

A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING EXPERIENCES
OF A SELECTED GROUP OF
JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

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PREFACE

A matter of current social concern is juvenile delinquency. Many aspects of this problem have been investigated in the past, but little has been done in the area of religion and delinquency. This study has had as its purpose the comparison of the religious training experiences of a selected group of juvenile delinquents with those experiences of a non-delinquent group, so as to see if there is any empirical validity to the commonly-held assumption that religious training prevents delinquency.

A juvenile delinquent is considered in this study to be a boy who has been incarcerated in a penal institution because of his behavior in society. This investigation, instead of looking for a "cause" of delinquency, has studied the describable experiences of a delinquent and of a non-delinquent group in one area, religious training experiences, to see if in the groups studied these experiences differed significantly.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Investigation	2
Importance of the Investigation	3
Limitations of the Investigation	6
Hypotheses Studied	8
Definitions of Terms	9
Design of the Investigation	9
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	11
Factors Related to Delinquency	11
Areas Needing Investigation	21
Lack of Research in This Area	22
III. SUBJECTS AND PROCEDURE	24
Selection of the Subjects	24
Instruments Used in the Investigation	31
IV. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION	34
V. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS	45
Relationships Between Delinquency and Religious Training Experiences	45
Implications for Education, Psychology and Sociology	47
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	49
APPENDIX	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Family Organization Status of Boys	26
II. Distribution of Intelligence Quotient Scores of Boys . . .	27
III. Distribution of Ages of Boys	29
IV. Occupations of Parents of Boys	30
V. Confirmation Experience of Delinquent and Non- delinquent Boys	34
VI. Attendance at Confirmation Instruction	35
VII. Frequency of Church Attendance	36
VIII. Frequency of Sunday School Attendance	37
IX. Attendance at Parochial School	38
X. Non-Sunday School Instruction	38
XA. Frequency of Non-Sunday Instructional Attendance	39
XI. Participation in Religion-Sponsored Activities	39
XIA. Kinds of Activities Participated in	40
XII. Religious Activities in Home	40
XIIA. Frequency of Participation in Home Religious Activities. .	41
XIIB. Kinds and Frequencies of Home Religious Activities	41
XIII. Contact With Religion-Related Personnel	42
XIIIA. Kinds and Frequencies of Contact With Religion-Related Personnel	43

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In the course of the research for this study, an estimable and cooperative prison official stated to the writer that most of the boys in the institution would not be there if they'd had religious training. He echoed the statement of a police official in a medium-sized Oklahoma community that "lack of a knowledge of God" is a cause of juvenile delinquency, and the statement of a juvenile court judge that "a high percentage of delinquents come from families . . . where there is little or no church participation."

The police official quoted above did add, however, that some of those involved with the law "are those that might be overexposed to the church," becoming "more and more alienated." But the implication remains that religious ties can and would prevent juvenile delinquency.

To be honest, we don't know if this is true. [A clinical approach, using the experiences and opinions of professionals in the field--like the gentlemen quoted above--would lead one to believe that such is indeed the case: religious training prevents delinquency and lack thereof is a cause of juvenile delinquency. But an empirical study has never been made, comparing the religious training experiences of a delinquent with a non-delinquent group.

Certain studies, to be quoted later, have, in fact, studied the religious affiliations of delinquents, their moral and ethical standards, and the amount of their biblical knowledge and attendance at church. But none has studied the complete spectrum of religious training experiences as a unique and describable experiential entity.

What is more, one minority religious group (Jews), it is pointed out later in this paper, has a disproportionately low incidence of delinquency among its youth. This is evocative (and provocative) of an implication that a certain kind of religious training might be less productive of delinquents than another.¹ This, however, is outside the scope of the present study. It is mentioned here merely as an extralimital indication of the problem that exists and the need for empirical investigation.

Purpose of the Investigation

The purpose of this study is to investigate and compare the religious training experiences of selected groups of delinquent and non-delinquent boys, and to determine if these two groups had experiences which differed in:

1. Attendance or non-attendance at a place of worship;
2. Attendance or non-attendance at Sunday School;
3. Attendance or non-attendance at parochial school;
4. Attendance or non-attendance at religious instruction school or sessions (classes or meetings);

¹As suggested in Chapter II, the multiple-factor and interdisciplinary approach currently in vogue among psychologists, educators and sociologists may show that this is only one of the factors inherent in traditional Jewish family cohesiveness. (Kvaraceus, 1954).

5. Participation in activities related to religion, place of worship, parochial school or religious instruction;
6. Amount or kind of religion-related activities and instruction at home;
7. Amount or kind of contact with religion-related personnel.

Importance of the Investigation

The American culture has always been faced with a paradox: we have a form of government based on and cherishing highly those Judaeo-Christian ideals which we feel promote the good life and good people; yet we have an apparently rising crime rate which might indicate that the good are growing fewer. It has been inherent in the growth of the American public school system that the training of our youth for responsible citizenship is of paramount importance. Yet, for a number of years, apparently rising rates have made juvenile delinquency a topic of interest to professional and layman alike. It has been pointed out (Perlman, 1949, Rubin, 1949, Riley, 1958) that identification of delinquents has increased, through more complete records and stricter enforcement of the law, thereby causing an apparent rise in delinquency rate. But whether or not the rise is a true one, the fact remains that any crime is a challenge to our professed cultural ideals.

The first "school book," the Horn book, contained a prayer. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a reading series much in vogue (The McGuffey Eclectic Readers) contained in its pages many stories pointing up moral precepts and standards of behavior. Even today, controversy rages over the question of bible readings or prayers in public schools.

The point of this is that a streak of religiosity is readily discernible in the skein of educational history in the United States.

For a number of years, church membership statistics have shown an increase, to the extent that about 63% of the 1962 U. S. population (the latest figure available) have indicated nominal church membership according to the Yearbook of American Churches. This would indicate that a norm in our middle-class society is membership in a place of worship and the sending of children for religious instruction. Kvaraceus (1945) studied the role of the school in preventing juvenile delinquency. In assessing the church attendance of his subjects, he found that Catholic children in his study were most regular in church attendance, Jewish children least regular, with Protestant children in between. But he points out that customs of religious observance differ qualitatively for each group so that religious observance cannot be judged from attendance alone. Still, the majority of the children studied were nominally church members.

In spite of the implication of church membership statistics, however, juvenile delinquency is an increasingly serious problem in many communities. One can raise, therefore, a number of questions:

1. Have delinquent juveniles had religious training, and to what extent?
2. If they have, does it have some measurable effect regarding delinquency proneness?
3. Do the religious training experiences of delinquents differ from those of non-delinquents?
4. Is religious training irrelevant as a factor in preventing delinquency?

With the answers to these questions, perhaps an assessment could be made of whether or not religion (and religious training) is in fact the chief moral guardian of our culture. We have assumed that it is. A study (Dunn, 1926) quotes many leading citizens as holding the view

that religious training is the only way to reduce crime. Yet, in this work 70% or more of a prison population cited some religious affiliation. Are we then to believe religious training has no effect on crime?

Another study (Kvaraceus, 1945) indicates that children of the Jewish faith have a juvenile delinquency rate far below expectations in terms of their numbers in the general population. Does this indicate that Jewish children receive better or different religious training experiences than non-Jews?

