignored by Mordecai after an initial meeting, and are treated more aloofly by the others; however, if they persist and prove themselves they are welcomed. Despite seniority, some members are added to the staff as soon as the group can pay for them, while others must continue to support themselves with secular jobs and volunteer their time.

Missionary and Character Training

> All of you feel called to the office
> of evangelist. We're a training cadre;
> I consider you in an apprenticeship.
> We all should be looking toward teaching.

Mordecai draws on twenty years experience as a minister and evangelist in training members of Jews for Jesus, and he considers what he labels "character training" as important as teaching evangelistic techniques. Character training is conducted on both a group and an individual basis. To the group, Mordecai speaks to the needs and problems of young Hebrew Christians using a combination of psychological and Scriptural explanations of behavior. Bible studies are often used for such teaching, but council meetings provide a workable forum as well. Self-awareness and self-assertion are important themes in Mordecai's teaching:

> You must know yourself, be in touch with your own desires, be aware of your human nature. Denial of it will cause personality disintegration. You must be willing to bring every thought into capativity to the obedience of Christ and let Christ move through you. Be aware of the things you still do as in B. C. days -- the thing that makes you most indignant in others is what you're likely to do yourself, watch for it. You can't excuse yourself for not being what you should because others around you aren't what they should be; Jesus is sufficient.

And a lecture on "the missionary personality" included the following insights:

> The three most important qualities of a missionary personality are self-control, altruism, and teachability. You must respect your calling and maintain yourself with dignity. A good personality is not just by luck, but by believing change is desirable and working toward it. A true professional is what he is all the time. An evangelist is obligated to witness, teach, and preach at any opportunity; you have no choice.

On an individual basis, Mordecai is concerned with each member's emotional growth and development of talents and skills. He maintains on each member a file that includes school transcripts, old letters, and samples of particularly fine work. In individual counselling, he is behavioristically oriented and sometimes takes a "hard-line" approach. After some particularly critical feedback, one member told me:

> It's a very hard thing to see a need in someone and to know that if you do what he needs, it will hurt him, and do it anyway. One of the reasons I respect Mordecai so much is that he can see these needs in people, and he's not afraid to gamble. Like today was a gamble -- he knows I might have left.

Mordecai will insist that a member undertake a disliked or feared task at least once; either the member will be desensitized or, if nothing else, he will have a more valid basis on which to refuse it when it comes up again.

Mordecai challenges members to think about themselves, and enjoys sharing with them his own perceptions of their behavior. The members appreciate this approach:

> Mordecai has really helped me. The self-awareness in itself has changed how I think about everything. He's said things to me that have really shocked me, or things that are just so real that it was like I'd heard them before, but why wasn't I listening? I know he's behind me -- if he didn't care, he wouldn't take the time.

In teaching techniques, Mordecai uses lecture materials from his former JMA training program to supplement "learning by doing." Training is interspersed with other activities, and the most effective method has been arranging for the more experienced members to instruct the less experienced. Didactic lectures on topics such as "the proper use of literature," "how to run an outdoor rally," and "the evangelistic interview," are read aloud and discussed in council meetings, and principles from these lectures are reviewed before evangelistic encounters by the group leader in charge.

Mordecai has expressed dissatisfaction with these training efforts. He would prefer that a cohort of trainees enter the program together to avoid the need to repeat basic material because members are at disparate levels of knowledge and experience, and he plans that future training be more formal, be held on a regular basis, and include "taking notes and quizzes."

Preparation for the intensive New York evangelism campaign planned for August 1974 presents a vivid example of Mordecai's intensive training of confrontation evangelists. Except for a skeleton crew of three who were to run the California office, all members were to participate in a month of evangelistic activity, twelve to sixteen hours a day, six days a week. The goal was to "make a dent on apathetic New York" by being as visible as possible. Activities were to include street theater and preaching, distribution of posters and literature, rallies, demonstrations, performances and speakers, and parades by members dressed as ancient prophets.

During the month before departure, the group went into high gear; members worked until late each night printing material, raising financial support, rehearsing, planning, sewing and buying "uniforms," and performing countless other tasks. Mordecai's leadership assumed militaristic dimensions as he evaluated performance, made demands, and gave conflicting messages incessantly. Interpersonal tension and sheer exhaustion ran high. To the group Mordecai said:

> This is like the Army; you'll be fined in New York if you are late or improperly dressed. We're on wartime footing.

He complained frequently about uncooperativeness and continually found it necessary to test his authority. As he explained to me:

> I'm going to specify only blue denim jackets in the meeting. It's going to cause a flap because some have gotten twill. Next time they'll follow exactly and not stray from what I've said. This group will come back from New York well-trained professionals. I've had to be very hard on them, but after New York, I won't have to worry about discipline and responsibility, they'll have internalized it.

In response to Mordecai's complaints, members of the group drafted and presented to him a "resolution of recommitment:"

> We have prayed individually and together concerning this recommitment and agree that full submission to the leadership of Mordecai Steinberg is the will of God. We agree to accept his judgments, directives, and decisions, upholding him at all times. We agree to accept and obey all orders concerning both professional and personal matters for the benefit of the effectiveness of the entire group in the furtherance of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

Frightening reports of physical threats by the JDL and conjectures of what might occur in New York underlined the need for strict discipline. This fear led to the resumption of pain training, which had been instituted earlier after episodes of physical harrassment by angry Jews. Typical of Mordecai's multi-pronged approach, pain training includes psychological preparation, pragmatic advice, and exercises. Members were told

to keep in mind the fact that hostility was directed not at them personally, but at their cause, at Jesus. They were advised about protective clothing and shoes, and taught how to hold stacks of broadsides close to their bodies to protect them from being grabbed. They practiced screaming and blowing the police whistles that had become part of their uniforms, and were instructed to desensitize themselves by hitting their own arms, harder and harder.

At the final meeting before departure, the members were asked to stand, whereupon Mordecai struck each one across the face hard enough to knock him or her over. Almost no one flinched. Afterwards, he told group members how proud of them he was, and that no one was likely to experience anything worse in New York. He hugged each person as they left. Later, seemingly shaken, he explained to me.

> I used to train missionaries in Los Angeles this way. I really had trouble hitting the girls, especially Alison, she's so soft. I have to harden them. Being responsible for thirty people is really heavy on me. They have to learn how to accept humiliation. I have to hurt them in order that they are not hurt by others -- I don't like to do it.

This exercise disturbed me when I observed it. Nevertheless, it attests to the strength of members' commitment and their trust of their charismatic leader. These characteristics demonstrate that Jews for Jesus remains a movement despite its financial success and bureaucratization.

NOTES

1. Gerlach and Hine (1970) broaden Weber's concept of charisma to suggest two types of charismatic individuals -- those treated by others as endowed with supernatural qualities, and more ordinary persons whose charisma stems from strong personal commitment. They suggest that most movement leaders are the second type, whom they call "charismatists," who strengthen those they influence, rather than being persons who possess a hypnotic sort of power that inspires devoted obedience.

2. According to Lofland (1966) contradictory statements and arbitrary decisions reinforce a leader's charisma by providing evidence of his greater knowledge, rather than discrediting him in a follower's eyes. Mordecai knowingly makes confusing statements at times to "make people think." One member stated in response, "Mordecai is the theological expert here, so he must know what he's talking about. If I don't understand, God will show me eventually."

CHAPTER V. THE FAMILY

We see conflict as a way of life; it makes us closer.

Interpersonal relationships among members of Jews for Jesus are rewarding, yet difficult, characterized by rivalry, cooperation, intimacy, and strong feelings of solidarity. These relationships reflect the same integration of divergent values and functional orientations as have been shown in the ideology and structure of the group.

Born-again Christians see themselves as "brothers and sisters in Christ," a practice common to many Christian fellowships. A family analogy, as noted by others, is appropriate for such groups, including Jews for Jesus. The group is an example of ritual kinship, a type of fictive kinship in which participants recognize a bond similar to, although not confused with actual kinship (Pitt-Rivers 1966). Members of Jews for Jesus are guided in their actions by the "ideals of brotherly love," but they also behave toward each other as real brothers and sisters; they exhibit sibling rivalry, take sides and have scapegoats, and criticize each other for behavior that might "reflect on the family."



Spheres of Relationship

Among members and persons associated with Jews for Jesus, there are three discernible levels of relationship: friends and neighbors, the extended family, and the tribe or nuclear family. Determining factors depend on the extent of involvement in the work, whether or not one is Jewish, and personal status in the group.

Friends and neighbors are those believers who participate marginally by attending Bible studies, occasionally help with the work, and are invited to ceremonial occasions. Most of the people in this category attend school or work in secular jobs, choosing not to devote the twenty hours a week necessary to be included in "the group." A few of the Hebrew Christians involved would be welcomed members if their commitment to the work increased.

The group itself can be seen as an extended family. It consists of tribe members and a number of well-liked and sometimes very close "first cousins." Among cousins are most of the Gentile volunteers, the two hired clerical workers, and a few so-called "deviants." The deviants are young Hebrew Christians who have drug or psychiatric histories and have been included in the group for short periods of time; members are supportive and attempt to help them overcome their problems.

There is a qualitative difference between members of the tribe and cousins, as pointed out by one cousin:

> There's a bit of cliquishness there. I don't know if it's because I'm new and they've all been there so long, or because I'm the first hired employee. Sometimes I feel its because they're Jewish. Like, I've been to none of their houses.

Clear criteria for inclusion in the tribe are being committed to the work and, more recently, being Jewish. The tribe does, however, include a few Gentiles who have been with the group since its inception, and hold important roles and high status. Within the tribe, although God is clearly "the Father," Mordecai is the godfather -- powerful, benevolent, and protective. The "oldest sons" (three women and two men) comprise the "quality control committee," and are the most influential members of the group. These members best fit Mordecai's concept of the Jews for Jesus ideal; they are talented, assertive, creative, articulate, attractive, and energetic Jews whose standards are very high and who push the others to achieve. The high personal status of these members is based in part on their personalities, but also on their length of time in the group, depth of commitment to the work, and extent of influence with Mordecai. The other tribe members are analogous to younger brothers and sisters, having less status and power, but cared for as important family members.

It was in respect to the friends and neighbors that I first became aware of "Jewish chauvinism" as a problem. When the number of persons attending Bible studies increased to unmanageable proportions, Mordecai voiced the concern that

> "We're being overrun with a lot of Gentiles who are "church" people; there are Gentiles and Gentiles; you are of us (to Gentile members). We don't want people whose chief participation is listening to our statements, and the peripheral people are bringing more and more. We have to figure out a way to make them uncomfortable enough to leave."

