

ST. MARK'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

THINGS IT SHOULD HELP US ALL TO KNOW: The Categories

Editor's Note - This document was originally published in July of 1956 by the Educational Center in St. Louis under the direction of Dr. Charles F. Penniman. It was designed to be an aid to the teachers of junior high school students who were using the Educational Center's three year cycle of confirmation instruction. Over the years it has become the "holy writ" of the small band of Penniman's followers, the core of his insight and wisdom. People who have been introduced to the system in recent years, however, have often expressed some difficulty in grasping the basic understandings without the benefit of Dr. Penniman's application of the categories to the specific circumstances of the teaching.

What follows is an annotated version of the original categories; the parts with normal margins that follow are commentary by Rev. James R. Adams. The only departures from the original are the elimination of the numerous cross references and some changes in punctuation to make for smoother reading.

As teaching and experience move along in the lives of people, there are many basic understandings (sometimes called categories) in the knowledge of which we all grow. Here an effort has been made to indicate some of the most important of these. This is not an exhaustive treatment. They are to some degree described in terms of the Teacher's Manual and the General Notes; thus, no final revision is here contemplated. Explanation is expected to continue and deepen in the Supervisory Process. These identifications are divided into two lists: A) a more specialized and limited group that are relevant in this educational process, and B) a more basic group that are always relevant.

This brief introduction points to the appropriate use of the categories. They are boxes for catching and sorting understandings we already have, not concepts to be learned and taught. A workshop filled with tools accumulated one by one over the years can be a frustrating place in which to do a simple repair job if the equipment is scattered helter-skelter on the bench and around the floor. Organizing the tools with all the screwdrivers in one place and the wrenches in another makes not only for efficiency but for pleasure in the task. Categories fill a similar function. They help us organize our minds so that we can put to use the understandings we have accumulated through experience.

The list is divided into two parts. The "A" list reflects experience in the process of education and the "B" list is theological in content. The two lists are related in that they express the same point of view about the basic nature of human beings and about God.

The A Categories

An indication of basic understandings that arise in the process of the work

A-1	People Learn	2
A-2	Sort of Issue.....	2
A-3	Structure and the Discipline	3
A-4	Categories.....	3
A-5	Launching of Any Question	4
A-6	Use of Concrete Materials.....	4
A-7	In the Development	5
A-8	Three Deeping Level	6
A-9	Four Level...to Take Hold	7
A-10	The Relationship of Cost/Promise.....	9
A-11	Two Kinds of Reflection.....	9
A-12	Three Levels	10
A-13	The Laws of Learning.....	10

Category A-1 People Learn

People learn functionally and in problem situations, as the process is tended within the company of the Faithful; therefore, we start with life (problems) and this takes some identifying. We specifically do not start within the straitjacket of goals where life is hinted. We start with life and only hint at goals. The goals fasten themselves on us.

At least four insights are packed into this brief statement.

First is a recognition of how people learn. People tend to remember and to use what they remember if the learning was derived from their experience in coping with real problems. You cannot learn to swim by reading a book or going to a lecture; you learn by getting into the water and discovering what it is like to float and to sink.

Second, in Christian education the classroom is only one of many learning centers. Students learn from the way they are treated and from the way church members treat each other. They learn from the way the rituals and the festivals are celebrated. They learn and they are nurtured. What is true for the students is also true for the teachers. They are constantly learning in the community and being nurtured by the community. Good teachers understand that they are responsible for only a part of the students' religious education and that with the students they are engaged in a wide-ranging mutual process of learning.

Third, the place teachers need to begin is always in identifying the kinds of real life problems facing the people in the class. If the students are of a different age or significantly different circumstances from the teachers, this business of problem identification takes keen observation.

Fourth, although management by objectives and organizing your life around specific goals can provide a way of channeling your energy, that way of approaching education can be deadly. Once a teacher gets a fixed idea about what the students are to "get" from the course or where the class should "arrive" by the conclusion, the teacher tends to exclude from awareness all insights and experiences that fail to fit into the preconceived framework. From time to time, of course, a limited goal may arise in the planning, such as a desire for the class to share some laughter. Such immediate objectives need not be feared.

Category A-2 The Sort of Issue

There are possibly three different kinds of indications of the sort of issue in which people can work fruitfully;

- a) Primary and not derived.*
- b) Where life is under pressure, confronted,*

c) Where people are going to be faced with the necessity of a decision at some point or other.

This, of course, means that people can work within their own existence concretely.

As a member of a parents' class, a primary issue for me might involve my response to my teenaged child's demand to quit school. To look just at the child's problem with a frustrating school would involve me in a derived issue dealing with the pressures on the child. Although looking at someone's problems can sometimes be helpful, it can also allow me to escape from the pressures of my own life and to avoid confronting my responsibilities. Only when I recognize that I have a decision to make can I be sure that I am working on the sort of issue that is fruitful for me.

Category A-3 Structure and the Discipline

There is absolute need for a structure and the discipline of a structure. This involves the following operations:

- a) The discursive description of the entire problem area as the children face it,*
- b) This area as seen in various levels as units of experience (units here are not developments in extent, but developments in depth).*
- c) Projection of a strategy with each unit.*
- d) The actual planning and execution of sessions,*
- e) The recording and feedback as the supervisory process moves on.*

Throughout the ages, Christians have developed a variety of ways for doing religious education. What each has in common with the others is some sort of structure. We would be both arrogant and naive to suppose that ours is the only true and faithful structure for Christian education. It is simply one way of going about the task. We would be equally arrogant and naive, however to suppose that we could operate without a structure and the discipline for our work that a structure provides.

The structure of this particular approach to Christian education summarized here is described in more detail in the teachers' manuals.

Category A-4 Categories

Categories are precise statements of any matter under consideration. They are by nature abstractions, but life within them is unpredictable. They are devices to help you know what you are talking about; they also

help you get under the surface of the experience.

The use of categories involves us in a tension. We have observed that people learn best when they are dealing with the specific materials and decisions of their own lives, but by reflecting on the experience with categories we are using generalizations that are detached from particular circumstances. No categorical reflection can adequately capture and summarize a specific experience or insight. Recognizing the inherent limitations of categories, you can use them fruitfully in two ways:

First, they can give you a way of understanding what people are saying and doing when you are leading a class so that you can lead confidently and responsibly.

Second, at times categories can provide you with the words you need to use in helping people in the class see more clearly the implications of what they are saying. This process of sharpening people's perceptions through categorical reflection is a basic part of the teaching enterprise.

Category A-5 Launching of Any Question

The launching of any question must, of course, always be done dramatically (within circumstances) and concretely (where decisions are faced). Care has to be taken that the circumstances fit loosely enough so that we don't get stuck with them. In process, they should be stripped away so that we are left with the concreteness.

In getting a class working productively, the teachers must have a clear and sharp question to ask, a question that will get the students thinking about their own lives. To give that question some emotional content and urgency, however, the teachers usually precede the question with a dramatic presentation of some sort that puts the question in a specific context. The tension for the teachers is to get the class launched in a lively way with a play or story or exercise and then to help the class move quickly away from the drama of the launch to the concrete reality of their own existence.

Category A-6 Use of Concrete Material

There are three possible uses of concrete materials such as stories, etc:

- a) To concretize an issue,*
- b) To reflect and develop an issue,*
- c) To make a point.*

In our business of either preaching or teaching, that last of these will, of course, really not have a place, On level #a, the concrete material ought to be within the competent range of responsibility and environment of the

people who are going to use it. On level #b, the entire gamut of inherited experience may be used, and it is particularly here that Gospel reflections come into play.

In addition to launching the discussion of an issue, stories and other presentations with specific content play an important part in a class. For example, students may be talking in generalities about how difficult it is to make friends, and the teachers will see that for the discussion to get anywhere someone will need to relate a particular incident in which trying to make friends was a pressing need. The teachers at that point could ask the class to offer an illustration of what is being talked about or could tell a story themselves in order to make the issue concrete. That is the process identified as item #a above.

Level #b is usually, but not always, the work of the teachers. When using the story to reflect and develop an issue, the teacher will say something like, “What we have been talking about reminds me of... “Occasionally, it will be a member of the class who suddenly sees how the issue being discussed is reflected in a parable or a psalm or a story remembered from childhood, but no matter who offers the reflection the purpose is quite different from trying to make the issue concrete. The purpose of a reflection is to heighten awareness and deepen understanding; the story is not told with the expectation that it will be discussed and developed in the manner described next in category.

Category A-7 in the Development

In the development of this concrete material, what we want to arrive at eventually are the “why” questions. This had better not be done prematurely. Rather, some such development as the following might much better work as steps in which we use the story.

- a) Straightening out the events,*
- b) How do these people feel? (If it can be borne, how do you feel?)*
- c) Was anybody here in a fix? — What kind of fix was it?*
- d) What was at stake here?*
- e) Have we ever known anybody else in this kind of business? (Perhaps, have you ever been in this kind of business?)*

To make the most of concrete material, either the kind that launched the class or that was offered in the course of discussion; the teacher needs to make sure that all five steps are attended to, but not necessarily in a neat and tidy progression. Knowing the work that needs to be done, however, the teacher will be aware that some classes will want more and more details about the event in order to avoid dealing with their feeling while others may immediately start offering solutions before they are clear about the real

nature of the problem. The teacher also needs to keep in mind the fact that the process can't be hurried by asking "Why?" For most people "why" implies a negative judgment, not a request for information or an examination of feelings. "Why didn't you wash your hands before coming to the table?" is not a request for an explanation but is a condemnation of unacceptable behavior. Even when "why" is eliminated from the teacher's vocabulary, the teacher needs to be careful in exploring examples of experience offered by members of the class in order to avoid sounding judgmental. The five parts of the process need to be handled gently so as not to sound like the examination of a person accused of crimes or misdemeanors.

To convey a more complete sense of what needs to go in each of the steps some expansion might be useful:

- a) Do we have a sense of what happened? Do we have all of the facts? Has the issue been cluttered with irrelevant facts that we would be better off to put aside?
- b) Have we identified the full range of possible feelings for the principal characters in the story? Which feelings are appropriate, connected directly with the immediate events? Which are inappropriate, carried over from some previous experience, probably from childhood?
- c) What is the real problem? What kind of a decision is called for? What options are possible?
- d) What of value may be lost or gained by following each of the options? What matters the most?
- e) Maybe nothing exactly like that ever happened to anybody you know, but maybe the story reminds you of something that you know about or that you have experienced yourself?

Category A-8 Three Deeping Levels

Three deepening levels in which an experience is realized are noticed. We start circumstantially by a guess and then proceed through:

- a) The things that befall, where the ground seems sure, but meet such things as chance, choice, commitment,*
- b) The things that are within, where the ground is shaken and we find a despair which may be either in sorrow or in gladness,*
- c) A response, which is made, really to some Lord, but always within this context of history--but it is the Lord who determines it, and the possibility of sin/faith is touched.*

Once enough trust has developed in the class for people to be willing to talk about what really matters to them, the teacher's responsibility is to help deepen the level of the conversation. This is difficult business. The deeper we go the more courage it takes to speak honestly and the harder it becomes to find words that express what we are trying to say. Without the help of a leader who is willing to share the pain of the process, most conversations do not get past level #a, and if they touch #b at all, they quickly bounce back to the safety of #a.

To get the process started the teachers need to do some guesswork as they plan the dramatic incident they will use to launch the conversation. They can never be absolutely sure that the circumstances with which they choose to present the issue will catch the imaginations and the feelings of the class, but that is a risk they must take in order for the members of the class to work in a common area of pressure. If people in the class are willing to identify with the circumstances of the launching device, then the conversation can proceed through the three deepening levels:

a) Everything is going along fine; the ground is steady under my feet. Then something happens, something quite outside of my control. I must make a decision about how I am going to respond to the situation; I say "must" because even a refusal to make a decision is a decision to behave in a particular manner. What makes the decision difficult is that my loyalties are in conflict to uphold one person I have to let down somebody else.

b) Now the ground seems shaky, as though I am crossing an unfamiliar stream on shifting stones. I feel desperately unsure. What now? Strangely enough, the experience is much the same whether precipitated by the flush of victory and success or the sadness of failure and tragedy. In both extreme gladness and sorrow I am isolated and know myself to be utterly alone.

c) My religion is what I do with my solitariness. How I respond in my despair tells me to whom or to what I have given shaping power over my life. This may or may not be the Lord whose name I call upon in a recognizable act of worship, but if I move beyond my despair, it will be through the agency of someone or something that can offer a structure that promises meaning and direction for my life, if I acknowledge this "lord," then I am immediately in the position of being accountable to the one who rescued me. I find myself accountable to this lord for my actions.

Whenever we are engaged in the educational process of deepening a conversation, we have moved into the realm of theology as well. To grasp fully the nature of the three deepening levels, the teacher will need to consult the next section of categories, particularly the shaking of the ground (B-7), the nature of a Lord (B-14), Sin (B-17), and Despair (B-18).