At present, we don't know the answer to either of these questions. Studies have related delinquency rates to many psychological, economic and sociological factors, even to meteorological and anatomical factors. An ecological study (Reiss, 1952) has attempted to show how moral ideals vary among delinquents. Kvaraceus, previously cited, lists church attendance among other factors of community standards studied. But religious training experiences (not merely church membership or attendance) have not been adequately examined. It seems pertinent and necessary, then, to find out if there is any relationship between religious training and delinquency, instead of proceeding, as we have, on the tacit assumption that teaching moral precepts will result in moral behavior.

One would assume that, since organized religion is supposed to be our culture's chief vehicle for the instillation of what our society deems to be "good," "moral" behavior, studies of delinquent behavior would have early investigated the religious backgrounds of those not behaving in a "good" or "moral" way.

Perhaps earlier investigators have made the assumption that religious training had no bearing on delinquency, or that delinquency, ipso facto, indicated no religious training. Perhaps they merely overlooked

it as a factor, or perhaps, as Bloch and Flynn point out (1956), we are confusing church attendance statistics with religious experiences. If, indeed, religious training has no effect on delinquency, then our society could concentrate its religious efforts and activities in those areas where they are most valuable. If it is true that the fact of delinquency means also the fact of no religious training, by instituting more of such training we will have discovered a means whereby our society can help solve the present impasse relating to the handling of the juvenile delinquency problem.

Furthermore, if certain religious training experiences are found to have a direct or inverse relationship to subsequent delinquency, some light would be thrown on current controversy regarding religious readings in schools, public versus parochial education, and the teachings of commonly accepted ethical values.

✓ Limitations of the Investigation

In the study by Glueck and Glueck (1950), wherein 1000 boys were studied, half of whom were delinquents and half were non-delinquents, the point is made that juvenile delinquents must be compared with non-delinquents to separate delinquency-causing factors. Therefore, they matched the groups on the basis of four factors, intelligence, family and personal background, body type, and health. The boys' character structures were assessed as a result of psychiatric interviews. They identified a number of what they called "delinquency-causing" factors. The Glueck study has been criticized (Bloch and Flynn, 1956) on the basis that these are really descriptive of a pattern of characteristics found in delinquent boys, rather than of causes. The criticisms are also made

that these characteristics are not sufficiently evaluated in terms of personality disorders, that they used a "body-type" psychology not generally accepted, and that they did not operate within the framework of a theoretical position. But even these critics admit the study's value, calling it "painstaking and controlled." Because of its stature in the field under investigation, the Glueck study has been used as a model and guide in these ways:

1. Matched selected groups are used;
2. Those patterns of activity, school achievement and other behaviors found to be more characteristic of delinquent than non-delinquent boys are assumed to be characteristic of the subjects used in this study.

Therefore, no attempt was made herein to duplicate any research into causal factors of characteristic patterns of behavior. This study investigated the two selected groups only in the area of religious training experiences to see if there were any measurable differences between them.

The investigation was limited to white Protestant boys between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. It was felt that boys who had reached their sixteenth birthday were far enough removed from early religious training experiences to show the lasting effects, if any, of these experiences. It was also reasoned that boys over eighteen years of age are usually labeled "criminal" rather than "delinquent," and a different sociological and philosophical orientation is brought to bear on the problem.

Only Protestant boys were used, because Protestant denominations make up the dominant religious orientation in Oklahoma.

Non-whites were not used because it is freely admitted in penological

sociological and philosophical circles that colored boys are treated differently from white boys in the matters of arrest and sentencing.

Girls were not studied because delinquency among girls is much lower than among boys, thus limiting the number of subjects available; and delinquency among girls is concentrated in two areas, sexual offenses and shoplifting, and fewer subjects are available for study.

Hypotheses Studied

This study investigated the following general hypothesis: the religious training experiences of adolescent delinquent white, Protestant boys differ from those of a similar group of non-delinquent boys. The null hypothesis was stated thus: there is no measurable difference between the religious training experiences of a selected group of adolescent delinquent white, Protestant boys and those of a matched selected group of non-delinquent boys.

Sub-hypotheses tested were these:

1. There is no significant difference in the amount of attendance at a place of worship between the boys of each group;
2. There is no significant difference between the two groups in the number of boys who have attended parochial school;
3. There is no significant difference between the two groups in the number of boys who have attended religious instruction school or sessions;
4. There is no significant difference between the two groups in the amount of participation in activities related to religion, place of worship, parochial school or religious instruction;
5. There is no significant difference between the two groups in the amount or kind of religion-related activities at home;
6. There is no significant difference between the two groups in the amount or kind of contact with religion-related personnel.

Definitions of Terms

In this study a number of words and phrases are used frequently which have delimited meanings for this investigation. Accordingly, the precise definitions relating to their use here are given.

The boys are classified into two groups: delinquent and non-delinquent. A delinquent boy is one whose pattern of behavior in society has brought about his incarceration in a penal institution. A non-delinquent boy is one who is presently attending school and has never previously been adjudged delinquent.

Religious training experiences occur at home and at formal and informal religion-related institutions. A religious training experience, in this study, is one which has as its purpose the furtherance of identification with the nominal religion of the subject, whether it occurs at home or at a religion-related institution.

A religion-related institution is considered to be one which provides religious training experiences, with the purpose of furthering religious identification in the participant. The institution, if a church or parochial school, is considered formal. It is an informal institution if it is sponsored by the church or parochial school with social, athletic or recreational aims as well as religious purposes.

Since religious training experiences are fostered under the aegis of religion-related institutions, the persons whose contacts with the subjects of this study are under such aegis are considered to be religion-related personnel.

Design of the Investigation

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, i.e., to investigate

the religious training experiences of a selected group of delinquent boys and compare them with the experiences of a selected group of non-delinquents, an instrument was designed, in the form of a questionnaire. This instrument is shown in the Appendix, and its rationale is discussed in Chapter III. Delinquency was selected as the dependent variable, with religious training experiences as the independent variable. By means of the designed instrument, a measure could be obtained of the independent variable and its effect, if any, on the dependent variable assessed. A trial run of this instrument was made and it proved to be satisfactory in that it was easy to administer, and took a minimum amount of the subject's time. The trial subjects, in the investigator's discussion with them, showed that the questions were not misunderstood or misinterpreted by the subjects.

Two selected groups were given the instrument: the experimental or delinquent group, and the control or non-delinquent group. These groups were selected on criteria to be described in Chapter III, and factors identified by other studies as affecting delinquency were held constant. After both groups had yielded their data, these data were analyzed using chi-square (X^2) to determine whether or not significant differences existed between the two groups in the dependent variable. The analysis of the data was then studied to evaluate and interpret the results in terms of implications for germane disciplines.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Factors Related to Delinquency

In the late nineteenth century, Lombroso (1911) postulated a criminologic theory of crime and delinquency. He averred that criminals were biologically and innately different from other people, in that they had readily discernible physical features that were overt manifestations of covert personality characteristics. The increased interest in intelligence testing that arose in the early twentieth century helped to give rise to a theory of intelligence as the chief factor in the causation or prevention of delinquency and crime. Goddard (1921) was the chief proponent of this point of view. Within a few years, Metfessel and Lovell (1942) had produced statistics which seriously challenged these works. But Schlapp (1924), with his hormonal emphasis, soon supplied new food for thought.

Historically, emphasis then shifted from single factors within the individual to single or multiple factors in the environmental situation in which the delinquent was found.