And even one tribe member (Gentile) is bothered by the problem:

> There's the fear that you're not quite anything unless you are Jewish. Giving out "honorary Jew" certificates doesn't quite allay that fear.

I suspect that the Jewish chauvinism problem is transitional, related to a search for group identity (see Postscript). Until 1973, no one seemed to care that almost half the members of Jews for Jesus were not Jewish. However, with group independence and recruitment of more Jews, there came an increased concern with image and outside criticism. The group began to sign its broadsides "Jews (and others) for Jesus." "Honorary Jew" was created as a special category, and there was a short-lived "Goyim for Jesus" campaign.[1] The group also decided that Gentile members were not to wear clothing bearing the slogan "Jews for Jesus" (although slogans such as "Jesus Made Me Kosher" were acceptable).

Responses to these changes varied. Some Gentile members denied discrimination, others privately acknowledged and said that they "understood" its necessity, and a few expressed anger. When Gentile members were asked at a council meeting whether they experienced discrimination, those responding evaded the issue by

emphasizing that the criteria of membership were hard work and commitment to the group's goals rather than being Jewish. Among Jewish members, some are outspokenly critical of Jewish chauvinism, and others are neutral. But several Jewish members feel that no more Gentiles should be allowed to join, and that "mixed marriages go against what the group is trying to do and are a bad witness to the Jewish community," "they aren't as motivated," and "they don't need the group."

The tacit solution to the above problems was the leader's decision to limit Gentiles to 25% of the group. However, some Gentile members admit that they see their participation in the group as temporary. And in any event, it seems clear that Gentile members have less to lose by leaving the group than do Jewish members. Of only four tribe members who have left, it was a Gentile who left of his own accord, accompanied by his Jewish wife. The other two who left, both Jewish, were asked to leave after being put on probation, one for erratic behavior that jeopardized the group, the other for irresponsibility in the work.

Group Dynamics

> ...[R]adicals seemed inclined to combine work, sociability, love, and recreation within the same group . . . the strength of feelings generated also led to a great intensification of neurotic interaction and conflict....(I)n all intense groups, ordinary personality conflicts, struggles for leadership, and differences in outlook and style are magnified enormously, sometimes assuming life and death proportions (Keniston 1968:152, 153).

Keniston's observations could as well refer to members of Jews for Jesus as to his young radicals. Individual Jews for Jesus say that "a lot of your growth as a Christian comes from conflict with other people." Difficulties stem from crowded and tense working conditions, personality clashes, and the conflicting values, messages, and roles that characterize the group as a whole. Gossip runs rampant throughout the group, and minor misunderstandings quickly assume crisis dimensions, but are just as quickly resolved.

Competition among members is high, each member seeking ever higher status. Mordecai gives conflicting messages about status; although he verbally downplays the entire concept, insisting that "responsibility is a functional thing," he plays on the competitiveness of members to motivate them to greater achievement. Indeed, competition among movement participants is common, especially among those having leadership capabilities. Most of the competition

> . . . stems from altruistic devotion to the cause or to the group. It is a blend of striving for self, for the group, and for the cause -- a blend so complex that neither the competitive participant nor the observer can isolate his motives (Gerlach and Hine 1970: 49).

Despite these difficulties, however, I am impressed at the thoughtful and caring manner in which the members treat each other. I was puzzled to hear complaints about the constant bickering because the observed conflict did not seem unusual. One member admitted that many members are reluctant to share interpersonal

difficulties with a non-believer. But the matter also involves differing concepts of normal and acceptable behavior. During the hectic period just prior to the New York campaign, I would have expected tempers to be flaring; another member illustrated the Jews for Jesus viewpoint:

> If we weren't Christians we'd say it's only natural if we blew up at each other, but we don't have that excuse anymore. Like, if you're angry at someone, you'd better examine deeper; like God is a tremendous analyst.

A basic problem faced by members of Jews for Jesus is how to combine the roles of friend, sibling, fellow worker, and sometimes potential mate. In the work, members are typical of their generation in that traditional sex roles are blurred. The women are encouraged to be assertive and achievement-oriented and are not barred from any roles. In fact, as observed by Mordecai:

> The women are the most powerful. Alison, Stella, Sarah -- I trust them to lead more than the men. It distresses me a little that those closest to me are women . . . (pause) .. no it doesn't, it doesn't make much difference.

The men are expected to assert their leadership abilities, but also to be spiritual, emotionally expressive, and nurturing. There seems to be more solidarity, camaraderie, and mutual support in dealing with common problems among the men than among the women. A few of the men have taken supportive roles toward the others; Stephen has been an especially effective teacher and counselor to new Christians or those having problems, while Ben and Jacob

have played an important role in helping new members control deviant behavior. Among the women, relationships are close and warm, but occur in dyads and triads.

Natural relationships between "brothers and sisters" are more difficult to maintain than same-sex relationships. Since becoming believers, members from counterculture backgrounds have had to make radical changes in their behavior and language with reference to the opposite sex. Frank discussion of sexual matters is not seen as proper between males and females, and is tempered even when speaking with others of one's own sex. Profanity is never proper. Even casual and spontaneous socializing between men and women is difficult; as one member observed:

> The group dynamics are really heavy. One of the heaviest problems of the Christian dating situation is that the moment you ask a girl out, you inevitably get on the road that ends in marriage, which puts a tremendous amount of responsibility on the success or failure of a situation. This is ridiculous and not healthy at all. The basic Christian attitude is that casual dating is frowned upon.

Members' former sexual activities are also a source of stress; many members had been sexually active before becoming believers and are at an age when most of their "unsaved" contemporaries continue to enjoy that freedom. Christians, however, are expected to abstain from premarital sexual activity. Sarah, who described herself as having been promiscuous in the past, explained that she would never invite a man for dinner without also inviting at least

one other woman. One of her concerns is her "image as a Christian" to her neighbors; another is opening the door to temptation. What makes the problem just that much worse is that, by and large, group members are attractive and personable. And for those Jews who insist that they will marry only Jewish believers, the pool of suitable partners is small indeed. As one female Gentile member concluded, with some relief:

> One of the things that is happening in the group is the concern about Jews marrying Jews, which kind of takes the pressure off me. I've decided it's not the best thing for me to marry a Jew because of the kids. If I did, I'd want to maintain a Jewish home for the kids, but legally, my kids would never be Jewish.

Since the members <u>are</u> attracted to each other despite their efforts to deny it, they resort to use of various distancing maneuvers or the erection of artifical barriers between themselves and members of the opposite sex.

In response to these underlying conflicts, Mordecai attempted to structure and formalize male/female relationships by establishing a dating code:

> The girls are to act like ladies, and the men to dress up. They should call at least a week in advance instead of showing up the same evening; you guys have been taking the girls for granted.

This effort added considerably to the tension. In addition, Mordecai is outspokenly in favor of marriage -- he has jokingly threatened to put all male names in one hat, female in another,

and hold a drawing to "pair the remaining singles on Passover" -- and has been accused of pressuring some dating couples in the marriage direction. Although most members concede the desirability of marriage, they cannot help reminiscing about the spontaneous, easy, and comfortable relationships they enjoyed with members of the opposite sex before becoming believers. Now:

> If a girl dates a guy twice in the same week or month, or more than once, people begin to talk. If I should buy a present for someone, just because I want to, it becomes a semi-proposal.

Christians believe in formal courtship of a style rare among sophisticated urban young adults today. Sol contrasted the romance and excitement of his courtship as a member of Jews for Jesus with past experiences:

> The Bible described marriage as analogous to our relationship with Him -- the commitment, and how much He would give the marriage. When I realized how much marriage had to give, I prayed, "God, I'm open to Your will about marriage, just show me who." I was very aware of the fact that I was courting her for marriage. This was something very special for me because my relationships with women up to this point had been for sex, without commitment.

Mordecai encourages short engagements, generally three to six months; in light of the sexual proscriptions, most members heartily agree. It appears that new Christian marriages are begun on a strong basis, the key being commitment. The partners believe that they have been brought together by God's will, and making their marriage work is considered a duty and a challenge; divorce is unacceptable.

Despite this motivation and the availability of an experienced marriage counselor in Mordecai, however, new marriages tend to be stressful. Role conflict and lack of privacy are the most difficult problems. Both partners in the new marriages have been fully involved in the work of Jews for Jesus, which demands much time, loyalty, and certain kinds of behavior. The role conflict is especially acute for the women, who are encouraged to be strong, assertive, and responsible in the work, yet submissive to their husbands in marriage. One young man complained:

> My wife is being asked to separate her feelings from her position, to be objective toward me as a member of the Singing Group because she's the leader. I'm the head of the family, but she's the head of the group -- it blows my mind.

In addition, new couples need privacy to develop their relationship. Ben and Marie have lived alone only four months of the two-and-one-half years of their marriage, while Sol and Rebecca spent their first three months of marriage on an exhausting cross-country tour accompanied by four other members. In the opinion of one member, the men have adjusted to marriage better than the women because the men have a strong male model, while each married woman owes allegiance to two men, her husband and Mordecai.

Rituals and Social Events

Within the observance of rituals[2] one is most aware of the Jews for Jesus "family." The group's rituals have developed and increased in number with time, and they express the Hebrew Christian identity and illustrate the syncretism which is characteristic of the group.

Prayer is the most common ritual. Every meal is preceded by a blessing, recited aloud in the assembled group, said silently in a public place or a non-believer's home. Each weekly meeting and Bible study are also begun in prayer. Before an actual prayer session, "prayer requests" are taken, and members volunteer to pray for each other. Group prayer sessions vary in emotional tone from routine but serious, to eloquent, moving, and tearful. The subjects of prayer at these sessions constitute a valid index to current concerns; members thank God for help in a successful endeavor or pray for the salvation of a parent or friend, a healing, or help in attaining a job or even a new car. On a more spontaneous basis, the members request God's assistance at the beginning of each group activity to ensure its success. During stressful periods, a member may suggest that the group assemble early in the morning for an hour of prayer together, followed by a day of fasting. And an individual is apt to take a moment to pray before or during a difficult endeavor. At a Bible study on the subject, the member teaching the study had this to say about prayer:

> We are committed to pray. If there's a problem, ask God to make it better. It's His responsibility to help you do what you've asked Him. God is the only one who can allow you to have a good prayer life; you can't do it yourself. God not only gives answers to prayers, but gives prayers too; it's a Biblical precedent to ask the Lord to teach us to pray. Give God the opportunity.