Category A-9 Four levels ... to Take Hold

There are four levels on which a teacher is able to take hold. In a real class there is never any question but what authority is present the class,

however is destroyed if it becomes authoritarian:

- a) Behavior,*
- b) What we are going to say,*
- c) What we are going to talk about,*
- d) The structure in which things will move.*

It will be seen that taking bold near the beginning of this scale will be completely destructive and that we can much more safely take hold near the end of the scale, There are times, however, when it is really necessary to take hold at one or another of these points. If it becomes necessary, and we know what we are doing, we can do it with a clear conscience and do it sharply so that it can get done and not drag on.

The ways in which the teachers engage the class has a profound impact on what happens and on what people learn. For anything to happen at all the teacher must clearly be an authority, someone recognizably in charge and with something to offer. If out of frustration and insecurity, however, the teacher begins to act in an authoritarian manner, respect and trust will be destroyed and religious education will become impossible, For that reason, teachers will usually need to apply their energies toward the lower end of the scale.

- a) It is easy for teachers to become preoccupied with the behavior of their students, no matter what the age group, because disruptions undermine carefully wrought plans. If maintaining order becomes the first priority of the teachers, however, it is not--likely that the class will ever find the incentive to settle down to business. Still, on some occasions teachers may find it necessary to deal with a disruptive person or group forcefully and decisively in order for anything constructive to happen.
- b) In order to deal with their own anxieties in the classroom, some teachers prepare a mental script in advance of the class so they know what they hope the class will say. This approach may make the teacher feel more secure but it tends to give a lecture room feel to the class, and by reducing spontaneity can leave the group fairly lifeless. Sometimes, however, a teacher needs to be well prepared to tell a story or to give a symbolic reflection, and this means concentration on what is to be said if the story or reflection is not thoroughly familiar to the teacher.
- c) A clear sense of what they hope to talk about is necessary for the teachers to begin the class. It may be, however, that the students have something of a more urgent nature to discuss. In that case, teachers need to have enough confidence to set aside their plan and guide the discussion into deeper levels the best way they can without precise preparation.

d) Nothing at all can happen without a structure. Without clear boundaries everybody becomes anxious and unproductive. Too much emphasis on structure, however, works against the educational process. If the established limits are inflexible, people feel trapped and hostile.

Category A-10 The Relation of Cost/Promise

The relation of Cost/Promise within me is too tense to face if the outrageous cost obsesses me first and alone; the outrageous promise must accompany it. In process the promise has precedence, but these two move together.

Even in making a mundane decision, like buying a car, the promise of a more rewarding style of life grips me before the realization of the price I will have to pay. I would never decide to buy the car if I became obsessed by the cost before I thought about what the car might do for me.

Teachers need to be especially aware of the relation of cost to promise when they are leading people to face decisions about ultimate things, like the decision to be more fully aware of what is going on within and around them, or the decision to make the Christ their Lord. If the pain of awareness or the demands of a lord press in on them before they are caught by the promise of a more abundant life, their decision will be almost automatically negative.

For more about the nature of decision, see B-16.

Category A-11 Two Kinds of Reflections

We use two kinds of reflection as we proceed in any class situation:

a) Categorical reflection, where the issue on which we are working is reflected sharply back into the group with some chance of getting under the surface,

b) Symbolic reflection, where the problem of meaning is reflected into the group (typical of these are Bible, Prayer Book, Hymnal).

Resources are always precisely of these two kinds.

At any point in a class when the teacher wants to deepen the level of the conversation, the teacher can either ask a question or make a reflection. As we noted in A-7, questions tend to be the most appropriate process move in the development of the concrete material. If the class is dealing with matters on an immediate and personal level, a reflection tends to be more helpful than a question. A reflection is a beckoning to look more closely at the significance of what has been said, to examine the implications for one's own life. When the reflection is offered gracefully, the class will scarcely be aware

that it is being led. The teacher's comments will seem like a natural part of the conversation.

In classes of any age group, teachers will use categorical reflections. What we mean by category is described in A-4.

In classes of teenagers or adults, the teacher will also use symbolic reflection. What we mean by symbol is described in B-10.

Category A-12 Three Levels

There are three levels on which any issue can possibly be approached

a) Ideological,

b) Organizational,

c) Functional,

It will be seen that the first two never get us into the issue—that it is only on the third level that we get into the issue. Then the first two can be dealt with, and they are extremely important.

Approaches to Christian education tend to emphasize one of these levels with the hope the progress will be made on the other two:

a) If the orientation is ideological, people are taught what to believe. They are asked to accept what the group thinks are proper ideas about the nature and meaning of life. The students are engaged primarily at the level of the intellect.

b) If the orientation is organizational, the goal is to develop loyal and enthusiastic members. People are taught what they need to do in order to feel like they belong. They are engaged primarily at an emotional level.

c) If the orientation is functional, people are encouraged to become aware of how they function under pressure and of where they find the resources they need. They are engaged at a personal level, what the Bible calls the level of spirit.

Although we use a functional orientation, we do not intend to neglect the other two. We want people to use their minds, to work out for themselves an intellectually defensible belief system. We also want people to become loyal and enthusiastic members, relating to one another with the full gamut of healthy emotional responses. What we are talking about is a matter of emphasis and priority, and also strategy. Certain kinds of people need to find a direct benefit in the way they function as human beings before they can think about doctrines or church membership.

Category A-13 The Laws of Learning

Amongst the laws of learning, there are three which possibly stand out (whether the learning is by children, teachers or supervisors):

- a) People learn what they are ready to learn,*
- b) People learn where there is a positive affect (this is not a function of pleasure but more clearly of reality),*
- c) People learn what they can use, and use now (but there are various levels and frames of reference of use — for instance, the conceptual use of a creed is not the only use).*

These are the principles of what has been called “progressive” or “experiential” education. In the light of declining scores on standardized math and English examinations, these laws of learning have been somewhat discredited in recent years. The reason that people have wanted to discount the reliability of the laws of learning can be found in the fact that they have been misapplied and misunderstood.

- a) Readiness for learning depends on a number of conditions, most of which cannot be controlled by the teacher, such as the mental and emotional development of the student. What the teacher can do, however, is to offer possibilities of learning suited to the level of readiness demonstrated by the students. The teacher can also manage the learning environment to some extent. A positive atmosphere can increase readiness by reducing resistance.
- b) Among the positive effects of learning is expanded awareness and increased skills that give a person a sense of greater control over objects and events. Other positive effects emerge from the student’s relationship with other people: learning can bring approval from authorities, status among peers, and the security of earning a place in a group.
- c) Children can learn the creed quickly if they like to take part in the worship with adults. Adults might learn the creed quickly if they discovered it to be an expression of the organizing myth that reflects both the realities of life and the source of power for living.

The B Categories

An indication of basic understandings that arise in the nature of things

B-1	Existence	2
B-2	Religion	2
B-3	Education	3
B-4	Lore and Gospel	3
B-5	Myself	3
B-6	Stages along the way	5
B-7	Shaking of the ground.....	6
B-8	Death	7
B-9	Savior.....	7
B-10	Symbol.....	9
B-11	Church	9
B-12	Word.....	10
B-13	Law	10
B-14	Lord	11
B-15	The Law becomes My Law	11
B-16	Cost and Promise	12
B-17	Sin.....	13
B-18	Despair	14
B-19	Justification.....	15
B-20	Right Decision.....	15
B-21	Forebearing on another in love.....	17
B-22	Christ	18
B-23	Revelation	19
B-24	Realm of discourse	20
B-25	Drama of Redemption	22

Category B-1 Existence

Existence may be hinted as life that is experienced under pressure, life that is being confronted, life that is faced by the necessity of making decisions of any sort in which the person himself is involved (I myself am involved.) This is a matter of true inwardness, but in this search history is always known as real—more real than the undertaker knows it to be.

In the absence of pressure, people can imagine that they hold all kinds of values and beliefs. The story is told of the philosophy professor who stoutly maintained that he had no fear of death. When a group of students put him to the test, however, by confronting him on a dark night with a pistol in his face, he discovered that his belief about himself was in error. We only know what kind of people we are and what we really believe when we are under the pressure of events, engaged in life and death issues.

We are using the word *existence* in a precise and technical way that is obviously contrary to its use in the popular expression, “I’m not living, just existing.” Because this word, as well as many others in our categories, has a variety of connotations in everyday speech, we have to be careful when we use it in the classroom or we will be easily misunderstood.

Category B-2 Religion

Religion is precisely the business that everybody is always engaged in of making sense out of his existence; that is sense out of that which is by nature nonsense — a dynamic activity.

Some people find it startling to realize that everybody has a religion. Not everybody engages in worship or has a clearly defined system of beliefs, but everybody finds a way of making some sense out of existence. Some people are also startled to discover that existence has no inherent or built in meaning, no sense that can be identified and recognized by all rational and intelligent people. Each person must construct meaning for himself or herself using the materials at hand. This is never a rational process, but one that requires the use of myth and symbol. This is not to suggest that any religion is just as good as any other. Many religions, especially those that are unconscious and unexamined, lead people into destructive behavior. The intent of functional education is to help people get on with their business of making sense out of nonsense in an aware and thoughtful way.

Category B-3 Education

Education (here) is the process of the development of people's capacities to the point that the more concrete experience (religion) is enhanced. #2 and #3 are different, but Christian Education goes on precisely where Christian Religion is happening.

To use a mixed industrial metaphor, Christian Education is both a tool and a by-product of Christian Religion. We use education to increase people's awareness, perception, and knowledge of lore and symbol so that they can do a better job of making sense out of their existence. At the same time, people who are engaged in the business of making sense out of nonsense within a Christian context are constantly being challenged to grow in awareness, perception, and knowledge.

Category B-4 Lore and Gospel

Religion carries with it a basic distinction:

a) *Lore*, which may be hinted at as the ongoing story of the life of these people.

b) *Gospel*, which is the symbolic (that is concrete) form in which meaning is reflected.

When we examine what we as Christians have inherited from the past, we need to make a distinction between lore, the traditional teaching of the Christian folk, and gospel, literally "good news." We can tell people Bible stories, teach them about doctrines and church history, and introduce them to the symbolic forms of our heritage. Gospel, however, is something that happens to people when they look into the life and death of Jesus Christ and find a meaning for their lives that lifts them up from despair. To borrow an expression from pious slang, lore can be taught but gospel must be caught.

Some confusion arises in this distinction because the books that contain the Jesus lore are called "gospels." What Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have to say, however, comes across as "good news" for people who find meaning for their lives reflected in the Jesus stories and teaching. We teach the Jesus lore to children in the hope that someday they may experience the power of the gospel.

Category B-5 Myself

Myself is a relation that relates itself to its own self (a dynamic versus a static realization); thus a person is:

- a) *One's relation to one's self,*
- b) *One's possibility (in a world of possibility),*
- c) *One's own singular responsibility.*

In these terms one's soul is identified: If we should find it, or if we should lose it. To this relation the pronoun 'I' is attached. (This experience has always been in people, but the awareness of it is here the crucial issue; by the beginning of the Junior High School years we can count on the dawning capacity.)

By the time they reach their early teens, most people discover that they can observe their minds as well as their bodies. They can watch themselves thinking and notice their feelings and wonder about their thoughts and emotions. This experience of detachment raises the sometimes troubling question, "What is the real me?" Some people tend to identify with their minds or emotions, and others primarily with their bodies. Reality, however, can be found in the recognition that what people call "I" or "me" or "myself" is a dynamic interaction of various aspects, distinguishable yet indivisible, that make up the total person.

a) I discover who I am as a person as I observe how I argue with myself, take care of myself, fight with myself, console myself; demean myself, encourage myself and participate in the countless other activities that make up this dynamic relationship.

b) Who I am as a person also emerges as I observe how I respond to what is possible to do and to be in the world. The possibilities for my life are limited by the circumstances into which I am born and in which I move. My ideas and attitudes as well as my skills are mostly given. Who I am as a person depends on what use I make of the given.

c) Finally, I come to the awful realization that as a person I must do my own living and dying essentially alone. I make a choice, and I am for all eternity the one who made that decision. I act, and forever I will be the one who did that thing. I can describe who I am by my own particular responsibility for what I choose and for what I do.