A study of 4000 delinquent boys was made by Healy (1915). Noting that many presumed causative "factors" appeared with great statistical frequency, he classified them into two categories, one which he called antecedent conditions: defective heredity, broken home, alcoholism of parents, poor parental control, bad companions, lack of healthy mental

interests; and one which he considered to be directly related to the mental state of the offender: mentally normal, feeble-minded, psychoneurotic, physically defective, unstable adolescent. Then he used a third category, the offense, to which he related the first two categories. It was his conclusion that these factors were not "causative" but simply demonstrated a statistical relationship of occurrence, the significance of which was doubtful in view of the fact that many boys of whom the same conditions were true did not become delinquent. Healy, with Bronner, subsequently (1936) made a study of siblings and twins in the area of delinquency causation. This study was an outgrowth of Healy's feeling that causation could be evaluated best through study of the individual delinquent. These authors contended that a multiple-factor theory based on individual cases would best explain the causative factors of delinquency.

The multiple factor-individual approach has gradually blended into an interdisciplinary-case study approach, one in which several disciplines bring their expertise to bear on any individual case. Along with this trend have come evaluations of the pressures of social institutions and their effects on the individual. This study has attempted to assess the effects, if any, of one social institution, organized religion.

As mentioned, early studies attempted to find a single factor which could be delineated as the "cause" of delinquency. Lombroso, previously cited, made physical measurements of prisoners. He used no non-prisoner controls, but nevertheless concluded criminals were physically different from non-criminals.

Dugdale (1916) studied a family he named the Jukes, and Goddard (1912) studied a family he called the Kallikaks. Both interpreted their

findings to show that law-breakers came from inferior eugenic stock. These studies were subsequently discredited because they used no comparative data about other families in the same situations and because the data were largely obtained from local gossip and recollection.

Healy and Bronner (1926) found that thirty-seven percent of the delinquents they studied were below a normal intelligence level. This seemed to agree with Goddard's contention that innate inferiority tended to promote delinquency. But Metfessel and Lovell (1942), Weiss and Sampliner (1944) and Adler (quoted in Bloch and Flynn, 1956) had produced statistics to dispute these claims, showing that the distribution of intelligence for delinquent groups approximated that of the general population.

Most recently, Glueck and Glueck (1950) have shown that the variation between delinquent and non-delinquent groups is not in quantity (i.e., in I. Q. score) but is rather in quality (i.e., the type of intellectual task).

Schlapp and Smith (1928) postulated a theory, based on a study of 20,000 prisoners, that glandular or hormonal differences existed between criminal and normal personalities. But Murphy (1947) points out that many bodily states and activities affect the functioning of the endocrine glands and incarceration in prison might well be one. Thus, this study, unless repeated on a comparative basis, cannot be relied upon. Levy's study (1931) shows that personality functioning can affect the output of the endocrine glands, in contrast to Schlapp and Smith's contention that the glands affect the personality.

Bodily type as a factor related to delinquency was studied by Hooton (1939 a,b). In contrast to Lombroso, he compared a group of prisoners

with a group of non-prisoners. He cited certain physical features as appearing more frequently in the prisoner group. His work has been criticized on the basis that his control group was too heterogeneous and showed more variation within itself than between it and the prisoner group (Bloch and Flynn, 1956).

Sheldon (Sheldon, et al., 1940, 1942, 1949) in his personality theory, has demarcated three physico-personality types: endomorphic (heavy-set), ectomorphic (angular), and mesomorphic (well-muscled), who were described as being relaxed, introvertive, and extravertive, respectively. Glueck and Glueck, previously cited, found in studying 500 delinquent and 500 non-delinquent boys that mesomorphs tended to predominate among the delinquents. They do however, caution that this physical type may result from early influences in their culture that stress muscular development.

The Glueck study has also discussed another factor thought to relate to delinquency, psychological traits. They found that delinquents differed from non-delinquents in such things as restlessness, impulsiveness, level of activity, aggressiveness, destructiveness, hostility, defiance of authority, independence, stubbornness, need for status and social assertiveness.

Burt (1925) pointed out that emotional disturbance is highly characteristic of delinquents, with which the Gluecks agree.

Shaw (1929) indicated that "broken homes" have not been proved as a factor in delinquency, although this attitude seems to persist among laymen. Coulter (1948) agrees with Shaw. The Gluecks imply that the number or kind of parental figures present is not as important as the quality of the relationship between the boy and the parental figure or

figures. They produced a prediction table based on this relationship, a five-factor table based on: discipline of boy by father, supervision of boy by mother, affection of father for boy, affection of mother for boy, and cohesiveness of family.

The most recent and most comprehensive study using the Glueck table was made in New York City (Craig and Glick, 1964). During the ten years of this study, the table was reduced to three factors: discipline of boy by mother, supervision by mother, and family cohesiveness. Boys from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $6\frac{1}{2}$ years of age, living in "high delinquency" areas were selected for study. Each was followed up for ten years. Of the 303 boys, thirty-three were predicted to become delinquent. The prediction was 84.8% accurate, since twenty-eight boys did become delinquent. Of the 243 cases predicted as non-delinquents, 236 (or 97.1%) did not become delinquent. Of twenty-five predicted as having an almost even chance of becoming delinquent, nine presently are and sixteen are not delinquent. This study, therefore, has shown the predictive value of these three factors.

Another study re-investigates the early attitude toward broken homes. Toby (1957) examines the hypothesis that the incidence of "broken homes" is greater among families of delinquents than among families generally. He cites several studies which seem to show that this is true only for pre-adolescent male and for female delinquents. He suggests that adolescent male delinquents are subjected to a differential control pattern as compared with pre-adolescent boys and females. Therefore, pre-adolescent males and females from "disorganized" homes get less control than females and pre-adolescent males in "organized" homes, and show more delinquency. Adolescent male delinquents get little control even in "good" homes.

One recent study indicates that, even in "poor" homes in a high delinquency area, the influence of adult-child relationships is important. Dinitz, Reckless and Kay (1958) and Scarpitti, Murray, Dinitz and Reckless (1960) advance the theory that the internalization of a favorable self-concept is the critical variable in the "containment" of delinquency. Cited by Scarpitti and his associates is a 1959 follow-up of a 1955 study (Reckless, et al., 1956, 1957). One hundred twenty-five "good" boys--as nominated by teachers and as defined by the boys themselves and their mothers--were re-studied (109 were actually found in 1959). Ninety-nine were still in school, and ninety-five had no violational behavior in the four years, although living in or coming from a high-delinquency area and being at the median age (16) for delinquents in this city. Their teachers, their mothers and they, themselves, conceptualized their not being delinquent in the future, i.e., a favorable self-concept was thought to be operating to keep them from becoming delinquent, as it had operated in the past.

Monahan (1957) feels that, on the basis of earlier studies, court experiences in general and experience in the Philadelphia Court (juvenile) in particular, the stability and continuity of family life is the most important single factor in determining delinquency or non-delinquency of a child. He notes that death was formerly the most frequent cause of family status changes, but divorce now is. He notes also that non-white children show greater family instability and greater delinquency than white children.

Andry (1960) cites his investigation of the roles of both parents and the adequacy thereof in their relation to delinquency in children. Studying parental affection, parent-child communication and general home

atmosphere, he concluded that delinquents identified less with their fathers, their affectional relationships were poor, they gravitated toward their mothers for advice or when in trouble, and their fathers set a cheerless atmosphere in the home.

