healthy patterns, following other deviant behaviors to meet life's needs and problems. "To many members (of varying Christian groups), complete opposition to alcohol does not appear to be a Christian virtue; rather it seems to be an unChristian kind of bigotry." 39

While Jews have less of a problem with alcohol because of their religion, large numbers of Christians have more of a problem for the same reason. Note the following statement by Howard Clinebell:

For the alcoholic, alcohol is not a symbol of the vertical dimension of life. It is the vertical dimension. The alcoholic substitutes a symbol—the very nature of which is to point beyond itself—for that which is symbolized.... Alcohol is not a symbol of his experience of a higher power; it is his higher power. Perhaps this is the meaning of the statement, 'Before A. A., we were trying to find God in a bottle.' 40

Clinebell adds: "The same properties which make it a valuable religious symbol for many people also lend it to use as a substitute for religion by others, including alcoholics." 41

I'm not implying that the Christian religious experience is always a causal factor in relation to alcoholism. Rather, I'm emphasizing that Jews have an integrated philosophy regarding the use of alcohol and many Christians do not.

Many changes in attitudes are taking place among Christian groups today. Official statements are being changed to include or reflect a position on alcohol use. More important than changing attitudes toward alcohol, however, must be a change in attitude toward the alcoholic. Contingent on this is our ability as Christian clergymen to deal effectively with alcoholism and to minister effectively to alcoholics.

There is no simplistic solution! Christian identity does not carry the same ethnic connotation as Jewish identity. There is no political or other orthodoxy that stimulates homogeneity among Christian people. Beyond this, the complex society in which we live is working to reduce the number, stability, and duration of primary relationships. Drinking, under these pressures, tends to become more of an individual matter for the purpose of conviviality.

Still, there must be some way of implementing the lessons learned in such a way that non-Jews may also benefit. Perhaps the most important thing for clergymen of all traditions is to promote integration of attitudes and patterns of use regarding alcoholic beverages that will reduce ambivalence. We must acknowledge there are others whose faith is as strong and meaningful as ours and that their different feelings and

39 Oates, Alcohol—In and Out of the Church, p.14
40 Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., "Philosophical—Religious Factors in the Etiology and Treatment of Alcoholism," Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol, XXIV (September, 1963), p. 476. (A complete reprint of this article appears in this issue, pp. 87-100.)
41 Ibid., p. 10.