On Sundays, each member is expected to attend services at the church of his or her choice, unless there are conflicting performances or speaking engagements. Most members belong to local churches, and some regularly attend synagogue as well. However, Mordecai occasionally has to remind the group of this weekly obligation:

> All of you should attend worship on the Lord's day. Synagogue is not required unless you want to. We have to show the church we consider ourselves part of it, but this is secondary. Primarily, worship on Sunday is a matter of obedience, whether you get anything out of it or not. Your devotional life is between you and God. Some praying, some Bible reading -- every day or however often you need it, but it's personal. If you don't like this church, find one you do, but go. That's an admonition from an elder.

Recurring calendrical events include group celebration of religious and some secular holidays. Members consider it important that they attend services together on Easter, Christmas, and the Jewish High Holidays. Among secular American holidays, a Thanksgiving feast for the whole group has become a tradition. Other occasions for gathering socially have included New Year's Eve, a July 4th picnic,

or a party planned around a member's birthday or to hear the Singing Group's newest songs.

Music is a vital part of all social occasions and rituals. Most of the music has been composed by Stephen, the group's "resident musical genius." Mordecai was instrumental in encouraging Stephen to write music that would be distinctively Hebrew Christian, as traditional church music does not express the Jewish element of Hebrew Christianity. Stephen's music, usually in a minor key, has the sound of Israeli folk songs, with lyrics based on scriptures. It can be slow and hauntingly beautiful or fast and lively.

The annual Jews for Jesus Passover Seder integrates Jewish and Christian ritual elements and is stamped with the group's lively style. Seders are attended by group members, persons who attend Bible studies, and other close friends. The women prepare a lavish feast that includes traditional Jewish festival foods in addition to those required for the service. A special Haggadah (Passover service) includes most elements of an abridged version used in many Jewish households -- the story of the Exodus, songs, "the four questions" and four glasses of wine, and "leaving the door open for Elijah." The service is ably led in English and Hebrew by one of the men. Christian elements are inserted in the basic service to illustrate "how Jesus fulfills the Passover." For example, after the blessing for the washing of hands,

a reader continues, "Jesus poured the water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet . . . ." And after the meal, the blessing and third cup are followed by: "And the same way, He took the cup after they had eaten saying 'the cup which is poured out for you is the new Covenant in my blood . . . .'"

A typical Seder is characterized by warm, even boisterously playful good feelings between people. After dinner and the service, the rug is rolled back for Israel folk dancing to the music of Stephen on piano and Bernie on clarinet. Mordecai encourages members to perform for the rest of the group and they respond with an impressive display of music and dance talent.

Thus far in Jews for Jesus, life cycle ceremonies have been limited to marriages. Mordecai has, however, shared his thoughts on other rituals. He bemoans the fact that there is currently no appropriate Hebrew Christian setting for religious training of children, baptism,[3] and other rituals; he has suggested that a Hebrew Christian church would provide the necessary setting. When asked how he visualizes a Hebrew Christian funeral, he said:

> When we have our first funeral, you'll walk away feeling good. It will be beautiful, you'll be glad you died then. A real Christian funeral has a triumphant mood, not much grief, because someone is going to heaven. But I'd include some of the traditional things, like prayers to remind us of the solemnity of the occasion, and the tearing of clothes to symbolize a tearing that can't be mended, and seven days of mourning.[4]

Marriage between group members have been gala affairs, blending Jewish and Christian elements in the Jews for Jesus style. As in the Passover Seder, the basic structure is Jewish, the Christian message being inserted at key points in the service. Premuptial preparations include planning the service, which is written by Mordecai to integrate traditional elements and the couple's ideas for their own unique service. Mordecai conducts premarital counseling, which is based on a short-answer questionnaire entitled "Checklist for Marriage Planning." This document seeks opinions in areas of possible conflict, such as relationships with parents, tastes in politics and entertainment, finances, career and family plans, and "areas of needed character improvement." Religion and sex are not discussed.

Jews for Jesus stages weddings as a self-sufficient family. Except for a lack of alcoholic beverages (for the sake of other fundamentalist guests), the weddings are typically Jewish, with good food, dancing, and several hours of joyous celebration. Invitations, reception refreshments (including the traditional chopped liver, bagels, and noodle kugel), photography, and music are all provided by group members. Mordecai, assisted by Bernie as cantor, conducts the service in rabbinical robes, under a huppa (marriage canopy) set up in an outdoor location or nearby church. The service includes a processional to Jews for Jesus music, an invocation in Hebrew and English and the Kiddish (inaugeral prayer over a cup of wine), an address on "the nature

of marriage" and marriage vows, and a closing prayer in which the whole congregation participates to symbolize the supportive role of the community. After a benediction, the groom crushes a wine glass under his heel (symbolizing destruction of the Second Temple) and everyone shouts "Mazel Tov!" The reception includes a blessing, a fine meal, and Israeli folk dancing accompanied by group musicians. The "first dance" is the Hora.

Special elements that distinguish Jews for Jesus marriage ceremonies are "adoption" and a special "charge" to the bride and groom. In two weddings in which Jew married Gentile, the Gentile member was adopted into Hebrew Christianity by recitation of the Shema (verse that begins "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one) and a statement of commitment:

> That your children shall be Jewish, we call on you to join the household of Israel through marriage and faith that you no longer consider yourself to be a Gentile, but a Hebrew Christian. By reciting from the Law and the Writings, you show your acceptance of our culture and obligation to maintain a Jewish home according to Scripture, your conscious faith, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The charge to the bride and groom, specially written by Mordecai for each couple, describes the strengths each brings to the union and suggests areas of personal improvement and goals to strive for in the marriage. The groom's role as the head of the family is

clearly spelled out and the bride vows to love and honor her husband, and to submit to his authority, a basic fundamentalist precept that is often unacceptable to generational peers. In each ceremony, the bride and groom acknowledge that "God brought them together" and "put it into their hearts to be married."

NOTES

1. Jews for Jesus describes "goyim" as "Gentiles who love Jesus in a Jewish way." Among Jews, the term is slightly derogatory. The campaign included a new broadside, a demonstration led by the Gentile group leader, and T-shirts silkscreened with the slogan "Goyim for Jesus."

2. Ritual is used here in the broad sense to include what some writers call ceremony.

3. In contrast to most other groups of Jesus People, baptism is played down in Jews for Jesus. Mordecai feels that common Jesus Movement practices of baptism in the ocean or a swimming pool "lack decorum" and a Hebrew Christian baptism should be conducted in a proper setting.

4. Rending a piece of black cloth is a symbol of bereavement in Jewish funerals. The first seven days following the funeral are a time of sorrow when the grieving family remains aloof from normal concerns, and is visited by comforters who bring food and conduct worship in the household.

CHAPTER VI. THE COMMITMENT PROCESS

> I traveled with some friends who were vegetarians and into yoga and the occult. They had a big cross and would pray to Jesus, as a good person. I think it's really common for Jewish kids not to know the difference in the area of the supernatural.

So far, this study has focused on Jews for Jesus as a group -- what it is, what it does, and how it functions. Equally important is a focus on individual members of the group. A significant question is how their participation in the group has affected the members; this matter is discussed in Chapter VII. Before that question can be adequately addressed, however, it is necessary to consider why members were attracted to a religious movement in the first place, and what changes they experienced in becoming believers.

A direct result of their embracing the Jews for Jesus ideology is that members accept a socially marginal role. However, a marginal social position does not necessarily depend on pre-existing marginal psychological traits or generate new ones, especially for those who have chosen such a situation as adults. And although marginality can create instability, it can also stimulate creativity (Park 1928). For example, members of Jews for Jesus do not experience

self-pity or insecurity. Instead, their sensitivity to their marginal situations serves as a challenge to develop and express their ethnic identity and mission. Jews for Jesus also resembles a peer self-help group in that its members are regarded as deviant by many Jews, and it is in part organized on the basis of mutual support. As such, it illustrates Spiegel's (1976) observation that mutual support groups based on a common stigma develop in the direction of public assertion and political activism, such assertion resulting in increased self-esteem of members.

Predisposing Factors

Some social scientists suggest that deviance or relative deprivation is a necessary precondition for a conversion experience and recruitment to a religious movement (Lofland 1966, Peterson and Mauss 1973, Bookman 1974, etc.). One study suggests that only contact with a committed participant need occur (Gerlach and Hine 1970). And in reference to young Hebrew Christians who have made recent commitments, some Jews prefer to attribute the phenomenon to rebellion or to poor Jewish identification. I agree that there are predisposing factors, but for Jews for Jesus at least, I suggest that a focus on broader societal and historical issues is more productive than a search for deviance, deprivation, or rebellion in individual members. However, since these factors cannot be ruled out in some cases, it is appropriate to examine them before discussing the broader aspects of the problem.

Deviance, Deprivation, and Rebellion

In the eyes of many Jews, members of Jews for Jesus are "apostates" and socially or psychologically deviant. If deviant behavior is behavior so labeled by a community (Becker 1962), then indeed, members are deviant for having become Christians. But are these young adults really deviant psychologically? Based on my own clinical training and experience with adolescents and young adults hospitalized for drug abuse, I assessed[1] the deviance of members from the standpoint of three criteria commonly used by both the general public and clinicians: (1) arrest record, (2) drug abuse, and (3) seeking of psychiatric help.

Arrest record. Seven members have been arrested -- one for drunk and disorderly conduct, one for defacing public property (spray painting political slogans), the same member for shoplifting (spray paint), and five for possession of small amounts of marijuana or alcohol -- and all were found guilty as charged. One young man was incarcerated for a year in the Louisiana State Penitentiary, ostensibly because of "local politics;" the others all received suspended sentences. That seven members out of a group of twenty-seven have been arrested may seem significant on first impression. However, since arrest was common in the counter-culture during the late sixties and early seventies, the number is not disproportionate.

Drug abuse. Most members with counterculture backgrounds have used psychedelic drugs for the purposes of enhancing social interaction, personal pleasure, self-realization and exploration, and "spiritual growth." A few used amphetamines, barbiturates, and heroin. However, even those who took drugs heavily, including heroin, were not physically or psychologically addicted. All members were able to stop their drug use if desired, and some had done so before becoming believers.

Psychiatric help. Six members of the group have sought psychiatric help in periods of distress or for personal growth. One member suffered a psychotic break for which he was hospitalized a week; this member is one of two who experienced difficulty as a result of the use of large amounts of LSD. Some neurotic conflicts were verbalized during the life history interviews, but I suspect that these conflicts were emphasized as a way of witnessing, to illustrate how lives had improved with Jesus; as a way of legitimating the new reality by reinterpreting past events as leading into it (Berger and Luckmann 1967); or as a result of considerable psychological sophistication and comfort in sharing conflicts openly with the interviewer. In general, most members seem quite healthy psychologically; those few who are less so are working out their conflicts through the group. Although some of the former "street people" describe their past "sins" in great detail, the sins of members of Jews for Jesus appear to be within normal limits for their lifestyles and generation.