The Gluecks also (1957) worked over data regarding the working mothers of the groups studied previously. Mothers (of delinquents) who did not supervise the boys well contributed to delinquency. Mothers (of delinquents) who worked sporadically seemed to cause greater emotional conflict in delinquents. In fact, the sporadic, irregular working mother seems to cause more delinquency. Mothers who worked seemed to account for fathers who fulfilled their roles poorly, and the Gluecks felt that this contributed to emotional conflict in the delinquent children.

Sub-cultural influences as a factor in delinquency are discussed by Cohen (1955) and Yablonsky (1962).

Cohen spells out three theories regarding the making of a delinquent:

1. Cultural transmission--learning sub-culture norms of behavior;
2. Psychoanalytic--faulty ego and superego formation;
3. Psychiatric--emotional adjustment faulty.

He feels cultural and psychogenic factors may work together to make a delinquent. Thus he sets out to "account for the sub-culture (i.e., delinquent sub-culture) itself."

Much evidence is reviewed to support Cohen's contention that juvenile delinquency and the delinquent sub-culture are "overwhelmingly concentrated in the male, working-class sector of the juvenile population." A "General Theory of Sub-Cultures" is offered:

1. All human action is an effort to solve problems;

2. The social milieu determines the creation and solutions of these problems;
3. There are social pressures toward conformity in solutions;
4. Individuals seek a sub-group whose pressures are "favorable";
5. Individuals seek a sub-group whose problems are similar and whose solutions are acceptable to the individual;
6. Sub-cultures offer solutions to status problems;
7. Sub-cultures offer a chance to show hostility to the larger group.

The point is made that middle-class and working-class children grow up in different cultural settings, with different aspirations and virtues. Cohen feels that the larger culture and its chief agents, the family and the school, tend to look upon middle-class standards as "proper" ones. This creates problems for the working-class boy. This creates his push into the delinquent sub-culture, as outlined under a "General Theory." Cohen goes on to say that middle-class delinquency arises because of working-class kinds of culture and child-rearing practices being used by some families who are middle-class in terms of income and occupation, just as some working-class families (in terms of income and occupation) are middle-class families in terms of culture and child-rearing practices. But he does not evaluate religious training experiences among these child-rearing practices.

Yablonsky cites his study of delinquent gangs, what he calls the "violent gang." The study covered four years, during which the author lived and worked in the New York area where the gangs were located.

Material was obtained on over 100 gangs and gang warfare incidents. The "violent gang" of today is not like Whyte's Norton Street Gang (Whyte, 1943). In Whyte's gang, definite role and status relationships were established, with the members internalizing the norms of the gang. The

violent gang's members are not able to establish relationships, they express hostility and aggression, and they need a channel for fantasies of power.

Yablonsky avers that the violent gang has marginal members who are emotionally disturbed, almost (perhaps actually) psychopathic. The leaders are a tough core who attract the marginal members as they drift in and out in a search for aggressive expression. The gang is a sub-culture in which middle-class norms do not prevail. It is evident that certain emotional, social and psychological needs are met through membership in it, even though the membership is flexibly organized and relatively unstable. The implication is clear that the factors which caused a boy to become a gang member had their etiology in his earlier life.

Current thinking on juvenile delinquency is summarized by the Gluecks (1952). The major findings of their work are discussed and put into perspective with current thought. The point is made at the beginning that an interdisciplinary approach to causation of delinquency is necessary. The authors show that causes as esoteric as meteorological changes bring changes in the amount of delinquency. They suggest that delinquents can be understood only when measured against non-delinquents. Delinquents are persistent in their misbehavior, while non-delinquents may engage in misbehavior, too, but only once or twice or for a short time. Furthermore, the misbehaviors of delinquents are more serious in nature, and they showed maladaptive behavior quite early--at an average age of 8.3 years.

The foregoing citations make only passing, if any, reference to the religious backgrounds and training of delinquents. Studies that have dealt with religio-delinquency data are, for the most part, not recent, being fifteen or more years old.

Mursell (1930) studied delinquents in an Ohio penal institution and non-delinquents in certain Ohio public schools. He administered four tests to test "religious training"; one on "moral knowledge," one on "religious ideas," one on "biblical knowledge," and one on "religious background." The first test asked questions like: Is it your duty to work before you play? The second asked questions like: why should we attend Sunday School? The third test asked questions like: Jesus was born in the town of Bethany, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth. The last test was a count of the number of times per month the child went to church and Sunday School, age of baptism and confirmation, number of times per week prayers and grace were said, and number of times per week that the child received religious instruction.

Mursell found no relationship between religious training and delinquency.

A similar study by Hightower (1930) shows no significance in the amount of biblical knowledge as it affects measures of lying, cheating, and loyalty and altruism. Measures were used to test the amount of biblical information. Then opportunities were given to lie and cheat on various measures. A test of loyalty and altruism was also given. Hightower found no relationship between scores on the measures of biblical information and scores on measures for lying, cheating, or loyalty and altruism.

An early classic in a connected field was the study of Hartshorne and May (1928-1930). They attempted to ascertain the effects of formal "moral" teaching on children and to this end devised an experiment wherein children who went to Sunday School regularly were found to be more apt to cheat on an examination than children who did not attend Sunday School.

There have been several related studies which examined the nominal

church membership of child and adult delinquents.

Kvaraceus (1945) studied 761 delinquent children in Passaic, New Jersey. Almost all the children were affiliated with some church--93.2% claimed affiliation. Only in the case of Jewish children is the incidence of delinquency "less than might be anticipated."

Dunn (1926) cites his early study of prison and reformatory populations that shows that most inmates of correctional institutions claim some "religious preference or affiliation." Kvaraceus (1954) says, "These do not represent the essential nature of the religious experience or the religious attitude." Kvaraceus further notes that the religious atmosphere of the home is important but has not been studied. He also suggests that control groups of non-delinquents were not used, and the age of this study is a limiting factor.

The latest study in this area is one by Wattenberg (1950), who related church attendance to recidivism of delinquents and found that those delinquents who attended church regularly tended to have a lower recidivistic rate than delinquents who were not regular church goers.

Areas Needing Investigation

Although many aspects of juvenile delinquency have been voluminously studied, the religious training experiences of delinquent youths have not been. This study has attempted to demark and evaluate this one aspect.

The literature indicates that there seem to be several other areas in the study of the etiology of juvenile delinquency that are worthy of investigation but have received little or none:

1. Studies of children behaving in groups, to assess the effects of group sub-cultures on children's behavior, personality, goals---a social-psychological assessment;

2. Studies of behavior deviations in children's groups, to assess their potentialities for discrimination between subsequent delinquency and non-delinquency;
3. Studies of what roles in delinquency perceptual and cognitive distortions play;
4. Studies of the etiology of delinquency related to certain critical periods in development: e.g., toilet-training, school entrance, etc.;
5. Studies of the contributions to the etiology of delinquency of certain current educational practices: e.g., compulsory attendance, automatic promotion, rigid curricula, fixed entrance age, etc.

It is believed the above might prove fruitful.