The Greek of the New Testament has a word, psyche, that is sometimes translated "life" and sometimes "soul" or "self." The word was used to stand for the animating principle that made an individual uniquely that person and not someone else. Apparently Jesus perceived a danger here: "whoever would save his psyche will lose it, and whoever loses his psyche for my sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:35)

Category B-6 Stages Along the Way

As I move into existence there are three stages along the way:

- a) The aesthetic, where I buzz around the issue but do not enter into it and there is no concreteness,*
- b) The ethical, where I meet a decision in some sort of framework that is mine and my life becomes concrete--I thus enter into the issue,*
- c) The religious, where the issue of life's meaning arises.*

When people move into an awareness of the pressures of their lives and of the way they are responding to those pressures, they go through three recognizable stages. They can of course, elect not to move into any awareness at all or to stop at one of the earlier stages.

a) The aesthetic is the stage of sensation. People notice their feelings; they realize the presence of both pleasure and pain. Those who try to by-pass this stage and move directly into the ethical are dangerous and not truly ethical because they attempt to make decisions based on a mechanical process that ignores the conditioning of their own emotions. The sensitivity training exercises developed by certain educational and religious groups in the mid-twentieth century were useful in helping such people get started with the aesthetic stage, but they often failed to help people move on to a recognition of personal responsibility for the impact of their behavior on other people, the ethical stage.

b) In the ethical stage people are struggling with question of right and wrong. They accept responsibility for their decisions and actions and attempt to conform their behavior to certain standards of conduct. In matters of grave importance; however, the right thing is seldom clear. Often two standards conflict with each other, as when a person must decide how long to maintain artificial life support systems for an aged person who has been in a coma for weeks. You shall not kill but neither shall you be an agent of unnecessary suffering. Usually some harm will be done to someone no matter which way a person chooses in difficult decisions. The recognition and struggle with this dilemma is what we mean by entering into the issue.

c) The only way into the religious stage is through the agony of the ethical conflict. It is at this point that people genuinely ask, "What's it all about?" They recognize their need for saving help.

Category B-7 The Shaking of the Ground

The shaking of the ground of my existence takes place in three challenges:

- a) Where the on-set is in Fate (circumstances over which I have not ultimate control) and the final term is Death,*
- b) Where the on-set is in Guilt and the final term is in Condemnation,*
- c) Where the on-set is in Emptiness and the final term is Meaninglessness.*

In this context of existence, Religion takes shape; for things do not hold together of their own weight. (If #a be typical of the breaking up of the ancient world, and #b of the medieval world, and #c of this present world, this does not mean that any of the three is absent for people of any urgent time--but it is at the same time necessary and more difficult to help a person to feel the shaking that is relevant to his own time.)

To identify three distinct challenges that have the power to shake the foundations of my life is not to suggest that only one is operative in any particular crisis. In the worst of times, a person is assailed by all three:

- a) The discovery that I am utterly helpless in the face of particular events or conditions is devastating because it brings me face to face with the certainty of that final event over which I have no control, my own death.
- b) By guilt we are not talking about an unpleasant feeling that arises from my early childhood training. Although called "guilt" a better name for that feeling is "fear,"

The fear of getting caught and punished. Guilt, the kind the Old Testament talks about, is the realization that I let down a person who for my own life's sake I was bound to uphold. Guilt is not a feeling, but the state of my being when I have violated a trust or behaved irresponsibly.

- c) Whereas #a is triggered by external events and #b by my own actions, emptiness can overwhelm me at any moment without regard for what is happening or what I am doing. I can be overtaken by the emptiness of my life at the peak of success or the depths of failure or in the midst of an ordinary routine.

Whatever the challenges that shake my foundations, the threat is always the same: non-being. That makes religion a necessity.

Category B-8 Death

The experience to which the word ‘Death’ applies is in at least three different forms of challenge:

- a) That I be a shadow and cast no shadow,*
- b) The condition of which the undertaker speaks,*
- c) The confrontation of existence.*

Our modern use of death imagery to convey a variety of threats originated in the Bible:

a) The Epistle to the Ephesians says, “You he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked” (2:1-2). Here death refers to a condition brought on by side stepping and evasion in which the very substance of life is lost.

b) The threat of physical death also received attention in the Bible, perhaps nowhere more poignantly than in Ecclesiastes 3:10-20 -- “For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, the man has no advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity. All go to one place, all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.”

c) Coming face to face with the reality of our own limitations is also a death, as St. Paul confesses in his Epistle to the Romans: “I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (7:22-24)

Category B-9 Savior

If I look for a Savior it is always in an extremity; and to speak of a Savior otherwise is emptiness (blasphemy). There are several ways in which a Savior appears:

- a) As an instrument of my safety within history — and he becomes a barrier between me and existence. In this the tragedy emerges that I may never have been born. Or was this a stillbirth?*

b) As a symbol of an eternal destiny, but the symbol is imbedded in history -- pure immanence. In this when the symbol withers, I got with it;

c) As a symbol of an eternal destiny, but the symbol is untouched by history like a fairy story – pure transcendence. In this, when the morning mist disappears, I evaporate, too;

d) As a symbol of an eternal destiny relevant both in transcendence and in immanence, like one who “for us and for our salvation came down from heaven (and) became incarnate,” In this, reckoning ourselves to be dead, we are alive and proof against destruction precisely in extremity.

I only want help if I am in trouble. I only look for a savior if my life is in jeopardy. Some outwardly pious people speak loosely and easily about being saved, but this is a failure to give appropriate respect to what is holy. That is blasphemy. When the need to be saved is real, a savior may appear in any of a number of ways, but the decision to accept a particular kind of salvation is always mine alone:

a) A strong person or a protective institution may keep me from certain kinds of harm, but if I do not do my own suffering, I do not have my own life. Well meaning parents often try to protect their children from the consequences of their own destructive behavior with the result that their Sons and daughters never reach emotional and moral maturity. Anxious people put themselves in the hands of cult leaders giving up their freedom for the security of never having to make decisions. This kind of safety is the opposite of what the Epistle to the Hebrews offer: -- “Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility toward himself~ so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted” (12:3); and of what Jesus said to Peter when Peter suggested that Jesus could avoid suffering — “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not on the side of God, but of men” (Mark 8:33).

b) When theologians speak of “immanence,” they are referring to a belief in an intelligent force that operates in the known universe and in the affairs of human beings. When people get involved in political movements or attach themselves to causes in order to find some shape and meaning for their lives, they are acting as if they believe that a divine presence guides their activities. The difficulty with such a belief, whether conscious or unconscious, lies in the fact that when the movement loses its energy or the cause is won, people are left with nothing.

c) In theological terms the opposite of immanence is transcendence, a belief in a power so remote from human experience that it takes the form of abstract speculation or fantasy. Some of these belief systems are quite elaborate — like a belief in free enterprise or spiritualism but because they do not connect to the real world or to life as it must be lived, these belief systems tend to evaporate in times of crisis. They are a fine escape

from the minor pressures and irritations of daily life but generally fail to deliver when the foundations of life are shaken.

d) The quote from the Nicene Creed (new Prayer Book, p. 358) points to the power of the Lord Jesus Christ as the symbol of my eternal destiny, one involved in the reality of my world and my life but one unlimited by the physical universe and by human history. This is a savior who upholds me in my existence and supports me in my suffering, a savior who does not protect me from death but who delivers me from the power of death to destroy my soul.

Category B-10 Symbol

Symbol is the dramatic (concrete) form in which that which is unsayable is reflected – the language of myth, which is the story of the dealings between “the gods and men.” Symbol is not something that stands for something else – a make-believe. Gospel is always symbolic form and carries with it the power of God to hold my life together and to interpret it.

In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul wrote, “I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (1:16). The gospel is *not* only a symbol that reflects my life so that I may see myself more clearly; it also conveys the power to live with what I see. Anyone who understands the nature of symbol knows how absurd it is to say that something is “merely a symbol.” That is like suggesting that Jesus was “merely the son of God.” The gospel of Jesus Christ is no less than a symbol; we can give the gospel no higher regard than to see it as symbolic. That is not to suggest that the only symbolic forms of value are found in the New Testament. On the contrary, symbols emerge among people of every culture and persuasion, and many are available to us in our struggle to make sense out of our existence. For Christians, however, the gospel is the central and primary symbolic form.

Category B-11 Church

Church (a categoric, not a symbolic statement) is the symbolic form in which I find my life and live it. For a symbolic expression of Church, see for contrast, a classic statement in the Epistle on the occasion of the Consecration of a Church or Chapel (Rev. 21:2-5). Church is always exclusive in a Faith sense, but not in a social, moral, or any other sense. If I am well-born here, I can never be narrow or isolated; I will be free for “friendly” mobility within history.

The passage cited above begins, “And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling of God is with

“That symbolic understanding of church is in a completely different realm from the use of the word to refer to a building or even to the people of the congregation. It helps to remember that church as people has no more power to save than the church building. The building and the people simply provide the occasion for our discovery of the church as the New Jerusalem come down from heaven, the symbol of God’s presence with us. It is the presence of God that makes us feel so well centered that we are free to move among people who would otherwise appear threatening because of their differences from us.

Category B-12 Word

Word in its most basic meaning is the power to bring order out of chaos. In this way the Bible, Prayer Book, and Hymnal precisely contain the Word of God for those into whom the end (the point of the thing) of the ages has come -and we use them for what they are.

The Gospel according to St. John opens with the pronouncement, “In the beginning was the Word.” This is an obvious reference to the first passage in the Bible, Genesis chapter one: “In the beginning God created the heavens and earth. The earth was without form and void, darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the water. And God said, ‘Let there be light.’” The urgency behind both of these passages is personal, not geological. Both refer to the chaos of my life for which I must hear a word that can bring some order if I am to live.

For St. Paul, an expression of the Word could be found in the sacred writings of the Hebrew speaking people. In his first letter to the Corinthians he recalls the story from the Exodus in which some of the people were destroyed for disobedience. Then he goes on to say, “Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our instruction upon whom the end of the ages has come.” (Corinthians 10:11) Here Paul is using a passage from the Bible as a symbolic reflection in the manner described in A-11.

If we are among those into whom the point of things has come (a more precise translation of the Corinthians passage), the words of the Bible and of our worship may at any moment become for us the Word bringing order out of chaos.

Category B-13 Law

Law is not a description of what ought to be: it is a description of what is. Thus, anything to which I may belong has its own shape, and its law is precisely the description of that shape; further, if I do belong, the law describes me and is my law.

The Hebrew speaking people used their word torah to identify the description of their common life. The root of the word is a verb that means “the hunter hit the target”

Whatever the community has discovered that keeps both individual life and the life of the people moving toward fulfillment is torah, or to use the closest English equivalent, law.

People join communities and groups in order to find direction for their lives. As they become involved, they also discover that anything to which they belong has a way of making clear who is in and who is outside. Part of the description of the limits of the group may be formal, but much of the description is never written down or even talked about. In fact, the unconscious law may be the most significant part of the group's description of itself. If you have to be told the law, such as how to dress and what to talk about, you obviously do not belong.

Category B-14 Lord

Lord is he in whom anything to which I may belong inheres, and this is always a symbolic expression; thus, if it has shape, the Lord (not the belonging or the group) is the Law-Giver. Out of my Lord's presence and favor (Grace) I have only chaos, turmoil, violence; in his presence and favor I can have order, power, peace.

Anything to which I may belong is inseparable from some symbolic expression that gives the group shape and direction. The symbol may be a person, an idea, an image, a story, or any other form in which the unsayable is reflected. No belonging can survive without this particular kind of symbolic expression, which in English we call a "lord." In Old English the word was haflord, meaning "keeper of the bread," a beautifully explicit way of indicating the function of one who has the power to provide or withhold nourishment. When I live according to the law of my Lord, I am fed, but when I live outside of the law, I go hungry.

For a better understanding of the lord as the law-giver, read the book of Exodus, especially the 20th chapter, which begins, "And God spoke all these words, saying, 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me.'"

Category B-15 The Law becomes My Law

The Law becomes My Law with a conflict of realizations:

- a) I want to have my own way --to make myself the law —
Autonomy,*
- b) I can't have my way-- the law of another challenges me —
Heteronomy;*
- c) If I stay with this tension and pressure, my heart may be*

melted, and the finger of the Lord writes within it a new Law-- here I may say, "This is my Lord" without blasphemy-- Theonomy.

As I move into any belonging, I am likely to experience a moment of confrontation when the group's description of itself does not fit my description of me. The standards and requirements of the group at this point seem arbitrary and capricious. The group seems to be against me. I want to be who I am, but at the same time, I want to continue being part of the group. It is in this pressure and tension that I may discover, perhaps for the first time, the lord of the group who can put within me the desire to have my life described by the law of that same lord.

It is an experience of this sort that Jeremiah describes: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor, saying 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord." (31:31-34)

Category B-16 Cost and Promise

As I face any decision I can only act if there is something in it for me (Promise), but I have to count the cost (Demand); these are clear opposites, and both are real — they are related to each other by a tension. In choosing, my relation is precisely to this tension (what it will cost me/what it will get me), and no amount of idealism can brush it off I am not related to either pole by itself, and the dynamics is neither one of compromise (Autonomy), nor of pay-the-cost-and-get-the-promise (Heteronomy). The dynamics of decision is precisely this tension, and this is where my life is this life -- that is, here my life is concrete.