Bookman (1974) states that relative deprivation (Aberle 1962, Glock 1964) (together with contact with a committed participant) was a predisposing factor for her sample of Jesus Movement participants. She reports that 88 percent of her sample experienced relative deprivation, most of which was ethical or psychic deprivation, illustrating the point by describing numerous psychological crises among subjects at the time of conversion. While I disagree with her relative deprivation explanation, I did look at the role of a crisis in commitment among my subjects. In twenty-seven life history interviews I recorded, only four people can legitimately be said to have experienced such a crisis: one reports an "identity crisis;" another an existential depression and family strife; a third, breaking his engagement to be married; and the fourth, an intense fear of being raped in prison.

Considering primary relationships and family styles that might result in other types of deprivation, my data show that all members of Jews for Jesus were raised in middle-class nuclear family households, although in a few instances, a grandparent or other relative lived with the family. Several members, especially those from New York, recall close relationships with relatives in the area, reflected by large family gatherings on holidays and perhaps a shared house in the Catskills for the summer. Three members lived with only their mothers from early adolescence -- two fathers died and the parents of one member were divorced. Family closeness varied from situations of excellent communication, mutual support,

and much time spent together, to misunderstanding, strain, and distance. Even in discordant families, however, parents were still perceived by members as caring for and trying to do their best by their children; no member felt completely rejected. Closeness often was not hampered by generational value conflicts. For example, Kezia, Alison, Jacob, and Rietze describe their families as having been very warm and tightly knit, with good communication and many mutual activities, despite the children's counterculture activities that conflicted with parental values.

The range of family styles was also typical of middle-class families of the members' generation. The fundamentalist families were the most authoritarian, with children committed to family group values and meeting parental expectations of strict discipline. Most other families were more permissive, having been influenced by the more relaxed style of child-rearing popularized by Dr. Benjamin Spock in the post-war period. Parents of a few members were unable to impose discipline. Characteristic of all the families was the theme expressed by the Yiddish expression "Alles für die Kinder."

Thus, families of members of Jews for Jesus, although varied, were generally typical of American middle-class families. I found no common economic or emotional deprivation that might explain members' commitments.

Some Jews suggest that the "defection" of young Jews to the Jesus Movement can be explained by lack of Jewish identification, poor Jewish educational background, or rebellion against this background. Based on my data, the range of identification and religious practices among the families of members of Jews for Jesus is typical of the American Jewish population as a whole. Indeed, my data compare closely with the findings of a multidimensional study of three generations of American Jews conducted by Goldstein and Goldscheider (1968).

Ideologically, the three traditional divisions of Judaism are blurred in the minds of most American Jews, and religious behavior is inconsistent. For example, Sarah's Orthodox family kept a kosher kitchen and lit Sabbath candles weekly, but did not regularly attend synagogue or provide Jewish education for the children. On the other hand, Bernie's Reform family participated in all home rituals and in weekly synagogue services. The pattern for most families was typical of second and third generation Jewish families in that synagogue attendance was limited to the High Holidays, weddings, and Bar Mitzvahs.

Insofar as celebration of home rituals is concerned, most members of Jews for Jesus grew up in moderate, rather than traditional or secular families. Stella's family was more traditional:

> When I was growing up, I was never allowed to write on the Sabbath, although other things were ok. We had three sets of dishes, too, and two sets of silverware -- the milchisch, the fleischisch, and the Pesach dishes. We used them that way til I broke enough dishes so we mixed and matched. But we didn't have two sets of pots and pans. I don't think there was enough understanding, and it was mostly for my sake. When I clearly began to show the earmarks of someone who could care less, it became less and less important. But there were always Chanukah licht and Shabbos licht -- my mother would leave them burning when she went to play mah jongg on Friday nights.

Members are also typical of their generation in that few are able to converse in Yiddish. Present use is limited to a liberal scattering of Yiddish expressions; if a member learns a language, the choice is Hebrew. Jewish education is highly valued, however, about 80 percent of members having had at least some training. All the men and one woman studied Hebrew and celebrated Bar or Bas Mitzvahs. Most members attended "Sunday school," three attended Cheder, and one attended Talmud Torah (Jewish parochial school).

Two members grew up in secular families that rejected all ritual, ideological, and organizational dimensions of Jewish identity. Their parents, well-educated professionals, considered themselves intellectuals and were militant atheists. For the others, however, the explanation that the Jesus Movement attracts Jews with little Jewish background or identification is invalid.

In reference to rebellion, Jewish members of the group are rebelling against their Jewish backgrounds in the sense that they oppose the secular type of Judaism and middle-class, upward-aspiring values they observed in their parents and synagogues. This style of Judaism is in decided contrast to the commitment and religious fervor observed in the Jesus Movement. I suspect that if these young adults had come in contact with a Chasidic movement of equal proportions and evangelical activity among their peers, they would have been similarly attracted.

The Broader View

If deviance, deprivation, and rebellion can be minimized as predisposing factors among most members of Jews for Jesus, what can be offered instead to explain the members' consideration and acceptance of the Christian message? I suggest the coexistence of the following factors: (1) ideological openness, (2) behavioral openness, and (3) contact with a committed participant, the timing being crucial. Thus, each member was presented with the message at a time in his life when he was perhaps most open -- ideologically and behaviorally -- to receive it.

Ideological openness is a state of mind in which one is receptive to and eager to explore a variety of ideas, however new or even contradictory they may be. In the context of Jewish members of Jews for Jesus it includes an absence of strong negative identifications of Christ. On a broader plane, ideological openness is characteristic of a relatively large segment of modern youth.

Most Jewish members of Jews for Jesus are second-generation American born and did not grow up with blatant anti-Semitism or in an insulated Jewish community. While Gentile members would not be expected to have been exposed to negative definitions of Jesus, even among some Jewish members, Jesus had been presented neutrally as a prophet by parents. The other Jewish members had rejected strongly negative definitions as part of a general rejection of parental intolerance of associations with people or beliefs of other religious groups. In addition, once having begun living on their own, most of these young adults stopped participating in Jewish rituals and belonged to no exclusively Jewish peer groups.

Keniston suggests a theme for the generation born in the early post-World War II years:

> The facts of change, affluence and violence are a backdrop against which we can try to understand the sometimes desperate search for meaning in today's advantaged youth. And the term "search" seems to characterize their position as a generation far better than concepts like alienation and rebellion. . . . . For these young men and women, it is not enough to be secure, advantaged, well-educated, and prosperous. Although they find it hard to define, they want something more (1969:49).

Similarities among these young adults are to be found not in their actual behavior, beliefs, or goals, but rather in the way they approach life. This generational style is characterized by an emphasis on flux and change, including deliberate psychological change, in an effort to deal with rapid historical change:

> On the one hand, post-modern youth floats with the tide, remains open to the changing world . . . .(yet) each variant of the post-modern style involves an effort to find an anchor in the cross-tides of history (Keniston 1968: 276, 277).

Such young men and women consider themselves parts of movements, not of organizations. They attempt to include within their personalities and movements every opposite, every possibility, and to synthesize and integrate rather than to repress and dissociate. For example, whereas most older Jews find absurd the idea that a Jew can believe in Jesus, many younger Jews find it less of a problem.

In the late sixties, the most visible and influential variants of what Keniston calls the "post-modern style" were the counter-culture and the New Left. But in the mid-seventies, a new conservatism is evident among American youth; there is a turning inward, a disillusionment both with social action that has failed to create real social change, and with the counterculture as a viable alternative lifestyle. New variations of this style, which are ideologically and directly connected with it, have appeared in the upsurge of youth culture religious movements. Ideologically, these movements share with the counterculture syncretism, spontaneity, anti-materialism, warm and holistic interpersonal relationships, and a rejection of rationalism. Other factors are evangelism and the search for subjective religious experience. For example, counterculture participants who use drugs often voice a common sentiment: "If everyone stayed stoned, there would be no wars."

New Left activists and "Jesus Revolution" participants share commitment to a single ideology, terminology, an activist approach, and confrontation methods such as rallies, demonstrations, and the distribution of literature to publicize their causes.

These common factors make it relatively easy to move from one system of values to the other. In joining a religious group, however, counterculture participants sacrifice tolerance for the searches of others ("do your own thing"), drugs, irresponsibility, and promiscuity in the name of their new ideologies. Some are relieved to give up peer group practices with which they have been personally uncomfortable; others decide that such self-denial is worthwhile for the sake of being "saved" or committing themselves to "the one right way."

Most members of Jews for Jesus moved easily into a Christian commitment from counterculture and political lifestyles. Many were involved in an Eastern religion or the occult and, in retrospect, suggest that these beliefs and practices helped lead them to Jesus. Whether the search was inward, for "instant karma" (with or without psychedelic drugs) or outward, the supernatural was an accepted, if not sought, part of the experience. In the words of Simon, for example:

> I had some supernatural experiences with Transcendental Meditation. I was sure it was a panacea. If the world didn't start practicing it soon, we weren't going to make it. I was a fanatic about it.

In eclectic counterculture ideologies, Jesus is often explicitly included:

> We read the Tibetan Book of the Dead. We decided that Jesus was a hippie, He had long hair and sandals, and believed in love. (Rietze)

> I was throwing the I Ching every day, and I kept getting the same hexagram, "you will meet the great man." I asked people "who is the great man?" and people kept telling me Jesus. (Sol)

As can be seen then, members of Jews for Jesus were ideologically open to the Christian message before they were confronted with it. It was not negatively defined; even those from strongly identified Jewish backgrounds were willing to listen. Among counterculture participants, their world views already included a belief in the supernatural, sometimes even Jesus, and their values emphasized irrational or subjective experience.

Behavioral openness refers to the emergent life stage of "youth" (Keniston 1968) made possible by modern society. Youth is characterized by psychological adulthood but sociological adolescence. Thus, while a youth has mastered such adolescent tasks as achieving a sense of inner identity, solidarity with others, and a demonstrated capacity to work, play, and love, he has postponed making adult commitments to a career, marriage, and a family in favor of continuing self-exploration. However, only young adults who are economically, socially, and psychologically privileged are afforded the luxury of such a stage. Behavioral

openness also means a dedication to experimentation, and a sometimes relentless effort to try out for oneself any ideology or experience that sounds plausible.

At the time of their decisions, few members of Jews for Jesus were working in jobs for which they had been trained, and even those few did not consider such jobs their careers. Most of the others, having worked at a variety of jobs, had not settled on a specific vocational area. For example, one of Stella's lifelong talents and interests has been art. She had taken a job drawing for a display company, but found the job less than fulfilling:

> It was just a disappointment after a while. I didn't have enough to bring it, and it didn't have near enough to give me -- it just wasn't important enough to be doing. I went through a number of "what is important enough to be doing? Will I ever find anything? Is this the best I can do?" I decided I couldn't answer that question yet, so I thought I'd go back to school.