Lack of Research in This Area

Obviously, the present study was undertaken because of the writer's strong feeling that our culture has been operating for too long on tacit assumptions and prejudices regarding the relationships between religion and delinquency. Perhaps a fruitful area for investigation would be the effects on child-rearing practices of the various religious orientations. But a logical starting point is the assessment of whether or not religious training experiences are differentially operative in relation to delinquency.

With the possible exception of the cited work by Mursell, this assessment has not been made. Mursell's definition of "religious training" is evidently different from the one in the present study. It seems to include knowledges and attitudes regarding religion that would indicate religious training, while this study is concerned with a pattern of activities.

Mursell questioned the value of the tests he used, on the basis that they didn't really measure the attitudes of the individuals tested: "They

may only represent information concerning the conventional opinions on these particular items." By "conventional opinions" he probably meant middle-class norms, for the questions seemed to be oriented to these norms. This is one among several reasons such tests were not used in the present study.

Biblical knowledge and delinquency were previously studied (Hightower, 1930); and cheating and Sunday School attendance were previously investigated (Hartshorne and May, 1928-30) also. Thus, Mursell's chief contribution seems to have been to confirm these then-contemporary studies.

The present investigation, on the other hand, has studied a pattern of religious training experiences, a pattern which includes experiences not previously investigated.

CHAPTER III

SUBJECTS AND PROCEDURE

Selection of the Subjects

What might be termed the experimental group, the group of delinquent boys, was chosen from among the inmates of an Oklahoma reformatory. The non-delinquent or control group was chosen from among a group of high school boys in a large Oklahoma metropolitan area.

The groups were matched on the following factors: age, race, sex, religion, intelligence, and family organization status. In addition, the parents' occupations were noted as an indicator of socio-economic level.

Chapter I ("Limitations") has stated the reasons why white Protestant boys between sixteen and eighteen years of age were chosen.

Accordingly, all of the boys in the reformatory who were sixteen to eighteen were included in this study, if they were also white Protestants. Intelligence test scores on the California Test of Mental Maturity were obtained for these subjects. Their family organization status was determined on the basis of their living (previous to commitment with both parents, one parent or neither parent. Since information on their socio-economic background was not available to the investigator, an indicator of this background, their parents' occupations, was used. The occupations were those that Cohen (1955) would class as "working class."

The boys in the control group were selected in a similar way, so that the groups were matched on the factors stated above. In this non-delinquent group intelligence test scores (also on the California Test of Mental Maturity) were obtained for each boy, family organization status was determined, and parent's or guardian's occupation noted. It was felt that socio-economic level would be similar for each group if the occupations were similar.

Since the number of possible subjects for the control group was very large, the requisite number was obtained in this manner: a representative of the school administration was briefed on the characteristics of the delinquent group. The criteria to be met with the non-delinquent group were described to him. He helped the author choose a working-class neighborhood school which, in the administrator's experience, would have in attendance boys who met these criteria. At the school, the aid of the counselors was obtained and the records of the 1000 boys in the school examined (all the boys were white). A list was made of the boys whose age, intelligence test scores, parent's or guardian's occupation, and family organization status were commensurate with the criteria. A total of 619 boys was culled. In random order, every fourth boy was picked so that a group of 154 boys resulted. A number of these were absent, twenty-four had been dropped (although not noted on the records) and several were not of a Protestant denomination. As a result of these selective factors which could not be controlled, the group was finally narrowed down to a total of sixty-five.

Since the delinquent group was found to have approximately 50% of the boys living (before commitment) with both parents, approximately 50% of the non-delinquent group was made up the same way, as shown in Table I

TABLE I
FAMILY ORGANIZATION STATUS OF BOYS

Status	Delinquents (Prior to Commitment)		Non-delinquent (Presently)	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Living with Both Parents	33	50.7	36	55.5
Living with Mother Only	26	40.0	27	41.5
Living with Father Only	4	6.2	1	1.5
Living with Neither Parent	2	3.1	1	1.5
N	65	100.0	65	100.0
SE _%	(Living with Both Parents)	6.20%		6.16%
	(Living with Mother Only)	6.07		6.11
	(Living with Father Only)	2.99		1.50
	(Living with Neither Parent)	2.15		1.50
SE _{D%}	(Living with Both Parents)		8.74%	
	(Living with Mother Only)		8.62	
	(Living with Father Only)		3.35	
	(Living with Neither Parent)		2.62	
CR	(Living with Both Parents)		.55	
	(Living with Mother Only)		.17	
	(Living with Father Only)		1.40	
	(Living with Neither Parent)		.61	

(page 26).

It will be noted that thirty-three of the delinquents lived with both parents, as did thirty-six of the non-delinquents. Twenty-six of the former lived with their mother only, as did twenty-seven of the latter. Four of the delinquents and one of the non-delinquents lived with the father only, while two of the delinquents and one of the non-delinquents lived with neither parent. Table I shows the percentages of each group living in each status category. It will be noted that the critical ratios (CR) are quite small, indicating no significances in the slight differences in percentages. It can be said, then, that the groups were essentially the same in family organization status.

Table II shows the distribution of intelligence quotient scores for the boys studied.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT SCORES OF BOYS

Score Interval	Number Per Interval	
	Delinquents (Range: 70-119)	Non-delinquents (Range: 70-123)
70-79	4	4
80-89	13	7
90-99	30	27
100-109	15	14
110-119	3	8
120-129	0	5
N	65	65
M	93	99
SD	9.42	11.74
SE _M	1.17	1.46
SE _{D₁M₂}		1.87
CR		3.21

It was found that the intelligence test scores of the delinquent group ranged from I. Q. 70 to I. Q. 119, while those of the non-delinquent group ranged from I. Q. 70 to 123. The mean I. Q. of the former group was 93, while that of the latter group was 99. From the data presented in Table II, it is evident that the boys in each group were significantly different in mean I. Q. score. This factor, therefore, could not be used for matching purposes. However, the range of scores was similar and both means fell within what the California test considers the range of "normal" intelligence. Furthermore, Metfessel and Lovell and others cited earlier point out that intelligence is not a factor in delinquency. Therefore, this factor is of no effect on the results of this study.

The distribution of ages for the boys in each group is shown below in Table III, page 29.

Means were figured for each age group (16-0 to 16-11, 17-0 to 17-11, 18-0 to 18-11) and also for the delinquent group and the non-delinquent group as units. Table III indicates that the groups were essentially the same in age, there being no significance in the differences.