Some idealistic people think they can avoid the tension of decision making by eliminating any desire to get something for themselves. This is altruism, the principle of living and acting for others. What the idealists may not want to admit, however, is that people act altruistically for a reason. In earlier days, the reason was to win a place in the Kingdom of Heaven beyond the grave. In modern times the reason may be the satisfaction that comes with knowing you can be kind and caring or feeling you have made the world a little better place for everyone. To think that you can act utterly without self interest is a dangerous delusion; such a false perception is merely an escape from the reality of the tension and the reality of personal responsibility.

Another way to avoid the reality of the tension is by attempting to make a decision that will make everybody happy. Although compromise is not a bad maneuver, and one that is frequently necessary to get along in this world, it rarely gets you what you want without creating some trouble for yourself.

Trying to get out of a difficult decision by giving in to the demands of other people in the hope of getting a little something for yourself is another form of avoidance. The doormat approach to life may help keep the peace, but self respect wears thin quickly when trampled on.

The real danger in avoiding the tension of a decision is that you will never move into the ethical stage of your existence, and consequently, never deal consciously with your religion. (See B-5 & 6.)

Category B-17 Sin

Sin is seen in three categorical identifications:

- a) *Not to will to be myself (e.g. a fly on the wall)*
- b) *To will not to be myself (e.g. putting over an act or going to Florida)*
- c) *To will to be myself (e.g. taking hold and winning)*

*Whereas the antithetic identification Faith becomes:
To will to be myself simply and in the power that created this self.*

The word in Greek of the New Testament that is most frequently translated “sin” is hamartia. Originally the word meant that the arrow fell short of the target. Hamaria was one of those simple word pictures that could give people a vivid glimpse of some aspect of their existence. A certain kind of behavior is undesirable, not because it is inherently wicked, but because it is beside the point; it falls short of the mark. This kind of off-target response to a situation is one of three types:

- a) A refusal to admit that I have any part in the situation, that I have any responsibility whatsoever. I am merely an observer.
- b) An attempt to handle a situation by distancing myself from the intensity of it by covering up my feelings, most often with humor or excessive politeness, or by physically leaving the scene for a while hoping the storm will blow over before I return
- c) A decision to be myself all over the place. I will make thing happen by the power of my feelings and the force of my personality. I will not be thwarted. I will get my way no matter what.

The opposite of sin is faith. Sin is an avoidance or denial of reality. Faith is an affirmation. The Hebrew word that we translate “faith” has at its root the same word that we leave untranslated in many Bible passages, “amen.” In some places, however, amen is translated into English as “verily” or “truly.” The meaning is the same, a yes to the power that created this self of mine.

Category B-18 Despair

Despair (either in joy or in sorrow) is wherever one is in Existence or involved concretely in the issue of Religion. At the heart of every existence there is a pool of tears and it is asked: ‘What now?’ Here I may respond:

- a) With a shrug — it doesn’t matter —it is foolishness. At this point I fall off into the abyss (literally blasphemy) where no power can rescue me;*
- b) By facing it enough to bounce off into illusion;*
- c) By facing it enough to bounce off into despondency*
- d) By responding with a “Yes” — i.e. Faith; but it is always by Grace that the response is made.*

Many “devout” people have been seen to confuse responses #a, #b, or #c with Faith, #d.

Despair has many recognizable forms of expression: I’ve had it I’m fed up. I’m at the end of my rope. That’s the last straw. All of these statements indicate an experience of extreme conditions, the sort of experience people in the Bible are talking about when they use the phrase “the end”: “The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane and sober for your prayers” (I Peter 4:7). It is out of such an experience that Paul asks, “Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24). When I am in extremity, I have at least four possible responses:

- a) Shrug it off; say it doesn’t matter. That is, I can refuse to be aware of my condition, but if that is my response, I am lost. Just how lost I am is made clear by what Jesus taught about the Holy Spirit. If you read through the Gospels, you find that wherever the Holy Spirit is mentioned, people are becoming aware, learning to see and hear the truth. If I refuse to be aware, I am rejecting the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” (Mark 3:29).
- b) Face my despair for a moment and rush off into an illusion. I tell myself things like, “Everything always works out for the best,” or “something is bound to turn up that will straighten everything out”
- c) Face my despair for a moment and then fall into despondency. My only desire is to numb my senses so that I will not feel the pain. I escape into sleep or a chemically

induced haze where all reality is blurred beyond recognition.

d) Or I may respond with an affirmation both of my despair and my need for a savior. It is only in the day of extremity when I can hear my savior's voice Saying: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15); "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:40)

Many people confuse the first three responses with faith. Many who have been influenced by the religions recently imported from the East have made a virtue out of being imperturbable. For others, faith is the illusion that God will always intervene to make things work out right Some equate misery and suffering with faith because they assume that the worse they feel the more they deserve God's love, or they adopt the poet's idealization of despondency and revel in their agony.

Category B-19 Justification

Many people have touched their existence closely enough to know themselves to be wrong and in-wrong; they may have cried out to be right and in-right. The precise name of this situation is a need for Justifi~4ion the common phrase "self-justification" is used in this sense. There is a difference between seeing this issue in a sociological context and seeing it in the framework of an eternal destiny; in any case, the Justification depends; not on my skill, wit, or energy, but on an opening up and a receiving of me back in and an establishing of me — the only thing I have to do, or can do is to say "Yes," i.e. Faith.

People need to be right, that is to be upright, firm, steady, well grounded. That is why nothing upsets me more than to think I may have made a wrong decision. To feel right, I have to make right decisions, that is correct ones. Convincing myself that I am right is the process called "self-justification." What is at stake is not how correct I am but my need to feel right about myself, to be justified. If my justification is a gift of God, however, then obviously I don't have to justify myself. I simply have to allow God to reground me and to restore my steadiness. This is the process St. Paul was talking about when he quoted the prophet Habakkuk, "He who through faith is righteous (the same word that means upright or justified) shall live" (Romans 2:17).

Category B-20 Right Decision

A person often feels the need of making a right decision (closely associated with Justification). Four different possible meanings of "right" may be noticed here:

- a) *A decision that will bring the desired outcome;*
- b) *A decision that will have in it the proper moral quality*
- c) *A decision that is upheld by analysis and logic;*
- d) *A decision that will please an absentee trustee.*
While all of these may be necessary, they will be seen to enclose an element of Sin, and I find myself seeking Justification by Sin. Thus I find a response that is so simple that it seems absurd:
- e) *A decision that is Faithful.*

Thus it is seen that the opposite of Sin is not Virtue; rather the opposite of Sin is always Faith. In this way, although it may be necessary to strive for good outcomes, morality, and logic, I have entered the issue on a different level, and the necessity has lost its corrosive sting -- precisely the entrance of "Redemption" and "The New Life."

Being right is so important, that most people have discovered at least four ways of convincing themselves that they have made a right decision:

- a) Everything worked out well.
- b) They followed a particular moral standard.
- c) They used a rational process in reaching a decision, weighing carefully all of the factors.
- d) They reached a decision that would have pleased an authority figure, such as a parent or a psychiatrist, had that person been present for consultation.

All of these methods of self-justification involve a measure of self-deception, an unwillingness to accept total reality with all the possible elements of being wrong. In that respect, self-justification partakes of the stance identified as sin.

- e) Another possible response is to make a decision and live with it without having to prove it was the right choice. If it is God who makes me right, I don't have to carry the burden of making myself right I will still want and need to make the best decisions I can based on probable outcomes, morality, and logic, but I will not be committed to justification by sin, and I can be free from sin's death dealing power. As St. Paul wrote, 'The sting of death is sin. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (I Corinthians 15:56-57).

Category B-21 Forebearing One Another in Love

The relation that I may have with another is confusing because the American Grammar knows only a subject-object relationship. When the Epistle to the Ephesians (4:2) speaks of “forbearing one another in love.” the word is really “having one another up;” this is known in classical Greek in both the active and passive voices (a subject working on an object, or an object being worked on by a subject), but it is never so found in the New Testament language — there, it is always two subjects (an I-Thou), and this is empowered within the climate of the out-stretched, self-giving hand (“love”) and never in the climate of the out-reaching, grasping hand (“lust”). In this consideration is touched: the Child of History/Child of God antithesis; Realm of World/Realm of God; The Flesh/The Spirit.

Beginning with the fourth chapter, the Epistle to the Ephesians describes the nature of the new life possible for those in the Christian community. A peculiarity of Greek grammar, called the middle voice, points up a central aspect of this life. In our language, limited by active and passive voice verbs, we must speak of one another as objects and subjects; something is being done to somebody by someone else. The beauty of the middle voice is that it carries the possibility of two subjects engaged in mutual interactions. The English translation of 4:2 unfortunately cannot convey with the same clarity as the Greek this sense that people can be mutually supportive rather than taking turns: I hold you up and then you hold me up. “Having one another up in love,” the literal rendering of the words, means basing our treatment of one another on our unity in God rather than on our differences and our separateness. The epistle contrasts this way of love with the way of lust: “Put off your old nature which belongs to our former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts” (4:22).

The same contrast between the way of love and the way of lust is brought out in Romans 13. “Owe no one anything, except to love one another” (vs. 8). “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (vs. 14). The Greek word translated here as desires is the same word we found in Ephesians translated lust. The root of the word is “ritual fire,” an image that eventually came to stand for “intense feeling or passion” That root with its special prefix suggests a grasping after fire — using other people to turn myself on, to use a more modern metaphor. The opposite of lust is love. Love is open and self-giving, wanting what is best for the other person.

The two ways of relating to one another are described in the Epistle to the Ephesians in mythological terms as two realms, the Realm of the World and the Realm of God. The reader is told “you once walked following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the Sons of disobedience” (2:2). Now a radical change has taken place: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God — not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (2:8-10)

Another way the contrast is highlighted is by the use of the terms “flesh” and “spirit.” The gospel passage often read at Baptism has the line, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). Flesh here does not refer to that which is primarily physical or even sexual, but rather to that part of my nature which seems to be at war with my best interests, which are here identified with the spirit. In the flesh, I see myself separated from other people who are there only to be used in whatever way makes me feel aroused and living intensely. We are one in the spirit, to use the words of a folk hymn, and I am able to share my life with others.

I am of necessity both a child of God and a child of history. I live my life in the tension between the two realms, but in the struggle I have the promise of God’s help, that which the Bible calls grace.

Category B-22 Christ

Any Christ emerges in three functions --these are distinguished out of other possibilities:

- a) How to face what I can’t face;*
- b) How to get the low-down on me;*
- c) How to receive a new way and a new life.*

These cries, of course, are constantly emerging in anybody’s life (therefore in these classes), and teachers may well know that a Christ is being called for.

Then it might be possible to identify without blasphemy, Him whom you/we have crucified and whom God has made both Lord and Christ.

The cry for a Christ, or to use the equivalent term in Hebrew — Messiah, is almost always inarticulate but unmistakable to ears that have been trained to hear:

- a) I can’t stand it. It just isn’t fair. It doesn’t make any sense. These protests and others like them are ways of saying that I do not have the strength to face the terrifying and painful reality of my own existence.
- b) Why do I act this way? What good am I? Who am I really? Such questions indicate a longing for self-understanding that always seems beyond my grasp.
- c) I want to make something of myself I want to do something useful with my life. I’m in a rut. My life is a treadmill. These desires and complaints indicate a yearning for

someone to show me the way to a life I can live with confidence and enthusiasm.