And in terms of marriage or a committed monogamous heterosexual relationship, none of the members were involved in a relationship that could be considered stable or fulfilling at the time the Christian message was presented. Thus, there were no strong prior commitments that might militate against making the Christian commitment, a decision that could -- and probably would -- have disrupted a pre-existing career or relationship.

Besides ideological and behavioral openness, the other element necessary to the decision is contact with a person already committed. My findings agree with those of Lofland (1966), Gerlach and Hine (1970), and Bookman (1974), all of whom point out that intense social interaction with an already-committed participant of a movement is essential for recruitment, and usually the relationship is a close one. For example, six members of Jews for Jesus had been influenced to consider the Christian message by an already-committed sibling, and six others were influenced by friends of long standing. Very few Jewish members had had contact with Hebrew Christian missionaries or Jews for Jesus; rather, most became believers through the Jesus Movement. No one in the group became a believer solely through the media, missionary literature, or independent discovery of the Bible; while these influences might have been helpful, the crucial social factor for each member was a relationship with one or more believers.

In sum, analysis of predisposing factors for members of Jews for Jesus reveals that rather than being obvious psychological deviants, deprived persons, or rebels, these young adults are representative of their generation. A search for meaning is evidenced in generational values and participation in counter-culture lifestyles, most of which have given way to the upsurge of religion in the seventies. As the religious motif was not emphasized in their ethnically Jewish but secular families,

they were open to the Christian message when it was presented. Rather than participating in a "passing fad," however, these young adults remain Hebrew Christians -- which can only be explained by consideration of the process and effects of commitment.

Elements of Commitment

The process of commitment[2] varied to some extent among group members so I prefer to describe four selected elements of commitment: (1) contact with the message, (2) the incubation period, (3) the decision, and (4) the first year as a Christian, which is the most intense period of socialization and identity change.

First contact with the message. For the commitment process to begin, one must be sufficiently attracted to the message to take it seriously. Among members of Jews for Jesus, the combination of the content of the message and a relationship to its bearer assured its consideration. Some members were most attracted by the ideas expressed. One liked the idea of salvation, others the promise that God would answer their prayers; still others wanted "the truth." These members eagerly read copies of the New Testament or The Last Great Days of the Planet Earth[3] given to them by friends. Other members were initially attracted by the charisma of the person or persons expressing the message. Intense commitment is obvious and communicable and lends a special Gestalt to a group so committed, as illustrated in Stephen's comments:

> I also felt myself quite comfortable with these people -- not that their relationships with each other were perfect, but that they related to one another with a consideration, maturity and love, and gentleness that had been missing. It meant a lot to me. Gradually as I learned through my reading and discussion that their faith had an intellectual integrity, I began to entertain the idea that perhaps my sense of alienation was a spiritual level. I had never thought of that before.

The incubation period. After a person seriously considers the Christian message, there comes a time when he realizes that a decision must be made -- he must either make the commitment or forget about the whole thing. The period that culminates in this decision varies in length and is characterized by conflict, soul-searching, and perhaps intense discussion with others.

The shortest incubation period among members was three days. On a Christmas vacation in California, Stella was invited to a Bible study by two Jesus People who were old friends of her traveling companion. She decided to attend out of boredom and curiousity, and afterward, having no place at which to stay, she accepted the offer of a bed in a Jesus commune. She was given a New Testament and read it avidly all weekend, reporting later that "I read it like I had read Edgar Cayce; I had to know if it was true." By Sunday, she was convinced and made her commitment to God in prayer.

The longest incubation period was an agonizing eight months. Simon attended a Hebrew Christian Bible study with his Gentile fiancee, hoping that they would meet other mixed couples.

He was intrigued with the ideas presented, and he looked up Isaiah 53 in his "Jewish Bible" at home. Torn in two directions, he continued to attend Hebrew Christian Bible studies, but began weekly study sessions with a rabbi as well. He finally decided in favor of the Christian ideology, but postponed a commitment because he realized the life changes it would involve and he feared hurting his parents. Finally, after "God threw a flying tackle at me" (he was nearly hurt in a freak accident), he made his commitment.

Resistance to the message was common. Some members reported peer pressure, acknowledging natural as well as supernatural influences:

> I would have walked by it if Kathy hadn't kept nebbishing me about it, day in, day out. I finally decided to go to the Bible to prove her wrong. It never dawned on me that I'd ever believe it, let alone turn into a fanatic like her. But everywhere I turned, she was right. I believed it was probably true, but I knew what kind of a commitment it would mean and I wasn't willing to make it; it would interfere with all my plans.

The decision. A similar sequence of events is reported by members making their commitments in the last few years. After realizing the necessity of making a decision "to find out the truth," each member prayed to God to show His existence and asked forgiveness for his sins. In every instance, the member either perceived a sign that God had "heard" or, more often, simply accepted a physical experience -- a sense of joy or peace -- as proof of God's response.

Although emotional reactions at the time varied from catharsis to "little feeling," members "knew" they had found "the truth." Some made commitments to Jesus at the point of decision, some later. However, some members reported confusion about what they should do next. They needed to be told by another Christian that in this act of prayer, they had been "saved."[4]

The specific date of the decision is important; it is seen as one's "birthday," the day he is "born-again." This symbolic rebirth can be seen as a rite of passage, including separation, liminality, and reintegration (Van Gennep 1960). Rites of passage often incorporate death metaphors. In declaring oneself a sinner and asking God to take over his life, one separates from secular relationships and kills the "old self" to become a babe in Christ. A young Christian experiences identity diffusion[5] and conflicts and must be taught by "older Christians." I visualize as liminal the period from the decision through approximately the first year as a believer, when the young Christian has sufficiently internalized his Christian identity to feel more comfortably integrated in his Christian community.

The first year. Identity, rather than being static, is a continuous process involving the integration of new experiences and interactions with one's self-concept, values, and modes of behavior. The identity change implicit in religious commitment is most strikingly illustrated in Jewish members of Jews for Jesus;

for these members, the liminal period was especially difficult, involving culture shock and value conflicts. For Gentile members, the change was not so abrupt. In the words of Rebecca,

> Even in my sophomore year of college I wasn't really interested in letting God rule my life; I was still playing games. It's not uncommon for Gentiles who become believers to not really be into it for a while. But for Jewish believers it's such a transformation -- you either go all the way or you forget about it altogether.

A qualitative difference in identity change between Jewish and Gentile group members is analogous to that found by Travisano (1970) in his comparative study of Hebrew Christians and Jewish Unitarians. He suggests that Hebrew Christians have "converted," or have adopted a pervasive identity based on a change from one symbolic universe to another. Jewish Unitarians, in contrast, have experienced "alternation," in which a new dimension has merely been added to the same symbolic universe and identity. While Gentile members now see themselves as saved persons with deep faith, they have not experienced a great change in world view. Jewish members, on the other hand, have embraced a new world view that includes Jesus and Satan, heaven and hell, and a new book that outlines a system of ethics and values. The new Christian identity becomes central to almost all interactions.

One manifestation of commitment is a primacy of concern with the belief system. Commitment involves a cognitive restructuring that is based on cognitive closure, a sense of finality at having

found "the truth." In the religious perspective, "the basic axiom is everywhere the same -- he who would know must first believe" (Geertz 1966:27). The new ideology becomes a matter of personal responsibility and daily concern, and every event is interpreted in terms of it; failure is seen as a "test" of one's commitment, faith, devotion and courage (Festinger, et al. 1956, Lofland 1966, Gerlach and Hine 1970).

However, the process of integrating the new ideology is not without difficulty, as illustrated by Rietze:

> I still felt abortion was right, although older Christians said it was wrong. They also told me I had to get baptized, but I didn't feel like getting baptized. It was very confusing -- maybe all my values and attitudes are wrong? Maybe I have to chop off my head and start over? You figure older Christians know what they are talking about until you finally realize that you don't have to rely on anything anybody says. You can ask God and He'll show you eventually.

For Tobias, the liminal period was an uncomfortable struggle to identify with the Christian community and to achieve a coherent sense of self:

> It was murder -- everyone was so straight, so corny, so square. Nobody knew what it was like to be Jewish and believe in Jesus. It was as if all the standards of my life were torn down and I looked at them in an entirely new light. Drugs: at first I thought I was totally free of them and would never be tempted again. But when traveling in Iran, one night everyone was smoking hashish, and my body was going "Oh Yes." I tried reading my Bible, thinking I was going to fight it, but then I got despondent when I realized what I really wanted to do. I prayed, "Forgive me, Father, it's still part of me."

Socialization was easier and more rapid for those who immediately became involved in a Christian fellowship. These members had older Christians from whom to learn, and evangelical activity, Bible study, and group prayer in which to participate. In the words of Stella:

> I didn't feel everything I said; I jumped right into it. I knew I believed the thing, and I thought "if you act the way they act, it will make more sense to you." It was probably important that I spent the next four months in that kind of an environment (commune) because I had hardly anything else to think about besides being there and learning about the Bible.

In addition to a change in world view, commitment involves significant behavior change. In defining themselves as Christians, members demonstrated their new identities to others by symbolic acts and assuming risks in their interactions. For example, a member's telling his family and friends of his new beliefs is an act from which there can be no graceful retreat. "Witnessing" reinforces commitment through verbalization of beliefs, and motivates the believer to live up to Christian tenets. Ben, for example, flushed his dope down the toilet to announce his new identity. Some of the men cut their long hair; some of the women suddenly became very conservative in their manner of dress. For many members, being a Christian meant giving up elements of their former lifestyles, such as indiscriminate sex, drugs, smoking, and profanity. Some members report their desires for such things had "disappeared" immediately; others made more gradual behavior changes as they perceived "God's leading."

Several group members describe themselves as having been "fanatics" at first. Totally preoccupied with their new beliefs, they read the Bible continuously and were tactless, insensitive, or obnoxious in witnessing to everyone, without regard for the hapless victim's feelings. They now express some remorse for having been "spiritual scalphunters." Stella said:

> And believe me, my touch wasn't exactly light in those days. I was about as subtle as, "It's too bad a nice person like you is going to hell." I was sincere, but I daresay I was a little self-righteous about being saved. I was in that stage where I thought Mordecai was a bit worldly because he owned a television set.