When matched for parents' occupations, the groups were found to be not significantly different (shown in Table IV, page 30), except in two categories, "Salesworkers" and "Craftsmen." Seven of the nine categories were of no significant difference, and the numbers involved in the two significantly different categories were not large. What is more, these two categories were "working-class" occupations. Thus, it was concluded that the boys in both groups were matched on the socio-economic indicator used, the parents' occupations. This is an indicator that the neighborhood of the control group was similar to the neighborhood of the experimental group in socio-economic level. The occupations were categorized according to the standards and methods used by the United States Bureau of Census.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF AGES OF BOYS

Age	Del.	Non-del.	Age	Del.	Non-del.	Age	Del.	Non-del.
16-0	1	1	17-0	0	2	18-0	4	8
16-1	0	1	17-1	0	0	18-1	3	6
16-2	3	3	17-2	2	1	18-2	3	4
16-3	0	0	17-3	1	0	18-3	3	2
16-4	3	2	17-4	3	4	18-4	7	3
16-5	3	2	17-5	1	1	18-5	1	2
16-6	1	2	17-6	1	1	18-6	2	0
16-7	1	1	17-7	4	2	18-7	2	3
16-8	1	0	17-8	3	1	18-8	3	2
16-9	0	1	17-9	2	4	18-9	1	0
16-10	0	0	17-10	1	2	18-10	1	1
16-11	1	1	17-11	2	2	18-11	1	0
N	14	14	20	20		31	31	
M _{age}	16.38	16.38	17.55	17.54		18.35	18.34	
SD _{age}	.27	.29	.32	.43		.40	.47	
SE _M	.07	.08	.07	.10		.07	.08	
SE _D		.11		.12			.11	
CR		0		.08			.09	
M _{group}			Del.--17.68			Non-del.--17.62		
SD			.84			.83		
SE _M			.1041			.1029		
SE _D						.1070		
CR						.0747		

TABLE IV
OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS OF BOYS

Category	Number Engaged			
	Delin- quents	Percent- age	Non-delin- quents	Percent- age
Government Service	5	7.6	4	6.1
Managers, Officials and Proprietors	1	1.6	1	1.6
Clerical and Kindred Workers	1	1.6	4	6.1
Sales Workers	1	1.6	10	15.4
Craftsmen and Kindred Workers	16	24.6	6	9.2
Operatives and Kindred Workers	5	7.6	2	3.1
Service Workers	10	15.4	15	23.1
Laborers	14	21.5	16	24.6
Unemployed	12	18.5	7	10.8
N	65	100.0	65	100.0
SE % (Government Service)		3.28%		2.97%
(Managers, etc.)		1.56		1.56
(Clerical, etc.)		1.56		2.97
(Sales Workers)		1.56		4.48
(Craftsmen, etc.)		5.34		3.59
(Operatives, etc.)		3.28		2.25
(Service Workers)		4.48		5.23
(Laborers)		5.09		5.34
(Unemployed)		4.81		3.85
SE _D % (Government Service)			4.43%	
(Managers, etc.)			2.20	
(Clerical, etc.)			3.35	
(Sales Workers)			4.74	
(Craftsmen, etc.)			6.43	
(Operatives, etc.)			3.92	
(Service Workers)			6.88	
(Laborers)			7.38	
(Unemployed)			6.17	
CR (Government Service)			.34	
(Managers, etc.)			0	
(Clerical, etc.)			1.34	
(Sales Workers)			2.91	
(Craftsmen, etc.)			2.40	
(Operatives, etc.)			1.15	
(Service Workers)			1.12	
(Laborers)			.42	
(Unemployed)			1.25	

When chosen by the above factors, each group contained sixty-five subjects, similar in sex, age, race, religion, family organization status and occupation of parent.

Instruments Used in the Investigation

Intelligence test scores were obtained by means of the California Test of Mental Maturity.

Religious training experiences were measured by means of a questionnaire evolved by the author (see Appendix). This questionnaire asked questions designed to determine religious training experiences connected with a formal religious institution, those connected with parochial school, those connected with extra-institutional activities, those connected with home religious activities, and those connected with religion-related personnel.

Based on the author's experience as a parochial school teacher and administrator, a number of questions were first set down which related to religion-connected activities. These questions were then grouped in the five categories mentioned above. In each of the five categories the questions were evaluated on the basis of redundancy, commonality to many religious denominations, estimated contribution to a picture of religion-related activities and ease of administration and answering. Nine questions resulted. The first four questions delineated a pattern of religious training experiences related to formal religious instruction and attendance that was closely tied to the church. The next two questions determined a pattern related to attendance at either a church-related school or a public school. The last three questions described

patterns relating to church-sponsored or church-school-sponsored activities, to activities in the home, and to personal relationship activities with religion-related personnel.

Question 1 asked whether or not the subject was confirmed. Confirmation is a rite practiced by several but not all religious denominations. It was used as an item in the instrument because, when used in a denomination, it betokens formal acceptance into the religious apparatus and is often a culmination of months or even several years of formal preparation for such acceptance. Its occurrence would imply goal-oriented behavior on the part of the subject and an acceptance of cultural norms which might act as a delinquency-preventive.

Question 2, "Did you go to confirmation class or instruction?" was included so that, if a significant difference between the groups was found, this question might indicate a degree of religious training experiences that could account for the difference.

Questions 3 and 4, relating to church and Sunday School attendance, were designed to assess exposure to the most common religion-related activities in our society. Question 5, re parochial school attendance, was thought to elicit any significant difference, if such existed, related to the additional religious training given in parochial schools.

Question 6 concerned itself with religious instruction that may have been attended by those who did not attend parochial school. It was believed that this would give a measure of parochial school attendance against public school attendance with additional religious instruction.

Questions 7, 8 and 9 measured, respectively, voluntary participation in institutional-related or sponsored activities; home-sponsored or home-related activities and voluntary contact with religion-related personnel. These were thought to give an assessment of religious training experiences that signified a residual effect of formal religious training experiences.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

This study has attempted to compare the religious training experiences of a group of delinquents and a group of non-delinquents. It was hypothesized that the pattern of these experiences might differ for the two groups, these differences showing in how many were confirmed, in frequency of attendance at church and Sunday School, in participation in religion-sponsored activities and home religious activities, in contact with religion-related personnel, and in religious instructional activities.

The data are presented as follows: Table V, below, shows the numbers of the delinquent group and of the non-delinquent group who stated that they were or were not confirmed.

TABLE V
CONFIRMATION EXPERIENCE OF DELINQUENT
AND NON-DELINQUENT BOYS

Group	Confirmed	Not Confirmed	(Did Not Answer)
Delinquents	23	41	(1)
Non-delinquents	9	53	(3)

$\chi^2 = 6.53$
 $p < .02$

To assess the significance of these results, X^2 was determined, using Yates' formula which contains a correction for continuity. For Table V, X^2 was found to be 6.53. At the .05 level of significance, chi-square is 3.84, according to the abridged Fisher and Yeats table used by Siegel.¹ This is clearly significant, p actually being less than .02. Thus, we may conclude that being confirmed is a religious training experience that is engaged in to a degree that is significantly different between delinquent and non-delinquent boys. Since the difference is on the side of the delinquent, the inference is that delinquent boys were more frequently confirmed than non-delinquent boys, to a significant degree.

When boys were asked: "Did you go to confirmation class or instruction?," the delinquent group again more frequently answered, "Yes." This is shown in Table VI.

TABLE VI
ATTENDANCE AT CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION

Group	Attended	Did Not Attend	(Did not Answer)
Delinquents	16	48	(1)
Non-delinquents	4	59	(2)
	$X^2 = 6.97$		
	$p < .01$		

At the .05 level, X^2 is clearly significant, being 6.97. In fact,

¹Table C, p. 249, in Sidney Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956, has been used in this study.

p is less than .01. Table VI indicates, therefore, that delinquent boys in this study were in attendance at a confirmation class or received confirmation instruction to a degree significantly different from non-delinquent boys.

Table VII shows the frequency of church attendance in each group, in answer to the question, "Between the ages of 10 and 13, how often did you go to church?"

TABLE VII
FREQUENCY OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Group	Attendance			
	Almost Every Week	About Twice A Month	Once a Month	Only on Special Occasions
Delinquents	25	15	6	11
Non-delinquents	35	13	6	9
$X^2 = 1.66$ $p < .70$				

A visual examination of these figures indicates that only among those boys in the two groups who attended "almost every week" was there a marked difference in numbers. In the categories showing less frequent or less regular attendance, the delinquent boys and the non-delinquent boys showed little difference.