When Peter addressed the people of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, he knew that his listeners were looking with eager expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Although these expectations were usually expressed in a desire for the deliverance of their nation from Roman oppression, Peter also knew that deep in their hearts political salvation was only a means to an end. The people of Jerusalem, like all people everywhere, longed for self-confidence, self-understanding, and a meaningful direction for their lives. Peter's message was that the longed-for messiah had come: "Let all the houses of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

Category B-23 Revelation

Revelation contains a paradox: I can only "hear" it by grace; I can only have grace as I respond to it. I cannot face Good Friday without the implication of Easter, but I can only have Easter through Good Friday. I can only have the fruits of the Spirit on the basis of my Faith response, but Faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit. In this Christ the paradox is over-arched (i.e., He is Divine) and all of this goes on within the Blessed Company of all Faithful People. Revelation cannot be set up within the structured Education Process — when a God speaks, he is heard and we do not hold a stopwatch on the Spirit

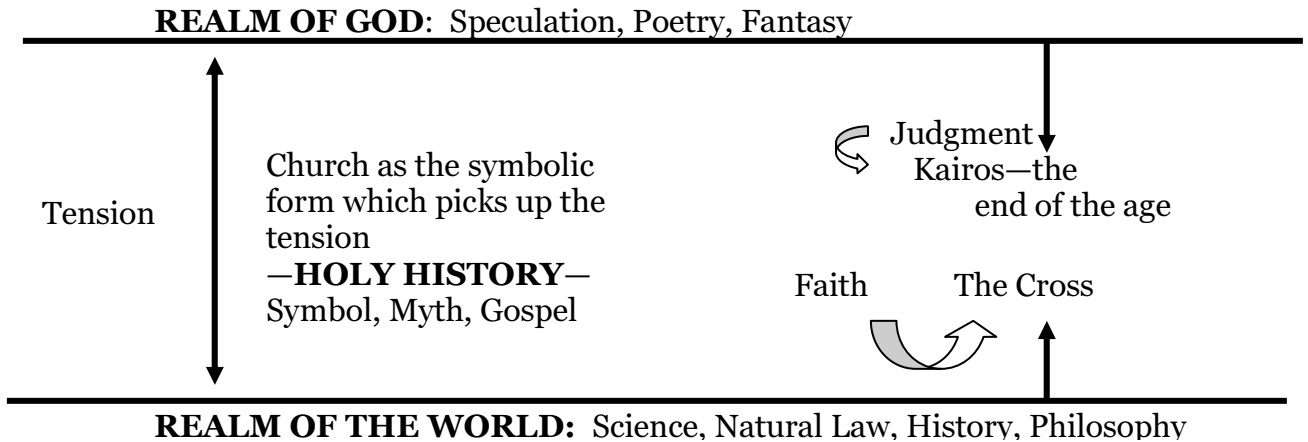
In the middle ages, certain philosophers of the church argued that God could be perceived only through the coincidence of opposites. It is as true to say that God is nowhere as it is to assert that God is everywhere. This perception helps us find the courage to press other contradictions, such as those involved in revelation. Awareness is God's free gift which I cannot earn or claim, but I can only receive God's gifts if I am willing to be aware. Or to use the language of St Paul, the Spirit is given to those who have faith, but faith is one of the gifts of the Spirit (see I Corinthians 12:9 and Galatians 5:22).

Christians look for the reconciliation of contraries in the one whom we see as the ultimate contradiction, the one who is both fully God and completely human. Through Christ we glimpse all opposites coinciding as they find their resolution in the incomprehensible mystery of God.

Christian education shoves us into the middle of the paradox, we teach so that others may hear the Word of God, but we cannot control the Spirit that alone gives people the grace to hear. As we enter more deeply into this contradiction, we may find that here also we are being drawn further into the Mystery.

Category B-24 Realm of Discourse

24. *The whole set of rules of computation change as we move from one realm of discourse to another. Let us have two parallel lines:*



They are so drawn in order to show their relation, which is tension. Typical disciplines, in which we are engaged as we approach either the top line or the bottom line directly, are listed. But we live in history and as we move within it, in any decision we may be keen enough to feel an impact, and we may respond in Faith. Thus history is real; it

- a) *Provides the occasion of the impact -*
- b) *Has within it no inherent logic;*
- c) *Is the occasion of redeeming the Kairos;*
- d) *Is the arena of testing my faith and of finding the truth in the*

Thus any occasion of the on-going passage of the days may be the spot in which the ends (point of the thing) of the world may come to me, and I may enter the realm between the parallel lines and be of the folk for whom the Bible was written. The realm between the parallel lines is called Heilsgeschichte (the Holy History), and that in the lower line is called Geschichte (the secular history). Beyond the death indicated at Kairos lies the eternal life (literally “life into the age”) where the Mighty Acts of God are found. they are never found by any computation of the Geschichte. In a rough way, we might say that “Lore” arises in Geschichte and “Gospel” in Heilsgeschichte; also that “Lore” can be made a direct object of teaching but “Gospel” cannot.

The realm of God cannot be known. God alone knows God. God is as incomprehensible to creatures as infinite light is to total darkness. When people are talking about God, they are indulging in poetic license, speculation, and fantasy. Such talk reveals a longing

for the realm of God that can never be satisfied. As it is written in Ecclesiastes, God “has put eternity into man’s mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end” (3:11). For this reason reality and truth must for us be hooked into history.

a) If the realm of God ever has any impact on my life, it will be on some particular occasion in my history. The opening chapter of the Gospel according to St. John declares that “the true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world” (1:9). This world and our history provide the only arena in which the true light can ever break in on my darkness.

b) A study of history and the world, however, will never teach me what I need to know for my life’s sake. It is interesting to note that Ephesians 5:15-17 talks of three kinds of learning that do not include knowledge of objective facts: ‘took carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.’ Foolish in Greek is the opposite of *phronimos* which meant the capacity to get something done. Unwise is sometimes translated “simpleton,” it suggests someone with a fluttering midriff meaning literally “not having an opinion.” Understand in the original Greek meant “sent with” a new avenue of exploration. The kinds of learning talked about here are all of more use than knowledge of objective facts because the facts will never add up to a sensible conclusion.

c) In the Ephesians passage just cited, “making the most of the time points to another important aspect of history. Time here stands for the Greek word *kairos* which is different from *chronos* or clock time. *Kairos* is the occasion when meaning breaks through. Making the most of *kairos*, or redeeming the *kairos* as older translations put it, meant literally “to buy back the value of the occasion.” This opportunity to recognize the occasion when meaning is breaking through can only be given during the ordinary course of my days, days which of themselves may be evil, or perhaps more accurately, days which are empty.

d) In writing to the Romans St Paul said, “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (12:2). The world is my proving ground; history provides the context in which my faith is tested. This is the test: can I demonstrate by my actions that the will of God operates within my mind? It is against this standard that I know myself to be judged.

In the tension between the realm of the world and the realm of God another realm opens up, the realm of Holy History. Like the other two realms which each have a characteristic language, Holy History involves a peculiar means of communication. Holy History, called *Heilsgeschichte* in German, finds its voice in the language of myth and symbol. This is the language of the church and of the church’s Book. This becomes my language as I seek to describe the indescribable experience of reaching my limits, always a kind of death, and discovering eternal life opening up before me. It is at such moments

that I know myself to be one of those “upon whom the end of the ages has come” (I Cor. 10:11), or more precisely “into whom the point of it all has come.”

As an expression of Holy History, Gospel can never be taught Lore, however, contains enough of the Realm of the World that it can provide the subject matter for a course much like history or philosophy or literature. Lore can even be approached from a scientific point of view using the tools of archaeology, philology, sociology, psychology, and economics. As was pointed out in the commentary on category B-4, care is required in the use of these terms, Gospel and Lore, because they merge into one another. The Lore contains Holy History and the four gospels in the Bible can be studied scientifically like any other part of the Lore.

Category B-25 Drama of Redemption

A diagrammatic form of the ‘Drama of Redemption’ can be developed in four “acts” where a start is made with me at the point of a decision of any sort, and it is realized that as I get into the Christian “Story” this may be a Christian decision. But the point of my entrance is always “at the end of the age,” “at the last day,” “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” that is, at the point of the Cross.

The drama of redemption unfolds in the liturgy of Holy Baptism. The theme of the drama is the mutual approach between God and a human being in getting born.

- Act I: Some people appear. They have gathered on this morning because they are aware of an urgency. This awareness causes the leader to declare, “There is one Body and one Spirit,” and the people to respond, “There is one hope in God’s call to us.” They have heard in that call a promise of a place in the structure of the universe. The promise is affirmed in the words of the Gospel, perhaps these words, “Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14).
- Act II: The leader then says: “You have brought this child and asked that the child be given a place in the structure of the universe. There are Conditions involved in this. You will have to agree to them for the child since the child is not yet able to know these things. Will you, as representatives of this Folk, take on you the responsibility of these conditions? Will your faith serve as a proxy and seed-bed for the germinating faith of the child?” These are the conditions (new Prayer Book, pa. 302-3):
- A. That the child give attention —
 - 1) to the danger of self deprecation and self hatred,
 - 2) to the danger of emptiness and exhaustion,
 - 3) to the danger of side-stepping and evasion.

B. That the child will live into the sense of value and the root of value that is the inner secret of this Folk's life --

- 1) by turning to Jesus Christ as a symbol of eternal destiny,
- 2) by putting confidence in this source of affirmation,
- 3) by behaving the way this game demands.

The leader says: "And will you, as a fellowship, promise to be the sort of people amongst whom it is possible for this child to live up to these conditions?" The people reply: "We will." Then they rehearse the Holy History and pray for the person about to be given the gift of new life and pray for their own part in this giving.

Act III. The people bring the child to the point of entrance and recognize *it* as the point of death. They release the child to enter the depths. The child emerges with a Name. The leader prints upon the child the sign of deepest tragedy so that the child may live. Those gathered say: "We have the great privilege and great responsibility of giving this child's name, of dramatizing the child's becoming a Someone, a person instead of a Nobody. The child is one with us, with a special place in the structure of things."

Act IV. The folk now say: "What can we do when something this tremendous happens and we are a part of it, except to pray: 'Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the holy Spirit you have bestowed upon this your child the forgiveness of sin, and have raised your child to the new life of grace. Sustain your child, o Lord, in your Holy Spirit'" (new Prayer Book, page 308). They go on their way rejoicing in the knowledge "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

GENERAL NOTES

(Adapted from the Educational Center Junior High School Outlines; July 1956)

Let's Begin at the Beginning

Where Life Begins2
Recognizing and Identifying this Life2
What We Are Going to Be Doing.....4

What We Are Seeking To Do as We Teach

The Place Our Teaching Begins: Problem Recognition and Setting4
The Necessity of Belonging6
The Ambiguity of Belonging.....9
Grace or Faith Belonging11
The Hazards of Commitments12
The Faith Response14
The Grace of God and the Testing of Commitment.....15
Who Will Be Doing This.....17
The Planning Process20
The Units22

Let's Begin at the Beginning

Where Life Is

1. A woman comes out from a Church Service and remarks to herself: "That's the most unfriendly place; I shan't go there again." An 8th grade girl refuses to sing with the choir anymore because it means wearing nylons to church school and the boys tease and whistle. A man watches his co-workers go off together and then heads for a nearby bar, in which he spends the evening before returning to his rooming house. A child becomes separated from his parents in the crowd leaving the circus tent, and stands in budding terror until grasped by a familiar hand attached to a gruff voice saying: "Johnny, I told you to hold your mother's hand." Two little boys; ages 3 and 4, playing together get into the situation where the younger, for no good reason, turns and hits the older, and, in turn gets hit back. Billy runs crying to mother: "Buddy hit me." Buddy just stands and looks at his mother wondering what will happen, until she says, "Buddy, come here; I'm not going to say anything." Whereupon he throws himself at her, burying his nose in her neck.

2. Judy arrives as a baby — a little Miss Nobody, whom certain people are concerned about because they know the importance of her being Miss Someone. "Name this Child." "Judith." "Judith, I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Now she is Judith, a very important small person who has her own place in the structure of the universe. One Sunday, several years later, the morning service was in progress. The Rector was presenting the offering on behalf of the congregation and everyone was singing "All things come of thee, o Lord," when Judith was seen very quietly moving up the aisle, up the chancel steps, and right up to where the Rector stood before the Altar. Judy wanted something; some people felt they knew what it was; others didn't have any idea but smiled over the picture presented; others probably thought the child should never have been allowed to get that far in the church, particularly during a service.

3. What is important is that Judy felt so much that she belonged here that she could go right up and, figuratively speaking, tug on the Rector's surplice-tail, even in the middle of a service. This was important to her; these were her people; it would be important to them. It was important to them even though they didn't understand what she wanted. The trumpet sounded as one small girl went forward to present her request. The congregation was changed if only for a moment, and raised to something of real living quality. "All things come of thee, o Lord, and of thine own have we given thee."

Recognizing and Identifying this Life

4. Is there a single common denominator running through all of this? It would be the common denominator of belonging to something — or more specifically, belonging to some group of people. The first woman was quick to notice her feeling of not being a part of the group where she went to worship; so an essential dimension of her life was denied. The 8th grader would give up something which she actually enjoyed rather than feel separated from the other 8th graders. The man spends his evenings in a bar in a

desperate attempt to cover up his need to be a part with others. Johnny feels the inner terror of physical separation from his own people. And Bud wonders if he still is “at one” with his mother, — as he was before he turned and hit back.

5. In contrast, what a wonderful feeling Judy has. She knows she has a place that is rightfully hers in the whole scheme of things. She is Judy, among people who support her in her travels up through the chancel to ask her own little question. Judy didn't have any of these thoughts in her mind; she just knew that this she could do and it would be all right; people would smile with her and for her, but not at her. It is up to the adults to recognize the religious implications of this and what sort of thing they are saying by their actions as they meet other people. It is obvious that all of these dilemmas can be seen on a surface social plane. Our inquiry has deeper implications. We are involved with the very stuff of which life is made — a place in the structure of the universe. But this place is only discovered in these simple practical situations.

