Temple stresses family concept

By SHELLY EICHENHORN

"One happy family" is the way Rabbi Ernest Conrad of Temple Kol-Ami describes his congregation.

This close warmth has been achieved by eliminating traditional male and female activities in almost all temple functions, he said.

Rabbi Conrad felt that the barriers of separate activity groups were, "bad at a time when so much tension exists within the family."

The West Bloomfield reformed congregation has no women's sisterhood or men's club, and "women participate fully and equally in the service," said Rabbi Conrad.

Committees of both men and women are formed to organize temple activities such as art shows, fund raisings, and picnics, when they are needed.

Only the youth groups are divided by sex because it was felt that this would better suit the interests of the young congregation members.

The religious program stresses family services.

"We think we have been successful in helping to keep our families together in this way," said the Rabbi. "Suburban living brings a danger of destroying family cohesiveness; we try to maintain traditional family attitudes."

Requirements for the boy's Bar Mitzvah and the girl's Bas Mitzvah (coming of age ceremonies) are exactly the same. This includes allowing women to read from the Torah.

This is a dramatic break from Jewish tradition where only men were allowed to read directly from the holy scriptures.

"We have no opposition to women reading from the Torah," said the Rabbi.

Two of the six officers of the temple are women, among them the vice-president and secretary. Also, the 10 member board includes four women.

Women's liberation sentiment was responsible for an unusual service two years ago. While Rabbi Conrad was on vacation, a Friday night service was held where traditional roles were reversed.

"The lighting of the sabbath candles always done by a woman, was performed by a man, and the ushering always done by men, was done by the female congregation members," Rabbi Conrad explained.

"This was the only time there was comment. Some felt this went too far," he said.

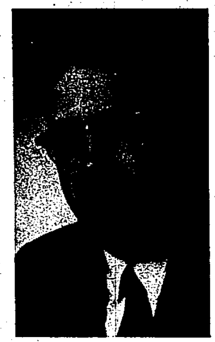
Rabbi Conrad does not hesitate to eliminate chauvanism from prayer.

"We never hesitate to change prayer here and there if things seem inappropriate today," he said.

One altered prayer said by men in the morning service was, "Praised be to you O Lord, our God, who has not made me into a woman."

The women's part read, "Praised be to you, O Lord, our God, who has made me in accordance with his will."

Temple Kol-Ami congregation says, "Praised be to you, O Lord our God, who has made us in accordance to his will."



RABBI CONRAD

THELMA MELTSNER

Business woman honored

Thelma Meltsner was named Woman of the Year by Cranbrook Chapter of the American Business Women's Association (ABWA), at a recent chapter dinner meeting in Troy.

Each ABWA chapter annually selects one of its members for this award. Selection is based on the member's achievement in her chosen field of business, education, participation in community activities, and character.

Mrs. Meltsner is an insurance agent for the Allstate Insurance Co. She has obtained her license in real estate and insurance, life and casualty-mutual funds. Mrs. Meltsner will represent Cranbrook Chapter in competition for the "American Business Woman of the Year" award. Announcement of the national award recipient will be made at ABWA's 1974 National Convention, Oct. 18-20 in Denver, Colo.

Among the officers elected to head the Cranbrook chapter is Charlotte I. Quade of Troy, corresponding secretary.

Association selects officers

David Michael Flynn, 33, has been elected president of the Oakland County Association for Retarded Children at its recent annual meeting.

Flynn of Lake Orion is employed as a senior supervisor of data processing and advance planning for Pontiac Motor Division. He is married and the father of three children. The eldest, Lisa, is mentally retarded and currently lives in a foster home in northern Michigan.

Other newly elected officers of the association include Bernard Trompeter of Southfield, first vice president; Jack Hunt of Pontiac, second vice president; Mrs. John Herrold of Birmingham, secretary; and Mrs. Byron Wyatt of Birmingham, treasurer. Also elected to a two-year term as delegate-at-large was David Aldorfer of Royal Oak.

The organization also approved an amendment to their by-laws which changed the name of the Oakland County Association for Retarded Children to the Oakland County Association for Retarded Citizens.

This change will better serve the organization in its efforts to serve all retarded persons and will help to eliminate the age-old myth that the retarded are "children forever," according to the association director, Brent C. Glazier.