After the liminal period as a Christian, members are able to integrate new behavior patterns and become more natural, less self-conscious; interactions with others become more sensitive and flexible. These changes are typical of most persons who, in religious commitment, have radically changed their belief systems and lifestyles. Following this stage of development, however, the characteristics of the particular group involved tend to govern subsequent personal changes. For members of Jews for Jesus, these changes are explored in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. My assessment is based on seven years of experience as a psychiatric nurse-psychotherapist in both inpatient and community settings, ranging from work with relatively healthy young adults to chronic schizophrenics.

2. Lofland (1966) and Gerlach and Hine (1970) have suggested seven step schemes for the commitment process. While both schemes are interesting, my data fit neither one in all respects.

3. (Lindsay 1970) This popular book is a recruitment tool in the Jesus Movement. It is reportedly convincing in its interpretations of current events as a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

4. Whether or not one was baptized right away depended on his social circumstances. Many Jesus Movement participants are baptized in the ocean or a swimming pool, as have been some members of the group. Others were advised to wait.

5. Identity diffusion, used in the sociological sense, is the process of dissolving the old identity and tearing down old values to open one to experiences involved in the new identity. This is culturally induced in rites of passage.

CHAPTER VII. THE PATHWAY TO ADULTHOOD

> Integration, whether of the self, the community, or the universe, is a characteristic, explicit religious concern. Geoffrey Lienhardt 1968:448

Integration, in the sense of synthesis, fusion, or combination, characterizes the personal changes experienced by individual Jews for Jesus. Change in group members is rapid. It results from individual and generational characteristics of members themselves as well as the multiple orientation of the group which, in many ways, resembles a therapeutic community. The overall effect is to foster rapid personal growth.

Forces for Growth

The generation of which members of Jews for Jesus are a part values continued psychological growth, openness to feelings, and integration of opposites, no matter how alien they may appear to be. For each of these young people, the act of Christian commitment has meant a radical change in identity, guided by the Christian ideology, and motivated by the desire to reconcile the separate constituents of identity: the self one feels one is, the self he would like to be, and the self he believes is attributed to him by others (Robbins 1973). The Christian ideology provides the

value system, direction, world view, and obligation to "grow." Unlike a weekly psychotherapy session, "the great big therapist in the sky," as Rietze quipped, is constantly on hand, encouraging a striving toward perfection and fostering self-acceptance.

As a group, Jews for Jesus is also particularly potent for stimulating personal growth. It functions as a human support system, which Caplan (1974) defines as "an enduring pattern of continuing or intermittent ties that play a significant part in maintaining the psychological or physical integrity of the individual over time" (p. 7). The group constitutes a surrogate family that provides individuals with feedback about themselves and validates their expectations about others. The family has been the best known support system in all societies, but in Western urban settings, the nuclear family is often strained in coping with the myriad types of demands for support by its members. Some past functions of the extended family are intended to be met by community caregiving agencies, but these agencies often fail in meeting the demands made on them (Caplan 1974).

Caplan observes that the family pattern is an attractive model for people who cluster together for mutual support in the community. Jews for Jesus is an example of a reconstituted extended family and, as such, satisfies a variety of needs, such as the needs

> . . . for love and affection, for intimacy that provides the freedom to express feelings easily and unself-consciously, for validation of personal identity and worth, for satisfaction of nurturance and dependency, for help with tasks, and for support in handling emotion and controlling impulses (Caplan 1974:5).

Beyond constituting a support system, however, Jews for Jesus speaks to other needs of young adults. As part of a movement, it demands commitment and provides a meaningful cause toward which to work, and as a missionary organization, it provides career training and a means of financial support. For Jewish members, its ethnic orientation allows reidentification with Jewish identity and values. Finally, its "character training" provides a combination of mutual support and direct critical feedback, in the context of learning work skills and discipline. In these aspects, Jews for Jesus resembles the therapeutic community mode for treating drug abusers described by Sugarman in Daytop Village: A Therapeutic Community (1974).

Daytop Village is effective in resocializing drug abusers because of its dualistic orientation, a synthesis of the expressive and the instrumental, and called by Sugarman "the two faces of Daytop." Jews for Jesus exhibits both modes of interaction. Work in the office corresponds to the "hard face;" it is characterized by control of feelings, and defined by norms of achievement and functional specificity within a bureaucratic structure. Members cooperate within a precise authority hierarchy and learn to function

with strict discipline while learning a variety of work skills. The "soft-hard face," or "responsible concern" as it is known in Daytop, is seen in the emotional support, caring and encouragement, and mutual expectations of growth among members. Concern, however, is more than just fraternal support; it is characterized by mutual confrontation and guided by an awareness of the necessity for long-term personal change in members. In contrast to Daytop, however, in which the "hard" and "soft-hard" faces are ideologically and formally separated in the program structure, Jews for Jesus does not articulate a separation. The resulting confusion of the two orientations sometimes leads to interpersonal conflict and hurt feelings.

Daytop Village and Jews for Jesus have several specific elements in common. In each group, feedback, which is very important for both social control and learning, occurs through informal confrontation or in shaming an individual in front of his peers. In Jews for Jesus, the implication of public shaming is that "we are doing this because we love you." For example:

> Maury needs our help. You help him by being frank and honest with him. Tell him he's uncooperative, or that he's using unrealistic excuses. There's no room in a group like ours to leave criticism unsaid. If you don't give him feedback, you do him a disservice.

Both groups reward correct and valued behavior with promotion to assignments of greater responsibility; job demotion is a sanction

imposed for disapproved behavior. Finally, the ideologies of both groups strongly emphasize personal growth. Daytop's "Concept" clearly delineates two points basic to adult socialization: residents are to "act as if" they were already the kinds of people they want to be, and they are to teach those newer than themselves what they know about Daytop. Similarly, members of Jews for Jesus are expected to strive to live up to Biblical and group ideals even if they do not presently understand why. They believe that God will eventually make clear to them the reasons they are to behave in certain ways, and that such behavior will eventually be natural. New members learn from old, and all teach each other on a regular basis.

Personal Growth and Change

Individual Jews for Jesus report changes of varying intensity and nature as a result of their commitments and participation in the group. These changes can be described from social, cultural, and psychological perspectives,[1] and lead to growth in all three areas.

Social and Behavioral Changes

Participation in Jews for Jesus integrates its members into the social system, serving as a rite of passage between youth and adulthood. In complex urban societies, one function of youth groups is to smooth the transition from expressive family relationships to universalistic achievement-oriented roles in adult society

(Eisenstadt 1956, Robbins, Anthony and Curtis 1975). Jews for Jesus facilitates commitment to dominant American values and norms, to a vocation, and to an adult role. These functions are not the cause of participation, however, as pointed out by Ben, a Viet Nam veteran who, but for several years in the counterculture, has worked most of his life:

> A lot of people might rationalize that I was irresponsible before and that I became a Christian because I was looking for responsibility. But I think it was part of my culture and my life to be a responsible person. I was trying to do something for society by building my houseboat. I felt responsible for the girl I got pregnant and I took care of her.

Of course, some members have used participation in Jews for Jesus as a means of returning to parental and dominant American values, previously rejected. But rather than simply accepting parental values, they have made the changes on their own terms. They have found a new meaning and "a good reason" to achieve, to be disciplined, to work hard, and to use their talents and abilities.

Becoming a Hebrew Christian often means choosing a career as a professional missionary, and members of Jews for Jesus are typical. Travisiano's (1973) "average Hebrew Christian" was about twenty-three at the time of his conversion, was unsettled in occupation and lifestyle, and was quite likely to become a missionary worker by vocation, or at least to adopt proseltyzing as a serious avocation.

Among members of Jews for Jesus, a conventional vocational routine or bureaucratic role is no longer seen as oppressive or dehumanizing because expressive needs are met in the same context. For example, work and pleasure have become integrated for Sarah:

> I've never had this before; this is new.
> I've always worked hard at something that
> takes all my time while doing the things
> I've wanted to do later. It was never
> just one.

Membership in Jews for Jesus means involvement in a special mission that is almost totally time-consuming, is occasionally dangerous, and leads to being in the public eye much of the time. Each member has chosen a marginal social status in relation to the church and the Jewish community, and risks being labeled "apostate," "hippie," or even "Christ killer" by others who disapprove. On the other hand, Jews for Jesus tends to allow its members from counterculture or radical backgrounds to substitute socially legitimate religious activities for stigmatized activities that involve conflict with law enforcement authorities. For example, a "spiritual high" takes the place of a drug-induced "high."

Participation in Jews for Jesus encourages those who had dropped out or had postponed adult commitments to accept adult roles. As Alison pointed out:

> I hate office work, but I'm good at it,
> I've got a lot of organizational sense.
> Every once in a while I want to run away
> -- then I realize that I'm just going
> through a growing up process and I can't run.
> Before, anytime anything got boring or a
> relationship got to be a drag, I'd leave.

Some members have returned to college to complete their degrees, or attend Bible college for theological training. A few members have actively sought marriage partners, and many others have altered their previous negative view of marriage and now see it as desirable.

Jewish members, in joining Jews for Jesus, have separated from their real families and joined a surrogate family. From the parental standpoint, a child's becoming a Christian can be regarded as a punitive act, especially when accompanied by a latent message that says, in essence, "I can be a better Jew than you; you too can be saved, I'll pray for you." For the members, however, it seems that membership in Jews for Jesus has allowed them to express their love toward their parents and to "understand and accept" them as they are. All report having experienced a positive change in perception of their parents and have attempted to improve or reestablish relationships with them on a new, adult basis. And for the most part, their parents have responded to these efforts.

All the above changes represent reintegration into the social system. However, they are not made for traditional reasons but in the name of a new cause. A member re-enters "the establishment" with qualifications, and for non-establishment reasons.

Cultural and Cognitive Changes

Cultural changes in members of Jews for Jesus include their adoption of a comprehensive belief system (a change in world view), and their reintegration or exploration of Jewish ethnic identity. In becoming Christians, the members have added the religious perspective to their world views. As distinguished from scientific, artistic, and common-sense perspectives, of the religious perspective Geertz has said that

> . . .rather than detachment, its watchword is commitment; rather than analysis, encounter . . . instead of effecting a disengagement from the whole question of factuality, it deepens the concern with fact and seeks to create an aura of utter factuality . . . (1966:26, 27).

However, as Geertz points out, not even a saint lives in a world formulated by religious symbols all the time; a person moves back and forth between the religious perspective and a common-sense view of the everyday world. These shifts of perspective are obvious among members of Jews for Jesus, who move with ease from eloquent prayer to concern with finances; many of them are equally comfortable shifting to scientific or artistic perspectives. Indeed, the one member who interprets everything in religious terms is regarded by the others as a "fanatic" who has a poor grasp of reality.