6. There is danger for all of these people — danger that they never will find the place that is rightfully theirs in a supporting fellowship. There is danger for Johnny, who was lost and is found, and for Buddy who experienced forgiveness, —danger that they may never know the meaning of these and other experiences within the understanding of the Christian faith. There is real danger even for Judy, — danger that she will be so protected by adults in her belongings that she will never know the threat of not belonging and will take it so for granted that it will be unimportant and a matter of unawareness. And this, perhaps, is the greatest danger of all, because one can never truly be a part of a fellowship without personal awareness of these things and personal commitment to the fellowship.

7. Every group or fellowship to which people belong has certain conditions for membership; every fellowship has its law which describes it, and a belonging member must subscribe to that law in order to be in. Every fellowship promises its members a place in the general structure of things — as seen by that fellowship. Every fellowship promises its members that they will be persons, —the kind of persons described by that fellowship. Every fellowship has its ritual and its means by which its members are supported and through which life is interpreted for them in a way which makes sense on its terms. We must be on guard, however, not to act on the unwarranted premise that the Church is now or ever has been a “real” fellowship for members of the class.

8. It is interesting to note that the Services of the Christian Church dramatize all this that takes place, as part of ordinary living. The Service of Holy Baptism dramatizes what it means to belong and the conditions for belonging to any faith group. The Service of Confirmation dramatizes our commitment of ourselves of our own volition within a faith group, accepting as our own its Lord so that the law of this group becomes our law. The Service of Holy Communion dramatizes the strengthening support of this group of which we are part. These Services dramatize what is true of life itself — our need to belong and the way in which we go about being belonging people. But with what a difference the Christian understands these things — what they dramatize, and the drama's meaning, and the life-giving power of TI-ITS truth that is communicated. It is our persuasion as Christians that identifies this “truth” as true, and we pledge our very

lives to it.

What We Are Going to Be Doing

9. Can we see our task more clearly now? We are concerned that the members of the class not only comprehend the meaning of their lives but also that they comprehend this meaning with a Christian comprehension.

10. This course is based on the business of belonging. The problem is the same for Junior High School students and adults, but with adults the task is complicated by their longer experience in covering up their true feelings and perceptions.

What We Are Seeking To Do as We Teach

The Place Our Teaching Begins: Problem Recognition and Setting

11. There are four functions with which we will be concerned in the educational process. These are:

- (1) Living some real life together and coming into contact with each other around a specific problem area.
- (2) Recognizing, identifying, and describing the nature of this life lived together and its concerns.
- (3) Discovering the symbols that emerge which can interpret life's meaning and hold life together, and relating those symbols to the wider focus of our heritage.
- (4) Ordering, regularizing, and institutionalizing all that goes on by catching up the experience of the class into the life of the Church where it comes into a focus of meaning and expression.

12. In any educational process, all of these things go on at once. The chief disaster comes when the symbols (particularly of the Christian Church, which we are chiefly concerned to discover as part and parcel of our real life together) get talked about alone and abstractly without any real life being lived together and without the discipline of the process of identifying and describing this life out of which symbols arise. We are charged with the responsibility of transmitting our heritage to prospective members of the Church, but we cannot do that unless we are willing to enter with them into a common experience within which symbols can be discovered.

13. We cannot say, on the other hand, that we work through (1) above into (2) and thence into (3) and (4) in some preconceived order for we work in all at the same time. Yet (1) is the beginning point from which the others follow and have real meaning. The function implied in (2) problem recognition and identification is an educational

discipline within which we can discover the symbols arising in relation to real life, reflecting and interpreting its meaning. Our task is to help our students see in the Prayer Book some reflections in their own lives. If we have done this for ourselves, we shall be willing and able to live with them in this experience. We will hope to uncover an awareness, on the deepest levels, of the meaning of the religious issue in our lives. In this way, the word “symbol” as used here (and as used within the framework of the Christian Church) is understood as being the “kind of language in which a group of people understands itself.” For example, the Church has the Creed as one of its symbols; this is a kind of language in which the fellowship of the Christian Church understands itself. A group of teenagers in some high school may consider blue jeans as mandatory wearing apparel for members of the group; the blue jeans become a symbol for this group--a language in which this group understands itself. Perhaps this could be as real a creed as are the words we say in church.

14. We want to discover the symbols of our folk. Symbols are not invented; rather, we look around one day and find we have a new language; the symbols grow up out of the life of people together — and this is exactly the way in which the Christian symbols came into being. Perhaps we should be clear about what we mean by the word “symbol.” Some things have to be said — either to one’s self or to others even though there is no literal way to say them. The essence of symbol is that it speaks, among the people who have its secret, something that is beyond the intrinsic logic of the words or action. There is always an outer form and an inner realization, as the definition of a “Sacrament” in the Catechism so well knows (“The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace,” Prayer Book, p. 857).

15. The symbols have to be continually refreshed for the entire group as they are discovered; else they go stale or lose meaning all over again. This is done in two ways:

- (1) In the direction of the on-going life experience.
- (2) In the direction of the secret this particular community holds in its heart, so that the symbols still have in them the things this fellowship is talking about.

Thus, the symbols do not become outmoded (or absolutized to a particular event or time in history or group of people), but are things which have present meaning for this fellowship because they point beyond themselves to a reality greater than the power of speech to express.

16. We are seeking to live together as small groups and as a large group in such a way that we can raise the question of the meaning of our own lives. As we become aware in some depth of the meaning of our lives, we see that religion is our activity of interpreting the meaning of life and making sense of what would otherwise be non-sense. We see what the Christian Church has to say to us in terms of real meaning for our lives, and we hope to see the Prayer Book and Bible as reflections of our own lives, rather than as things set apart. Here we touch on Revelation as an essential experience. God’s word

speaks into our inward ear, as, in the concrete spots of our own lives; the Church's inheritance becomes a mirror in which we can see our lives in a fresh focus. Then we see and hear.

17. Real life is seen as a dynamic relationship — a tension — between the realm of this world and the realm of God. There is a given-ness in the structure of things; this given-ness we must live with in some way or other and make sense of our lives in the process. The realm of the world cannot be absorbed into the realm of God; the realm of God cannot become identified with the realm of the world. These two are in conversation with one another but are two different realms. We are called to live in each of them. How is this done?

18. The Church becomes a symbolic form in which this dynamic relationship is caught up, understood, and lived. It should be clear that “symbolic form” is not something less than real. It is the only form in which real personal life can be understood. The Church has history. It is part and parcel of the realm of the world, but it is also a mythological form. Myth was always known among the ancients as the story of the dealings of the gods with human beings, i.e. the focus for the interpretation of life's meaning.

The Bible talks about the realm of God entering the realm of the world as judgment and being met by faith. At this point the fullness of time is present. Here is the point of the Cross, the end (culmination) of the age. The Cross is the “end” in terms of being the whole point of the thing.

The Church is the arena in which the Mighty Acts of God are recognized. The Church is related both to history and to the realm of God. The Church is the fellowship which knows the secret of real life within this tension between the two worlds. Other groups succeed only in either bringing the two worlds together in a false fashion or cutting one out of the picture under the illusion that this solves the problem. Both of these realms are given, and of necessity, we live in both if we really live at all.

The Necessity of Belonging

19. The junior high and adult courses suggest: If I am going to be a real person I need a Folk. I become part of a Folk by my own commitment. With this Folk my commitment is tested and strengthened, and my Destiny becomes clear. In the lives of Christian people the services of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion dramatize these issues of belonging:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| (7th grade) | What it means to belong— Baptism. |
| (8th grade) | Belonging to one's commitment—Confirmation. |
| (9th grade) | The testings and fulfillments that arise within the commitment—Holy Communion. |

20. One of the most difficult problems we face as God's people is helping alienated Christians and our own young people find their way solidly into heritage where,

whatever the changes and chances of this mortal life, they need never be shaken. It may be that many of these people previously experienced this “folk” we belong to as a loose agglutination of individuals without a functioning Lord. The symbolic may have gone stale for them. Unless they are to be lost again, we need to help them ask, “Who are these folk with whom I might belong?”

21. If this can be done with enough urgency we will recover for them (and for us) the promise of fulfillment which has been lost. The promise which underlies all of this course is the discovery of a belonging which speaks to me of a place that is mine when I accept the conditions for fulfillment. A promise is made at Baptism and later confirmed, and will be confirmed anew each time we meet our Lord at this altar at the Holy Communion. The fundamental religious issue, then, is the question of an eternal destiny which is known in the Church — a place in the structure of the universe.

22. Every group holds out a promise for belonging. For the people of God the promise is specifically entering into the inheritance of the Kingdom, to be a child of God. To be a child of God, however, I must become a new being, be born into a Folk who know this secret. If you choose to be yourself under a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, the stability that goes with a place in the structure of the universe can never be taken away.

23. Anxieties arise because I feel that I have a destiny I am not fulfilling. “Who am I really? What is my destiny?” We are looking for answers to these questions in all of the various age groups to which we belong. In discovering myself in any group, however, I must find out who these other people are and I must be willing to belong with them. If I am going to be a solid, bedrock person, this group must have at its heart the gift of eternity, the gift of a place that is mine forever. Without this gift, I am a person only in a limited sense. The problem of belonging is that the place we seek is already ours. The problem in Christian education is to uncover what is already there so that the members of the class can claim the gift, the gift of personhood.

24. It is extremely unlikely that the problem will be understood at the beginning by any except the leaders. Members of the class are not likely to know that their personhood is at stake in their struggle for real belongings. They will not know immediately that the issue is death to sin and new birth into righteousness. They will not grasp the full implications of what it means to make a commitment to the Lord. These things must be experienced by the class and identified by the leaders for such understandings to take hold within the lives of the students.

25. Our understanding of the issue of Baptism in these terms (death and resurrection) opens up the issue of the need for redemption. Belongings of real value are the given ones out of which life itself takes shape: that is, they make me who I am and tell me who I am. My freedom here is to choose:

- (1) that it does not matter one way or the other.
- (2) that I will rebel.

(3) that I will to be what I am.

This choice involves the issue of commitment and leads to the possibility of sin in a dialectical relationship to faith. The adult understanding of sin as the opposite of faith is part of the net in which we catch the experience of the class.

26. Because the move seems to be from sponsored belongings (baptism) to belonging on one's own commitment (confirmation), we run the danger of not recognizing the full value of sponsored and given belongings. Even when we come of age and are recognized as being answerable for ourselves, we cannot ignore the value of trusteeship in our belongings. We can never be fully answerable for ourselves at all times. The value of the sponsor is never nil. Commitment is within the fellowship and is supported by this fellowship in a way which maintains the trustee relationship. This is never outgrown.

27. Once I know I am personally committed, I can recognize my immense need for the support and interpretation of this fellowship. I need help if I am not going to run out on my commitment. This fellowship is seen in terms of Holy Communion, a belonging within which are both the testing of my commitment and the awareness of the promise of fulfillment.

28. As we consider what we need to know in this whole area, we become aware of various problems involved in the issue of belonging, certain fundamental questions which need further examination.

29. For the class there will be confusion over the relationship between "choice" and "value." There are two basic types of belongings:

(1) The eternal, fundamental given belongings which are ours by birth.

(2) The secondary, sociological belongings which we enter by some form of initiation.

Real value comes from the given belongings that make me what I am and tell me who I am. Secondary belongings seem to be more valuable, however, because I am able to choose them. Value is confused with free choice. The given belongings are so often taken for granted that we are part of them without awareness. Yet, these are precisely the belongings out of which life itself emerges, and we deny them at the risk of our own death. In a very different sense from its voluntaristic connotations, an element of choice exists here also, for we are required to choose by an act of will to be what we are already. And there is no choosing here except in a situation of unpredictable and radical freedom which comes from God. I need to say "Yes" to the Power Who created me if I am to enter into my eternal destiny as a Child of God with real personhood. Value can thus be seen, not as freedom as such, but in the choice which freedom allows me to choose to be what I was created to be.

30. It just happens to be true, however, that until we are threatened within our belongings we have no idea of their value. The problem of getting into any course always

shapes up around this problem of discovering this sort of urgency within the class. The importance of belonging takes shape from the fear of not belonging, of being a faceless no one without a folk. Part of this may involve feelings of guilt and fear--who will justify me and hold my life together when it seems to be falling apart and death appears as a reality?

31. The problem we run up against is the depth to which these things have often been covered over. As children, many members of the class were protected by adults who saw to it that they were never left out and who thus prevented them from facing up to the whole question. It was probably not possible for the well-meaning adults to protect them from the fear of being no one. In many ways they heard people telling them that they were of little worth, but because our culture frowns on any outer manifestation of feelings of low self esteem, that also was covered up. In all of the work we will do with the class we will take care to start with the life of which they are aware, in circumstances familiar to them, where their known responsibilities lie, and amongst the persons with whom they are familiar. This we do in spite of the fact that their real life is deeply covered up and obscured from them. Here follows a treatment of several matters that will be necessary for us to know if we are to help our class live below the superficialities which the culture has fastened on them and move into the existence that is actually theirs~

The Ambiguity of Belonging

32. A way into a course, however, is often provided in terms of the urgency of the problem in existence that always arises on account of the necessities laid upon us by the whole issue of belonging. Belongings are always ambiguous and there is an ambiguity in any belonging. Out of these ambiguities, problem situations arise.