To determine whether the apparent differences were significant, the X^2 value was calculated. No significance was found, the X^2 value of 1.66 being far below the table value of 7.82 at the .05 level of significance. P actually lay between .50 and .70. We may therefore conclude that there is no significant relationship between delinquency

or non-delinquency and frequency of going to church.

In answer to the question relating to frequency of attendance at Sunday School, results were obtained as shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII
FREQUENCY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Group	Attendance				
	Almost Every Week	About Twice a Month	Once a Month	Once in a While	Almost Never
Delinquents	31	9	2	12	8
Non-delinquents	39	13	0	7	5
$X^2 = 5.79$					
$p < .20$					

From this Table, X^2 was found to be 5.79, again far below the table value of 9.49 at the .05 level. In this instance, p was almost (but less than) .20. Therefore, frequency of attendance at Sunday School did not distinguish between delinquent and non-delinquent boys.

No significance was seen in attendance at parochial school, shown in Table IX, page 38, when the groups were asked, "Did you attend parochial school instead of public school any time between the ages of 10 and 13?"

The X^2 value obtained was 1.47, at the .05 level. With p lying between .20 and .30, it can be assumed that the two groups of boys do not differ significantly on the basis of whether or not they were public school students.

The next question sought to elicit information regarding non-Sunday religious instruction, by asking, "If you attended public school between

the ages of 10 and 13, did you also go to religious instructions of any kind during the week (not Sunday)?" This is shown in Table X.

TABLE IX
ATTENDANCE AT PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

Group	Attended	Did Not Attend	(Did not Answer)
Delinquents	5	60	(0)
Non-delinquents	1	62	(2)
$\chi^2 = 1.47$			
$p < .30$			

TABLE X
NON-SUNDAY SCHOOL INSTRUCTION

Group	Attended	Did Not Attend	(Did Not Answer)
Delinquents	12	51	(2)
Non-delinquents	10	54	(1)
$\chi^2 = .07$			
$p < .80$			

More than two and one-half times as many boys in the delinquent group went to Sunday School as went to religious instruction during the week; and almost four times as many of the non-delinquent boys did the same (see Table VIII). However, of those who did go to non-Sunday instruction, the proportions were almost identical in an inverse ratio between the two groups on the frequency, as shown in Table XA.

TABLE XA
 FREQUENCY OF NON-SUNDAY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENDANCE

Group	Frequency	
	Almost Every Week	Once in a While
Delinquents	4	8
Non-delinquents	7	3

That non-Sunday religious instruction is not significantly different between the delinquent and the non-delinquent groups is indicated by the fact that p , here, lies between .70 and .80, the X^2 value found being .07, far below the .05 level value of 3.84 in the table.

Even less significance is shown by the data of Table XI. This table shows the number of boys in each group who participated in one or more of a variety of stated activities sponsored by their religious institutions.

TABLE XI
 PARTICIPATION IN RELIGION-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

Group	Participated	Did Not Participate
Delinquents	40	25
Non-delinquents	50	15

$$X^2 = 2.92$$

$$p < .90$$

Table XIA shows the breakdown of activities for each group. Some differences can be noted upon examination; but that these differences are not of significance is apparent from the lack of significance in the data of Table XI.

TABLE XIA
KINDS OF ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATED IN

Group	Activity						
	Youth Group	Choir	Scouts	Athletic League or Team	Dances, Camp etc.	Any Other	
Delinquents	16	12	18	13	25	16	3
Non-delinquents	23	11	30	14	24	24	1

Taking part in religion-sponsored activities such as those described has no relationship with status as a delinquent or as a non-delinquent. This is shown by the obtained X^2 value of 2.92, p lying between .80 and .90 (see Table XI).

Table XII shows the numbers of each group who remember certain religious activities in their homes. No wide variation is noted between the two groups, most of the boys in each group having had some such experiences.

TABLE XII
RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN HOME

Group	Participated	Did Not Participate
Delinquents	45	20
Non-delinquents	49	16

$X^2 = .32$
 $p < .90$

When X^2 was calculated, those in the non-delinquent group were not found to differ significantly from those in the delinquent group. The

value of X^2 in this instance was found to be .32, p falling between .80 and .90.

TABLE XIIA
FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN HOME RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Group	Sometimes	Often
Delinquents	57	35
Non-delinquents	70	33
	$X^2 = .52$	
	$p < .50$	

This table shows the numbers of times each group checked "sometimes" or "often" for all the categories combined, while Table XIIB, below, shows the breakdown of the various categories.

TABLE XIIB
KINDS AND FREQUENCIES OF HOME RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Group	Activity	Frequency	
		Sometimes	Often
Delinquents	Prayers at Meals	12	12
Non-delinquents		27	13
Delinquents	Prayers at Bedtime	9	10
Non-delinquents		20	7
Delinquents	Bible Reading Together	7	6
Non-delinquents		10	5
Delinquents	Visits from Your Pastor	29	7
Non-delinquents		23	8

The two groups of boys did not show a significant difference in Table XIII. The value of X^2 was .52, p falling between .30 and .50. It is of interest, also, that the data indicates that home religious activities were not of frequent occurrence.

To determine personal contact with religion-related personnel, the boys in each group were asked about the frequency of such contact with certain stated persons. Contact with religion-related personnel is shown in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

CONTACT WITH RELIGION-RELATED PERSONNEL

Group	Had Contact	Did Not Have Contact
Delinquents	17	48
Non-delinquents	24	41
	$X^2 = 1.28$	
	$p < .30$	

When those who had some such contact and those who had none are considered for each group, we note, from Table XIII, that most boys had no such contact.

With p lying between .20 and .30, the X^2 value of 1.28 of Table XIII can be seen to be of no significance at the chosen level of significance. Thus, we may say that contact of the nature described herein, with religion-related personnel, is not a distinguishing feature between the delinquent group and the non-delinquent group.

TABLE XIII
 KINDS AND FREQUENCIES OF CONTACT WITH
 RELIGION-RELATED PERSONNEL

Group	Person	Frequency		
		Once	Sometimes	Often
Delinquents	Pastor	4	6	1
Non-delinquents		10	7	1
Delinquents	Sunday School Teacher	1	4	0
Non-delinquents		5	9	2
Delinquents	Youth Leader	2	2	1
Non-delinquents		4	6	1
Delinquents	Camp Counselor	2	1	0
Non-delinquents		7	2	1

The X^2 value obtained additively for all questions was 27.01, p lying between .10 and .20. Thus, we may conclude that the overall patterns are not significantly different between the two groups. Both delinquent and non-delinquent boys, in the groups studied, tended to attend church and to go to Sunday School on a regular and rather frequent basis. Neither group attended parochial school in significant numbers, nor did either group attend religious instruction sessions during the week to any great degree.

More of the non-delinquents than of the delinquents took part in religion-sponsored activities such as youth groups and choir; but the difference was not significant and the majority of boys in each group participated in such activities.