Christian theology provides a comprehensive system of meaning within a conception of a general order of existence. According to Geertz:

> The Problem of Meaning . . . is a matter of affirming, or at least recognizing, the inescapability of ignorance, pain and injustice on the human plane while simultaneously denying that these irrationalities are characteristic of the world as a whole. And it is in terms of religious symbolism, a symbolism relating man's sphere of existence to a wider sphere within which it is conceived to rest, that both the affirmation and the denial are made (1966:24).

The belief system is well equipped to deal with evil, pain, and paradox. Evil is attributed to Satan. In the case of pain, rather than focusing on how to avoid suffering, one is taught to accept it, as pointed out by one member:

> Stella has muscle spasms in her jaw. When you're not a Christian you find something like that impossible to deal with; when you are a Christian, you feel there's a purpose for it. You can look forward to the time when you'll know that purpose, and you say, "thank You for teaching me."

Paradox is handled similarly. Members of Jews for Jesus <u>know</u> that there is one "truth" and that life has direction and meaning. Their belief system denies coincidences or the inexplicable event, and members trust that God will eventually reveal the purpose of something not immediately understood. Rietze, a graduate student in behavioral genetics, explained that

> I look at it like a biologist. It's not adaptive to have a need that cannot be met. We're all realistically looking for something. People would not be created with a need for meaning if there was no such thing as meaning. For me, there were all these "ah-hah's" -- every once in a while you realize you've been looking at something backwards all your life and

> it just seems so simple. Before I was a Christian, the idea that life had no purpose never bothered me. Now I wonder how I could have ever lived thinking that life had no purpose; it's really nice that it does.

Several Jewish members of Jews for Jesus have symbolized a second type of cultural change -- the exploration or reintegration of a Jewish ethnic identity -- by adopting their Hebrew names. One young man not only changed his given name, but also changed his Anglicized surname back to its Russian original.[2] Jews for Jesus is an especially potent group for those from the most assimilated or secular families, such as Mollie:

> Being with a lot of other Jewish people is really exciting to me, to start getting connected with my Jewishness. I don't feel rejected because I don't know all the things I never learned; I can ask and people will explain. I think all along, inside, I really longed for this.

Members of Jews for Jesus -- as well as other Hebrew Christians -- prefer "completion" to "conversion" to describe their Christian commitments. They explain that they have not switched religions, but have added a belief in Christ to Jewish faith and ethnic identity. Although the members use "completion" ideologically, the term also reflects the manner by which they integrate elements from disparate value and subcultural systems. For example, Jewish members have no desire to assimilate and have generally felt uncomfortable in totally Gentile fundamentalist Christian settings.

Jews for Jesus provides an atmosphere in which both Jewish and Christian components of members' identities can be expressed. Indeed, the group provides a solution to conflicts experienced by young people caught between the youth culture and the "straight" world (Gordon 1974). Thus, for example, Gentile members from conservative backgrounds are able to explore such new realms of experience as demonstrating on the streets wearing blue jeans and denim jackets, carrying placards, and flavoring their speech with Yiddish expressions.

Psychological Changes

The concept of "completion" or integration is also applicable to members of Jews for Jesus in the psychological sense. According to Jung, "The psyche is irrational, religious dogma expresses an irrational whole by means of imagery. . . a theory which is abstract and exclusively rational has less value for psychological truth (1953:45). Indeed, Maslow (1969) suggests that people who have never had a "core religious experience" might be said to be in a "lower-lesser state," a state in which one is not fully functioning. In Jung's view, the aim of one's life should be to develop and enjoy the whole range of one's capacities -- to come to know one's "other side" rather than to repress or suppress, and to develop the weaker of the four functions of sensation, intuition, thinking and feeling. The religious experience can thus be seen as a way of exploring all of oneself and allowing integration of dualities.

Individual Jews for Jesus are different from each other -- each has differing needs and each has articulated different changes as a result of his Christian commitment. For some, becoming a believer has led to resolving an identity conflict, leading to a coherent sense of self. Some emphasize increased self-esteem. Others mention the exploration of new aspects of themselves, some, such as Tobias, in explicitly Jungian terms:

> Did I ever tell you that one of my first understandings of God was almost on a Jungian basis? I was finding God by going into what I am. Within each of us is a well-spring of being that is bursting forth each moment into what we are. If you move down that well you draw close to the source of your being, encountering the underground river that's the source of all wells. Have you ever had the experience of crying about something and knowing that every human being was crying about that same thing all over the world? That same ache, or fear, or longing -- having something that deep is a Christmas present.
>
> Before I was a believer, I had no concept of my own life. I was reacting to each moment, and it was lost after that. I've been getting bits of it the last three years. They've been the heaviest and most jam-packed of my life, and I wouldn't call them the most fun, but they've been really meaty. In a sense, all the steps I've wanted to take in the past and haven't, I've been taking.

Among those who have expressed increase self-acceptance as a result of their commitments is Stephen:

> The experience of renewal is the most therapeutic aspect; God is prepared to give us a new start after we've blown it. You're forgiven when you repent. God is not only willing to let you try again, but to help you meet the standard. This is a tremendously liberating factor -- you don't have to feel terribly guilty, there's no

> requisite amount of self-flagellation. All you need is sufficient emotion to know what you did is wrong and to decide against it. I still have my fears and insecurities, and I take failure very seriously. But because we're people and as we are, and the world is as it is, there's struggle and sometimes darkness and fear. But there is also hope -- it's not suffering in a vacuum; it's possible to hold on and grow and not to despair.

A few members have mentioned that recently they have been flooded with memories of the past and were taking stock of their whole lives. Perhaps this was stimulated by the expectation of a life history interview! More likely, though, it is due to the emphasis on self-awareness in the group, and to having sufficiently integrated the belief system and participated in this supportive group long enough to bring back and deal with old memories and conflicts.

Examples of strengthening their weaker dimensions were also articulated by several members of Jews for Jesus. Rachel, for example, stresses the integration of her feeling and thinking capacities:

> Before I became a Christian, I considered myself an intellectually-oriented person, involved in learning and thinking -- I just loved Platonic theory, for example. When I became a Christian, I got into a very spiritual-type thing as a counter-reaction. I put more emphasis on reading the Bible and praying to God. But although I'm a very emotional person too, I appreciate thinking things out.

Bernie, who had experienced a brief psychotic break, says he is working on becoming "less subjective, more in touch with reality" through his faith and through the group. Marie, introverted, quiet, and always self-conscious, is exploring new aspects of herself through street witnessing, teaching, and even learning to dance.

Participation in a movement and the commitment process gives one an increased ability to take risks (Gerlach and Hine 1970). Members of Jews for Jesus confidently attempt many new things that might otherwise be too threatening. They do so feeling that they can depend on God's help as they work closely together in the name of their cause, and are stimulated to further commitment and effort by opposition. Such risk-taking allows increased self-exploration and increased confidence, and often leads to success. Stella offered a succinct summary of the group's effect on its members:

> I really think this ministry is a good thing
> to bring out the essential person so we can
> begin dealing with what are our faults,
> instead of smoothing them over on the outside.

Some members have experienced greater life changes than others, but continuities are also apparent. For example, a former political radical embraces a new symbolic universe but continues his activist methods and style. A former "hippie" changes by returning to disciplined work or school, while his quest for self-knowledge and spiritual growth continues. And for a life-long Christian, becoming a "religious radical" is a change in behavior, but in the name of the same beliefs he has grown up with.

Jews for Jesus offers a variety of choices for personal change and a reason for making them. Essentially, involvement in the group allows these young adults to "get on with living" rather than postponing commitments or marking time. In this way, Jews for Jesus provides a pathway to adulthood. Mordecai suggested that "what this group does is allow people to do what they're inclined to do anyway," and that the rapid growth I have observed is "just maturation." However, I feel that commitment is a way of centering. By embracing a comprehensive symbolic universe rather than laboriously working out his own belief system, each member can move forward rapidly in relation to that "truth." And he can do so trusting that God and his brothers and sisters will support him in his growth efforts, thus affording him a measure of control in a confusing and rapidly changing society.

NOTES

1. The following discussion has been inspired by Robbins (1973), who examines the identity concept as it is used in anthropology. He suggests three models:

   The identity-interaction model, associated with C. H. Cooley, G.H. Mead, and E. Goffman. This model emphasizes the importance of one's self-concept in guiding interaction with others; identity tends to be equated with social position.

   The identity-world-view model, associated with R. Redfield and A. I. Hallowell. This model suggests that every world view begins with a concept of self, which is necessary in orienting one to other persons and the environment.

   The identity-health model, associated with E. Erikson, C. Rogers, and H. S. Sullivan. This model examines those conditions of self that make for optimal psychological functioning, identity being equated with a coherent sense of self.

2. Practical concerns have also led to name changes. In the case of members who have the same name in the group, the newer member has changed his name to avoid confusion.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Jews for Jesus is a new Hebrew Christian missionary organization that was inspired by the Jesus Movement. Its existence and growth are attributable in part to the most recent upsurge of interest in religion. Equally important has been the current emphasis on ethnicity which, although always important in social definition, has been the subject of increased vocality, especially among young adults. As a small community, Jews for Jesus exemplifies the new forces developing in the wider American society.

Were it necessary to choose a single concept characteristic of Jews for Jesus, that concept would be integration. The group's hybrid character reflects its origin in the Jesus and Hebrew Christian Movements. Its ideology combines Christian, Jewish, contemporary American, and youth influences and values. Its social organization can be viewed in terms of a movement, a missionary organization, an ethnic group, and a surrogate family. The personal changes observed in members as a result of their participation in the group reflect attempts to integrate values from diverse sources and to combine functional orientations. These attempts may lead to conflicting behavioral expectations and interpersonal tension, but members of the group accept such difficulties as a challenge and stimulus to interpersonal and psychological growth.

Mordecai Steinberg, the originator and architect of the Jews for Jesus mission and the group's spokesman and leader, is a typical charismatic movement leader in that he integrates values from several sources and expresses this combination in a new ideology. If Sobel's (1974) observations of the Hebrew Christian Movement are correct -- if it has been characterized heretofore by "an overwhelming bleakness, enervating ambivalence, and negativity" -- then Mordecai is a different type of leader indeed, and the movement provides an ideal vehicle for his abilities. He serves as a catalyst in mobilizing the energy and creativity of young adults to produce a new type of confrontation evangelism that, through its very nature, has elicited a strong response from many Jews, and has led to increased publicity dealing with the entire Hebrew Christian Movement.