33. The ambiguity of belonging situations takes many forms. The most obvious one is in terms already familiar: "I can't be me unless I belong; but if I am not careful my belonging may crush me." In this sort of realization there is a great deal of urgency possible. On its deepest level it is realizable in adult terms in the threat of non-being. The being/non-being tension does not refer to something versus nothing, but to being a person with identity or a person in various degrees of unrecognizability either to himself or others. This whole issue of Being and Non-being underlies all of existence and all of this course. Belonging is the ground of Being, and contains in itself the threat of Non-being. The question always follows, after the examination of the function of a belonging group. "Can this belonging give the gift of Personhood? Can it truly baptize me? Can it speak to me of my destiny to become a new being? Or does it restrict and narrow my life so that existence is thin and I am merely a shadow?" There is indeed jeopardy in the pressure of any belonging for it both sustains me and puts me under judgment.

34. There are further ambiguities in belonging situations. Belongings are both things that befall (simply happen or are given), and they are also things out of which a Lord appears who can speak to me at the point of my need. We sometimes distinguish belongings by the way in which we are in them. We are already in some groups by birth;

that is, we were put into them; others we get into through choice and initiation. There is an ambiguity in the so-called “put-in” belongings since they may not be primary belongings, or they may be only extensions of primary belongings. In this connection the matter of coercion arises at the point of the exercise of choice. It has been noted that people often identify choice and value at the point of apparent freedom. While coercion is not to be identified with belonging as such (and this becomes an acute issue when primary given belongings are considered), nevertheless it is true that we never live in a world free from coercion.

35. Another major issue which arises in connection with the whole matter of belonging is the fact of law and its function. Any belonging has an identifiable form and structure (shape) and law is precisely that which describes this shape. The essential issue is law functioning as the description of group life. This is true of any law, but in these situations, most of this law is unwritten and perhaps even non-verbalized. We do not teach law as such, but deepen the class’s awareness that law already discovered is a description and interpretation of life for them according to their belongings. I know I belong when the law of my group speaks to me and describes me so that I feel at home in it. Thus I know I am in.

36. There are further implications. When this law speaks to me and is my law, a God appears for law is always given by a lawgiver who can write so inwardly in my heart that His law is my law (Jeremiah 31:31ff). Members of the class may have experienced something of this sort as children in a neighborhood gang. Now, however, they may recognize a yearning that “God may dwell in me and I in him; he will be my God.” This can be seen with many angles in reference to the category on autonomy (my law), heteronomy (another’s law) and theonomy (God’s law). When, in this inwardness, -we have a law which is ours, we can begin to talk of God in such a way that the word “God” can be used without blasphemy because of the inner struggle hinted here.

37. Law also functions within the dynamics of decision, of cost and promise or demand and permission. There are requirements (conditions, e.g. in Baptism) on me if I am to belong, but also permission to become a belonging person. In this connection, however, it should be noted that coercion as such removes the issue of decision entirely and makes me an automation of someone else’s decision and there is no real belonging in it; on the other hand, laissez faire lands me in an unreal world where no decision is possible. Also, we must guard against what might seem to the class as a causal sequence in the relation between cost and promise. It is simply not true that if I pay the price I get the promise. As a matter of teaching process it is always necessary at this point to establish clearly for the class the outrageous nature of the promise of belonging before the outrageous demand can be assessed or met. The demand on my life described by the law established the nature of the promise.

Grace or Faith Belonging

38. We have noticed above that it is possible to tell belongings apart by the way in which one gets into them: those given in the nature of things (race, sex, family, etc.), and those into which we move by some form of initiation. The identification of the difference is not clear by the use of the terms “got-in” and “put-in” and so we talk about primary and secondary belongings. Those of deeper value are always the birthright belongings which are simply given. It is out of these that my life largely is given meaning and shape. The actual sharp distinction is between things we elect to be part of, and our choosing of the things for which we are already chosen. Within the latter is the real choice — to be what I already am, or to say it doesn’t matter, or to wish that it were different. This is a life and death matter.

39. We need here to be clear about the way we can move from primary belongings into the grace and eternal destiny belongings symbolized by the word “place” — a place that is mine and makes me truly me. This, it should be realized, is not a static form, but is a process term. The identification of the word Church in functional and symbolic terms may take place here. While it is not easy to move from primary belongings as such to grace belongings concretely within the classes’ realization or experience, one way may be around the issue of justification. There may be anxiety about what will hold life up and since anyone’s life must be justified in some manner, this realization may begin to occur. As has been suggested above, our process will be to let emerge the anxieties that already exist.

40. While grace belongings arise within the context of primary belongings, it is necessary that these do not remain simply sociological belongings in history (such as Church becoming identified with a particular parish or neighborhood). For if they do, we are betrayed (and not justified) and find ourselves in further conflict (should I go to Church or to the football game). There is no power to Baptize in this sort of belonging. When we reduce our faith to an institution, its power becomes a road to death rather than to life. In a faith belonging, a Lord appears with the power to speak and to give me new life, whoever this Lord may be. We initially seek to find with the class the Lords they are actually serving. Then grace or faith belonging may become a symbolic form pointing beyond history to an eternal destiny where I know that gift of personhood in a place that is truly mine. Our process will be to help the members of the class find themselves groping toward this urgently needed justification and to identify this groping with them. In this way we may help them see whatever “churches” they actually belong to as a necessary step toward Christian Church.

41. Simply using the words “faith” or “grace” does not mean that we are automatically talking about Church as such, as we understand it. There are many faith belongings with a residual power of grace which are not identifiable with the Church as the household of God’s people as Christians understand it. But the teachers need to know what Church is involved here because they have lived into this. They can then in fact begin to talk about Church without making it the issue. The issue is that of birth in the Church (death and resurrection to the New Being in Christ) in terms of a living promise of a place that is mine where my life’s meaning is interpreted and where God can guarantee and

underwrite my existence.

42. The entrance into any Faith Community as such is through the conditions stated in Baptism and Confirmation (these are sketched in the last section of these Notes). Then all of these issues - law, demand, Lord, promise, destiny — can be seen in grace terms for what they are; and the choice is to choose to be what I am created to be in the power that created me. But if the process becomes short-circuited by making Church, rather than life, the issue, the urgency is lost and becomes a struggle between teacher and class, which is non-viable. If the tension is between the members of the class and their existence, we can move into this sort of realization. Thus, in all of this we need to be sharply on guard never to make Church or any other symbol the direct object of teaching.

The Hazards of Commitment

43. In any belonging, entrance is made by accepting the conditions of the outrageous promise on one's own commitment with responsibility. Then we discover the continual support which helps us stay in. Baptism leads to Confirmation and thus to Holy Communion. But commitment is not simply to a group. It is a personal relationship to the Lord of a group. The order in this is in terms of giving attention to what is required, giving commitment and pledging allegiance. One of the things, we need to be aware of at this point is the betrayal here by our own culture. There are hazards to a commitment in a casual culture such as our own which in fact gives little or no support to commitment. The culture has in it only death in the shadow of living which is what most people live by without even a taste of their own existence. And so we have to live our commitments in a culture that will trip us up and set us at naught. There are hazards in our culture's addiction to:

- (1) Broadmindedness.
- (2) The voluntary principle.
- (3) Practical mindedness.

44. On the other hand, if we understand what is involved in the issue of commitment and answerability, we will have to reject the culture's addiction and cling firmly to the fact that any commitment to a Lord of a belonging carries with it an exclusive demand which see this as though it were narrow, prejudiced, and "un-Christian." In any faith belonging there is an exclusiveness at the heart of its life where the Lord claims allegiance to Himself and the denial of allegiance of any other God. "I am the Lord thy God, and thou shalt have none other Gods before me." Unless this happens, there is no personhood and we cannot stand in an unfair world for we will always fear the loss of our identity and of our being. But a warning needs to be made that a belonging or faith group can become idolatrous if it is exclusive for the wrong reasons. It can put itself at enmity with the world. There is, for example, the idolatry of a peer belonging which is

utterly different from the exclusiveness of faith which gives true breadth and the capacity to take care and be concerned.

45. The real issue here is fundamentally not the accepting or rejecting of belonging or its Lord, but the full acceptance of oneself and having a ground on which we do it. Thus one lives into his own existence as defined by one's basic belongings. This realization is always the turning point into the exploration of the category of faith in a Lord and of Church as the symbolic description of "place."

46. The thing we are up against in light of a commitment can, perhaps, be stated: "How can I keep my integrity and wholeness when commitments cause so many complications in life?" The commitment problem often puts me head on into a brick wall and the danger is that one becomes commitment-shy. This is a danger since one has to be committed to be a person. On the other hand, there is a danger within the commitments themselves. A commitment may be to an idea or ideal (or anything *in* history) rather than to a Lord; this only leads to contention, division, and bitterness. Again, a commitment may be made without my knowing it or I find myself already committed by someone else. When these things become matters of awareness, I may refuse to make any commitments at all.

47. These point out the ambiguities involved in commitments. There are others but at least one more major one involves the matter of sponsorship. We have already noted that the move here is from sponsored belongings given at Baptism to on-my-own-commitment belongings which Confirmation symbolizes. We have pointed out that we must never seem to give the impression that the trustee relationship is outgrown and becomes valueless. Sponsored relationships persist throughout life. The issue is the increasing ability to be answerable on my own. But the ambiguity is that of the tension between dependence/independence. Most young people express this ambivalence in wanting to be adults but not wanting to commit themselves to adult responsibilities. It is for this reason that many of them commit themselves at Confirmation unawares. We are always caught up in the tension between dependence and independence. This is one of the basic polarities of existence.

The Faith Response

48. Another major area in this matter of belonging around which there are some things we need to know, and which has been hinted above, is the relation of a belonging to the Lord of the Belonging. It is stated in terms of the function of lawgiver, but this is only a beginning realization of Lord. The relation of a person to the belonging is the relation of commitment in faith to the Lord of a belonging; and the acceptance of these conditions to belong is the preparation for the gift which is the permission to belong in a place where I can really be myself. Thus a faith community is always a community which has at its center a known Lord and which has a secret longing to be shared.

49. This means, among other things, that the basis of conflict between belongings is not a sociological but a faith matter. We are not really in the position of having to choose

between alternative possibilities. We are making a faith decision and the battle is between principalities and powers. This fact itself underlies the polytheism of all mankind. Modern people have difficulty entering into the realization of faith because they so often have an unconscious faith.

50. One angle on this is the realization of the function of a faith community. The basis of conflict is not between the laws of differing belonging groups, but between the Lords of those groups and their differing demands in terms of faith allegiance. What we mean by a faith community, then, is a place where I take my stand and a point of view.

51. The Function of faith itself in existence can then be seen as the root of decision. The way I face a decision and the way I make a decision shows whose child I am--that which lies behind an action, that is, a decision, is of significance here for decision takes shape around faith. The issue at the heart of any faith community to which a commitment is given is always the secret of life's meaning.

52. We have said in several places above that the mode of entrance into the several realizations in connection with the functioning understanding of the whole complex of belonging is around threat or ambiguity as we face the necessities in existence posed by belonging as an issue. I can respond to threat in several ways:

- (1) With fear — directed toward an object;
- (2) With anxiety — a free-floating thing not directed toward anything;
- (3) With faith — as the response in the dialectic of the courage to be: to be me without any strings, to be me as a part of the people and things around me. This is a tension to be lived with.

The realization of law and of shape always poses a threat to any existence. The response of anxiety is always to the possible narrowness of my existence and the consequent dread of not occupying the whole of it. The response of faith would open the possibilities of a wider existence. In this connection see the category on the "shaking of the foundations."

53. There is a relationship, also, between faith and the need for justification (something which will hold me up and make me right). In this connection see the category on justification and also the categories of experience which underlie this entire discussion on faith. There is never any guarantee at this point and this can be a serious threat. The demand for a guarantee is in fact a denial of faith. On the other hand, we do not mean that faith is blithe or blind or uninformed. This is not the issue of faith against reason or of faith extending the limits of reason. Faith is simply beyond either resignation or the demand for a guarantee.