Religious activities in the home were experienced by most of the boys in both groups. This kind of activity seemed to be common practice

in the families of the boys studied; but, again, delinquents and non-delinquents participated in numbers that were about equal. It is interesting to note that in none of the individual activities listed was the participation indicated as occurring "often" by more than a few boys in each group. A similar observation can be made about contact with religion-related personnel: few of the boys in either group had such contacts and, when they did, they seemed to be on a "once" or "sometimes" basis, the "often" category being checked so few times as to be almost non-existent.

While confirmation was experienced by significantly more of the delinquent than of the non-delinquent group, those who were confirmed were in the minority, by far.

In sum, these data indicate that the boys studied tend to go to church and to Sunday School, often participate in religion-sponsored activities, but do not have much participation in religious activities in their homes nor much outside personal contact with religion-related personnel.

The question may be raised for any questionnaire: how truthful are the responses? An answer can probably be found in the fact that the two groups in this study responded similarly in most instances. If lying occurred, it seems to have occurred to about the same extent in each group. Since the responses did not show a heavy preponderance of replies tending to indicate unusual amounts of religious training experiences, they can be considered to be generally truthful. If the boys in the groups had wanted to impress the examiner, no doubt they would have erred on the socially-approved side, i.e., by indicating an unusual number of experiences.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

AND CONCLUSIONS

Relationships Between Delinquency and Religious Training Experiences

This study has produced data which indicate that delinquency and religious training experiences have little or no relationship. Chapter II ("Review of the Literature") pointed out a number of factors, in some detail, which have been thought to be related to delinquency causation; and it also pointed out religious training experiences as an area needing investigation. Implicit in some of the citations, and, indeed, in our middle-class cultural rationale for religion, is the assumption that our religious institutions instill attitudes and values that promote ethical (or, at least, legal) behavior. Certainly, no one but an individual whose aim is the promotion of anti-religious or anti-theistic thinking would be rash enough to say that on the basis of this or any other study religious training experiences have no role to play in the rearing of the young in our society. But the fact remains that no evidence has yet been adduced that the particular kinds of experiences tested have been effective in preventing delinquency. Indeed, the early studies by Hartshorne and May, previously cited, indicated that they have not even been

effective in reducing cheating on a test, usually considered unethical behavior rather than delinquent.

Quotations earlier in this paper expressed our middle-class cultural attitude well: many in our society assume that church-going, Sunday School-attending, religious-activity-participating youths are better citizens for these activities. But evidently youths can also become good citizens through other activities, and they can become poor citizens in spite of these activities, if the implications of the data herein and in earlier studies are valid.

Many people would probably recall their earliest religious training experiences as involving activities at home and attendance at a place of worship with their parents. The data in this investigation indicate that delinquents do not differ significantly from non-delinquents in these experiences. Neither are there significant differences in any of the other religious training experiences, between delinquent and non-delinquent boys in the groups studied. The only questions on which significance was evidenced were the first two, pertaining to confirmation and attendance at confirmation classes or instruction. Surprisingly, however, the delinquent group was the one which had the most confirmees. This can be interpreted in one of two ways: boys who are confirmed tend to become delinquent; or it is a chance variation, an anomaly of these data.

If the data had borne out the assumption that non-delinquents attend church and Sunday School more and engage more in other religious training experiences, we might conclude that, since delinquents are more often confirmed, this experience is related to delinquency.

On the other hand, if the delinquent group had engaged more

often in these experiences (including confirmation) we might come to the same conclusion. Perhaps, as the police officer quoted earlier felt, the boys had had "too much religion."

However, neither of these situations was found to exist, so it is felt that perhaps the significance found is a chance variation, in spite of the high probability, from a statistical standpoint, that it is not. It must be remembered that "probability" is not "certainty."

The implications of the findings of this study are largely heuristic. While theories abound in the field of juvenile delinquency, no one has yet been able to point definitely to a practice or experience and say, "This prevents delinquency." Our approach has generally been to try to find causal factors for delinquency. This study has attempted to assess one factor assumed to work against delinquency.

Therefore, if religious training experiences do not operate to prevent delinquent behavior, the heuristic value of this study is apparent: most boys are not delinquent, so what made them and keeps them that way?

Implications for Education,

Psychology and Sociology

Education alone cannot be the answer, for the role of these religious-connected activities is largely an educative one and they seem to have no effect in this study. Perhaps the effect of education on behavior, in determining whether it becomes delinquent or not, is a broad one, involving not merely the teaching of facts or the cultivation of attitudes but, in addition, the opportunities for

practicing under guidance behavior that is acceptable. This may be the way for the instillation of the psychological controls that distinguish the delinquent from the non-delinquent. If so, then psychology's role in preventing delinquency is implied herein: to identify, more clearly than it has heretofore, the psychological milieu and practices that promote these controls. Many psychological theories concerning delinquency are extant; but we lack empirical support for any child-rearing system as a delinquency-preventive.

Child-rearing practices are also a matter of concern to sociologists. They involve social norms, family structure, interpersonal relationships, knowledges, beliefs and attitudes. Since all of these involve the family, the school, and the church, sociology may find it fruitful to investigate how these social institutions become factors that work against delinquency to make non-delinquents.

The above implies an interdisciplinary approach. It would seem most evocative of answers to start with the children rather than with the problem of delinquency. Delinquency itself has been defined in various ways: as incarceration, as deviant behavior, as illegal behavior. If educators, psychologists, sociologists, clergymen and others concerned would engage in a study that followed children as they were reared and educated, as they reacted and learned, as they behaved and misbehaved, perhaps a pattern would emerge that would more clearly say, "These experiences promote acceptable patterns of behavior." Then we would be ready to define delinquency more explicitly than we have, and definition, being a prerequisite for hypothesizing, might bring better theory and research.

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A P P E N D I X

RELIGIOUS TRAINING EXPERIENCES

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Were you confirmed? Yes _____ No _____
2. Did you go to confirmation class or instruction? Yes _____ No _____
3. Between the ages of 10 and 13, how often did you go to church?
 Almost Every Week _____ About Twice a Month _____
 Once a Month _____ Only on Special Occasions _____
4. Between the ages of 10 and 13, how often did you go to Sunday School?
 Almost Every Week _____ About Twice a Month _____
 Once a Month _____ Once in a while _____
 Almost Never _____
5. Did you attend parochial school instead of public school at any time between the ages of 10 and 13?
 Yes _____ No _____
- If yes, how long?
 3 yrs. _____ 1½ yrs. _____
 2½ yrs. _____ 1 yr. _____
 2 Yrs. _____ ½ Yr. _____
6. If you attended public school between the ages of 10 and 13, did you also go to religious instructions of any kind during the week (not Sunday)?
 Yes _____ No _____
- How often?
 Almost Every Week _____ Once in a While _____
7. Between the ages of 10 and 13, did you belong to or take part in any of the following connected with your church or with your parochial school?
 Youth Fellowship of Group _____
 Choir _____
 Scouts _____
 Athletic league or team _____
 Dances or parties _____
 Camp _____
 Any other _____

8. Between the ages of 10 and 13, do you remember any of the following religious activities in your home?

	Sometimes	Often
Prayers at meals		
Prayers at Bedtime		
Bible Reading together		
Visits from your pastor		

9. Between the ages of 10 and 13, did you ever talk over your troubles or problems with any of these persons?

	Once	Some-times	Often
Pastor			
Sunday School Teacher			
Youth Leader			
Camp Counselor			

VITA

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Doctor of Education

Thesis: A STUDY OF THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF A SELECTED GROUP OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

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