Why have these talented and privileged young Jews joined a movement based on fundamentalist Christianity? Case histories have disclosed no common factor to account for such a change, other than common generational values and youth status. Members of the group fall within normal limits for their generation according to commonly-used criteria for psychological deviance. As a group, they have suffered no more deprivation than have their peers. Their Jewish backgrounds and identity are also typical of young second-generation American born Jews; members rebel against their Jewish backgrounds only in their perception of the lack of spirituality or religious fervor in the Jewish community.

Rather than deviance, deprivation, or rebelliousness, predisposing conditions to recruitment would seem to be found in social and historical factors. These young adults were presented with the Christian message by an already-committed significant other at a time when they were open to consideration of it. In their openness they were ideologically receptive, as well as not yet committed to a lifestyle, career, or marriage that would inhibit the impact of the message and willingness to act on it. The majority of members are typical of their avant-garde peers who have progressed through political activism and/or counterculture lifestyles to religion. Instead of passing through another fad, however, it appears that most of these young adults will remain active Christians; the intense commitment process has resulted in identity changes and adoption of careers as evangelists.

In addition to personal commitment, this innovative group has combined disparate cultural elements in a new ideology that satisfies the need of its members, as is typical of revitalization movements. The group itself speaks to many needs of its members. It provides a comprehensive system of meaning, a cause toward which to work, a community in which to develop and express creative talents and ethnic identity, career training in a working organization, and finally, a surrogate family. While it differs in ideology,

it is similar to other marginal religious groups in which young people are currently involved, such as Hare Krishna and Meher Baba, in its combination of a strict work ethic and world-saving ideology in a community of love. In these multiple aspects, Jews for Jesus is a human support system and much like a therapeutic community. Of therapeutic communities, one observer says:

> What. . . (they) . . . have achieved is a new synthesis of the two main elements of the value system of modern civilization which have previously been in conflict with each other. To have brought together again the emphasis on mastery of one's own life situation and the value of altruism is a remarkable achievement (Sugarman 1974:130, 131).

Therapeutic communities have the capacity to foster rapid psychological growth and change in their members. Such changes in members of Jews for Jesus were described previously, but in general it can be said that the group has offered its members a pathway to an acceptable and accepted legitimate adult career role. What seems to be a radical movement is in fact a means by which its participants reintegrate as adults in society, a means for returning to parental values in the name of a new ideology. It also allows a social and individual quest on the part of a group of people who want to change and grow. Individuals differ in personality, but have a common need for peak experience. They have joined together to build a community and to spread their message to others.

What is the future of Jews for Jesus? Portraying the group in a simple manner has been difficult because of its transitional character and rapid growth. It has come to illustrate Weber's

(1922) concept of "the routinization of charisma" in which a cause is "corrupted" by the tendency of organizations to become ends in themselves. In the six-year history of Jews for Jesus, a tiny group rebelled against its powerful parent organization in its youthful style and confrontation evangelism. It evolved as an independent, financially successful, and well-organized ministry with a bureaucratic structure. In the first few years of the group's existence, it would not have survived without Mordecai's leadership. At present, however, because Mordecai and the capable young adults he has trained have set up a strong organization, I judge that Jews for Jesus could exist and flourish without its leader. It no longer depends solely on his charismatic influence.

Despite such rationalization, however, Jews for Jesus retains its movement characteristics and as yet has not become just another missionary organization. An important factor in its continued growth, and the growth of Hebrew Christianity in general, is the strong opposition from Jews. Irving Zaretsky (1974) suggests that while the Hebrew Christian Movement in the United States and Israel remains numerically marginal, its significance rests in the impact of its opposition on the social order and in its political and legal framework, especially with respect to the issues of church-state relations and civil liberties. At this point, the amount of opposition is optimal; there is enough opposition to stimulate growth, yet too little to impose effective social control.

However, perpetuation of a movement requires continued recruitment of new participants. Recent recruits to the Hebrew Christian Movement include new Jewish Christians influenced in the current revival, formerly assimilated Jewish converts who have been convinced to come forward and identify themselves through the Movement's efforts, and some newly inspired Gentile Christians who feel a calling for Jewish evangelism.

Because of the cyclical nature of religious revivals, I suspect that as the current revival wanes, so too will the strength of the Hebrew Christian Movement. Glick (1958) who characterizes Hebrew Christianity as an intermediate step in the conversion of Jews to Christianity, predicted that at some future time it would cease to exist. He states that second generation Hebrew Christians, who lack the conviction of a conversion experience or the experience of living as Jews, tend to become almost exclusively Christian. However, I feel that Hebrew Christianity will survive, at least on the limited basis on which it has survived since its inception, and that it will experience a reflorescence in the next religious revival.

Jews for Jesus, as part of the Hebrew Christian Movement, and a product of broader social and historical circumstances, is already beginning to evidence changes in membership. The young Jews who moved from the counterculture into religion in the late sixties and early seventies differ from their younger, more

conservative counterparts who now become Christians. Further, it now appears that the number of young Jews being influenced by Jews for Jesus has diminished, although the organization continues to be successful in inspiring commitments among people in other age groups. In recognition of this fact, and always ready to seize any new opportunity for spreading its message, Jews for Jesus plans to open a new branch of the ministry in Miami. This city has the fastest growing Jewish population in the United States, but such population includes a large number of elderly persons, and it will be fascinating to observe how the group changes its approach to meet this new challenge. Thus, the next five or ten years will be highly significant ones for Jews for Jesus. The organization's success in influencing elderly Jews in the near future -- and its ability to respond to later social trends as they occur -- will in large part determine whether this remarkable organization will sustain its current impact and rapid growth, or whether it will simply fade into the background, just one more nova in the realm of evangelistic endeavors.

APPENDIX A

POSTSCRIPT

Brief visits to Jews for Jesus between 1974 and 1976 have revealed continued rapid growth and expansion. Jews for Jesus is currently the fastest-growing and has become the second-largest Hebrew Christian evangelistic organization in the United States. The group has established branch offices in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, with plans for another in Miami. The oldest branch office, at Los Angeles, has at least twenty-five active members and a singing group. The main office has moved to facilities providing at least four times the space of the former office, and there are now sixty full-time staff. The ministry owns several large vans, much sophisticated office and production equipment, and even the ubiquitous computer.

The current Jews for Jesus program involves four goals: direct evangelism, missionary training, church relations, and media relations. Evangelism is conducted with more of an emphasis on teams. Both Jewish and Gentile members are given the opportunity to participate in performances or speaking engagements. Formal education is an important part of "discipleship" training. Excess funds from the ministry are used to provide $1,400 scholarships to members on "student status." Several members attend Bible college and some of the men are now seminary students. The church relations department has a mailing list of 50,000.

The social organization of Jews for Jesus has become considerably more formal. The "council" now consists of seven selected members who, with Mordecai, make group decisions. Mordecai has hired as his assistant a Hebrew Christian missionary and former colleague from the JMA, who is about Mordecai's age. The group adheres strictly to formal channels of communication. When I telephoned for an appointment with Mordecai, his businesslike secretary scheduled one for three weeks later; I felt as if I were dealing with a top executive in a large business. Every procedure is spelled out -- "unless it is in writing, it is not official." Employees must sign a "Worker's Covenant" which spells out the group's values; the conditions of service, salary, employee benefits, and sanctions; and even personal relationships (rules cover mate selection, pregnancy, and divorce). Older members have reportedly complained that Jews for Jesus is now an organization instead of a family, to which Mordecai responds:

> As we develop the capabilities to do things ourselves, we rely less on prayer, we're less religious. We've become institutionalized, but we've kept our family. Those that feel we're less a family remember when we used to do everything together. Some now have responsibility for others.

New individuals recruited seem to be generally younger and from more conservative backgrounds than was true in the past. A few older adults have become active supporters, notably a Lutheran minister from a nearby church; his wife works in the

office every day. The problem of Jewish chauvinism seems to have been resolved; composition of the group remains at 75 percent Jewish members, 25 percent Gentile.

Although I have not interviewed older members again, it seems that most have become career Hebrew Christian missionaries. About seven or eight marriages between group members have occurred, and members of long standing who are married have taken leadership positions in the branch offices. In general, they appear poised, mature, and happy in their work.

APPENDIX B

METHODS AND LITERATURE

Little published scholarly literature on either the Jesus Movement or the Hebrew Christian Movement exists as yet. Jesus People have been the subject of three doctoral dissertations (Gregg 1973, Harder 1973, and Bookman 1974), and several scholarly articles (Adams and Fox 1972, Harder, Richardson and Simmonds 1972, Peterson and Mauss 1973, Balswick 1974, and Gordon 1974).

I have located only three studies of Hebrew Christians. Glick (1958), in describing the First Hebrew Christian Church of Chicago, points out the marginal social status of its members, and suggests that the Church represents an intermediate step in the conversion of Jews to Christianity. Travisano's (1970) comparison of Hebrew Christians and Jewish Unitarians is a study of two qualitatively different types of identity transformation. Finally, Sobel (1974) provides a history of the Hebrew Christian Movement and its mechanism of legitimation; he describes a Hebrew Christian Fellowship in New Jersey and young Jewish Jesus People he calls Jews for Jesus, living in Israel. He suggests that the Movement is an attempt to "overcome the long-standing refusal of the Jews to willingly convert in large numbers," and that the movement participants are marginal people suffering many deprivations.

The group I studied, which originated and popularized the name "Jews for Jesus," had not previously been examined from a social scientific perspective.

While doing clinical work with young drug abusers in a psychiatric setting, I developed an interest in the Jesus Movement. Specifically, I noticed that it seemed to offer a therapeutic escape from drug abuse. Dr. Joan Ablon suggested a study of Jews for Jesus as a field project for a class in Social Deviance.

I began participant observation in October 1972. Entry and role establishment took four months. I was allowed to participate because I was accepted by the leader of the group, and because the group was in an early stage of development. Once accepted into the group, and referred to as "our resident unbeliever," I participated in activities on an average of ten to twenty hours a week. I took a regular work role as a printer and participated in staff meetings, social events, Bible studies, and demonstrations, and observed members at work and in interaction with each other.

To supplement participant observation, I conducted twenty-seven life history interviews, each averaging about three hours Although I used a memorized outline, the interviews were unstructured and informal. I also interviewed parents of four members, three couples in their homes in New York and the fourth on their visit

to this area. I rarely used a tape recorder except in these scheduled interviews. I took field notes during meetings and Bible studies, but otherwise postponed recording of data until away from the group. No informant was paid; however, I tried to offer whatever help I could to the group's efforts within ethical limits. The members, being well-educated and sophisticated individuals, understood my purpose and were supportive and cooperative with the research effort. They gave much of themselves, their suggestions and observations. I ended formal research in July 1974, when Jews for Jesus closed their office for a month of intensive evangelism in New York.

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