54. The opposite of faith is sin and the opposite of sin is faith and not goodness. Sin is seen as the rebellion in one of several possible forms against the Lord to whom I am committed. Sin is a descriptive way of talking about this rebellion, and its characteristic

forms are shown in the categories of sin. An ambiguity arises here in terms of the tension of sin/faith at the point of decision. Since sin and faith are realizations only in the presence of a Lord, it always depends on who my Lord is. A further ambiguity comes in the fact that there is no sin and no faith until a Lord appears, but a Lord does not appear until a sin or faith response is made. This is dramatized in the Confirmation service. I promise to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and at once the bishop turns and calls for our help in the Name of the Lord that is the Lord who made heaven and earth. But I must know who my Lord is for otherwise I am in the position of doing the right thing for the wrong reason. (Cf. T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, pp. 23-25).

The Grace of God and the Testing of Commitment

55. It is difficult to do more than this sort of descriptive undertaking in these general notes in relation to the issue of faith. One more thing needs to be said, however, as a reminder. What is at stake here is one's own personhood as the gift of God and of His grace. This occurs in the faith relationship to the Lord of a belonging. The members of the class are actually striving for this in a thousand ways; our task is to help them to identify the struggle and learn within it. We need to be reminded constantly that personhood emerges out of belongings which make me who I am. Belongings do not produce identity but produce persons of value. There can be and often are Christians on both sides of the barricades and agreement as such is not the issue. Faith in a common Lord is the issue. Individuals come out of a coherent society. Here again, we need to be reminded of the issue at stake in the dynamics of decision making. Perhaps all this is most sharply realized in the dialectical form of the courage to be, already referred to above. The necessity is the courage both to be me and to be a part with the consequent emergence into a climate where I can be me as well as a part in a coherent belonging with identifiable shape and order.

56. In the personal relationship of faith to a Lord it is possible to identify the functions of a Lord or Savior. Christ is the one who:

- (1) Gives me the low-down on me;
- (2) Brings me under both judgment and grace;
- (3) Shows me a new way and a new life.

This is a categorical way of talking about these experiences. They would not be taught as such, but we need a way of knowing what we will be talking about. The issue here in a face-to-face relationship with a Lord is death and resurrection. Out of this experience (not death to self, but death to self-will and sin) comes the possibility of becoming a new/being in Christ. There are several types of death but we are talking of the kind of death reflected in the Easter epistle (Colossians 3: 1ff) where being risen with Christ we are new creatures in Him. This is identified as death to sin and new life in righteousness. This is the experience of choosing to be what I already am and refusing to ignore the issue or rebel against it.

57. At this point it may be possible to see what is meant by entering into our inheritance. We are part of a folk and we have the gift of personhood and a living soul. The point of the identification of our “birthright” brings us to the extreme of existence and out of the average of existence. We either take it or we leave it (at our peril). A reflection of this is in St. John 6:40 where the implication of “last day” is not an identification where we either fall into the depths or we discover in faith a Lord who will support us and underwrite the meaning of our existence. This is to enter into an eternal destiny prepared from the foundation of the world. It is important for adults to have the eschatological issue clear. We are not referring to an extension of time endlessly for (I Corinthians 10:11) the “ends of the world” are come into us now and what is being spoken here is a new life which is life in the realm or age of God, not simply a life contained within the present age.

58. By this time, the phrase “a place in the structure of the universe” may have more meaning. The issue is always in the choice between child of history (this age) and child of God (the realm of God). The faith response is a response of great daring: to claim the heritage which is ours in terms of the grace belongings. This heritage is entered into by faith where there is discovered the power to be who I was created to be. The secret of the faith community is this sort of power of faith for living. Baptism is the giving of a place in the structure of the universe, of an inheritance prepared and given. I cannot win it, but I can enter it and claim it at confirmation and continue in that holy fellowship at Holy Communion. There may be here some understanding of the point made in the Lord’s Prayer where we pray “thy kingdom come.”

59. When this happens to some extent, we can enter into a deeper realization of the testings which arise in the world on account of this kind of commitment in faith. The testing is the testing of my integrity as a person of a Lord. We need defense against running out, which is the grace to stay in. On the other hand, unless this jeopardy is known, there is no capacity to follow a Savior. The issue of being in jeopardy occurs to someone who has a commitment he has to measure up to for his own life’s sake. The issue is assessed not in terms of what I do, but of what allegiance I hold. Christ is the one in whose presence I can confront the reality of my own existence at this and all points.

60. A testing is always coming at us in terms of asking if I am true in my decisions to what I say I believe in and am committed to. When this happens, there are satisfactions which lie deep within and are trapped. These are precisely in terms of my need for status, security and significant achievement; but there is the difference of life and death in whether these are had under the judgment of the world or under the judgment of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is right here, however, that the testing goes on. For the matter of satisfaction is a must and many people founder right here in the midst of the confusion abetted by our culture as a result of which they lose touch with the Church. True satisfaction derives out of that which the on-going process of events can never supply. These are merely transitory and illusory. True satisfaction is outside the mere logic of events themselves and is something inward and which is directly related to the capacity to be answerable and responsible in terms of the basic belongings out of which

life emerges.

61. For this reason, the issues of commitment must always be in our minds as we undertake this whole cycle of belonging before, at the time of, and after confirmation. The response in a faith commitment is in terms of answerability and its value. There is no reason more lost than the one who is answerable to no one. The frustration is compounded if one does not know it. The people need to know who will uphold them in their responsibilities, knowing the One to whom they can say “thank you,” knowing that there is a steady authority, and knowing the value of being answerable. This is not just moral responsibility, but religious responsibility. A person maintains integrity in terms of religious responsibility. Otherwise integrity becomes corroded and eroded. They need to know that whatever may befall, they can stand erect in the Day of Judgment. This is incomprehensible, but true. (Romans 1)

The real value of being answerable is discovered in the basic belongings, the folk, out of which life emerges. Unless this is realized, there is no possible way for people to find themselves squarely within the life of their folk.

Who Will Be Doing This

63. The life of the class has to dramatize what is being taught. The business of belonging and not belonging is part of the very class structure itself~, as is also the business of being or not being a person. The class may dramatize these experiences by becoming a belonging group in which all of the issues related to belonging may be contained and examined. The class belonging is also one in which the value of support and interpretation can be discovered by its members. The class becomes a belonging group, however, only if we let it. We cannot make it one, but if we are willing to live some real life together, to discuss situations that occur both in and out of class, we can develop a structure in which belonging can happen. The class group is a given. It becomes a belonging if we are doing our job well.

64. This sharing of real experience is an important thing, for it is a dramatization of what we are talking about in depth. It is within the context of our sharing experience together that real life is lived together and a group becomes a belonging group. For the students to discover the promise of a place for them in the structure of the universe, they need to base their exploration on experiences that are dramatic and specific. The life to be examined can be concrete if it is the form of the personal experience of the class members described to the class; other people’s experience related by the teachers; or the experience within the class itself

65. Perhaps before starting with any class, we should each ask ourselves the questions: Is belonging to things important to us and why? What things do we belong to? To what are we truly committed? And what about running out on this commitment? Out of these questions anxieties arise possibly taking the following forms:

- 1) “Am I living all my life?”

2) “Will my life ever come off?”

3) “Will my life be shadow or substance?”

66. Unless we as leaders really get into the game ourselves with the class, and have a feeling for it, we cannot play it. If we really come to grips with the issues involved in these courses ourselves, then we can move through the course units in terms of the students’ own lives. We can see ourselves and help the members of the class to see themselves reflected in the services of the Church and our other symbolic forms. The nub of the matter is the teachers’ actualization of their own confirmation. Are we really in this, and are we really “daily increasing” and renewing this commitment with deeper awareness and understanding?

67. While the teachers are thus a part of the class, they have their own particular role to play. There is nothing automatic about the class’s self-awareness. The class can become viable only if the teachers understand and play their roles with skill. Perhaps the best way to describe this role (and a way which clearly points away from the teacher as the imparter of facts) is to say that it is “maieutic.” This comes from a Greek word meaning midwife. The midwife is not the person who has the baby, nor does she try to make the baby arrive according to her own predetermined schedule. When the child is born, it is the mother who did it and not the midwife. Yet without the midwife the child could scarcely be well born. The possibility of awareness is in the students on account of the necessities they face as they begin to live into their own existence. The teacher’s role is to tap this awareness by a “boxing” process so that the student may be confronted by the issues in life and enter into the process of problem recognition and identification. Because of the ambiguity of their lives, they need to be set into problem situations where they can explore these issues.

68. The teacher’s role is more than this. The teacher must have the sensitivity to “see” what is being said beneath the words the class will use as they talk over their concerns. Teachers must know what is in the class’s heart and respond to it. It is more important for the teachers to understand and see the meaning behind the class’s words than to have used our own words. Further, the class’s own vernacular can be deepened as a matter of process. It is possible, for example, to pick up the vernacular “fun” which the class will use to describe an experience and to press for a deeper realization somewhere on the New Testament level of the word “joy”. While the words are not the same, the experience they describe may be similar. The depth training of an experience can thus be entered. In such fashion the teacher’s role to proclaim the good news of the Gospel can be hinted. The implications of the Gospel cannot be guessed nor do they emerge out of class discussion. At the right time proclamation must be made so that the Gospel can speak to the problems that are in people as they become aware of them. This is not direct discourse but may be described as the holding of a mirror in which I see the double reflection of Christ and me, with the awareness that we inevitably see “in a mirror dimly” (I Cor. 13:12).

69. The course is to be understood within the framework of the Prayer Book, but the

services are not subject matter to be taught. They are a dramatic focus of the life we live together. Thus, as we live together and find our lives reflected in these dramatic forms, we find ourselves transformed. We realize that we have been “born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). Units I, II, and III are always developed within the envelope of Church understanding, but Church language only becomes obvious late in Unit III and in Units IV and V. If we -- the leaders and the class members together -- really understand what is true, then we can see that symbols found in the services of the church dramatize this truth and are the means of communicating it. Therefore, we cannot start with Unit V, where the actual church services are dealt with, but we start by seeing what is really true in our lives.

70. We need a way in which the members of the class can tell us what is real for them so that the symbols of the Church will not remain shut for them but will open up as real dramatizations of what is true. Our strategy will be to pick the class members up in the on-going stream of their own experience within the framework of the course outline in order to uncover the meaning of their experiences and to deepen their awareness of this meaning. In the light of this awareness we should be able to do two things: (1) let them tell us how experience shapes up for them, and (2) develop sufficient urgency in them so that specific needs may be identified. From this we may develop enough momentum to carry us through to Unit V, where proclamation of the Christian Gospel may take place and be heard. This is NOT to say that proclamation cannot and must not place all during the course. It does take place in terms of our living relationship to the group itself. There will be times during the year when something needs to be said. Within our general plan, however, proclamation is an integral part of Unit V.

71. During Unit V, some members of the class will be actively considering Baptism, or Confirmation, or re-affirmation of faith within the life of the Christian folk. In this unit a discussion of the services of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion is appropriate as a reflection of all that has gone on.

72. So we need to talk about life, within the framework of the courses. If we, however, talk about the courses themselves, our conversation will grow stale and life in the classroom will wear thin, just as when we teach the symbols as such, they become abstract and lose their power to interpret and hold life together. There is, for example, little fun in making a catalogue of the things we belong to and why they are important. When we are through, all we have is a list and some opinions. We do not, then, talk about the Services as such, nor even about the issues to which these services speak — belonging, commitment and testing. We do talk about life as it is seen in these areas in tension. We talk about belonging in situations that are actual for the class and in terms that the class uses so that around these concerns the meaning of belonging and its reflection in Baptism may emerge. Out of such awareness comes the urgency that we are seeking. As the class gives us the way their basic problems shape up for them, we will use their language rather than our own, but we will be talking about the issues in our design.

73. The implication in all this business is that there is a great deal of freedom in the class in what we say and do together. We are concerned with life, and that allows for

immense limits. In any class, however, we are dealing with life within the framework of a given course since we cannot move profitably in any direction unless we have definite plans for getting somewhere and unless we know where this “somewhere” is. In this, as in all life, the real freedom of movement comes as a result of true acceptance of the limits which describe it. Thus, we encounter the absolute necessity of a design and submit ourselves to the discipline of the teaching structure.

74. We do not, then, teach propositions or subject matter or symbols, but we teach in the midst of life being lived so that the class will understand its own experience both as class and as individuals within the class. In order to do this the whole must take place within a planned framework rather than within something so broad it becomes confused and sprawled. The course manual is an attempt to identify within a specific aspect of life the focus of the course and the function of the units in the course as well as the process through which a class might move.

75. Recall that what is given is the life of the class itself and the individual people in it with their different levels of self-awareness. The possibilities of moving anywhere in the situation rest upon the dynamic qualities of the life of the class including the teachers. Out of this life together come awareness and the sense of urgency that is in the class as they face up to the necessities of the problem that is in them. But this is simply the raw material which is at hand. If we see this from the point of view of our educational process and the four things we do as we teach, we can begin to get hints of what we mean by the discipline of designing a year’s work together. Out of the sense of process and the discipline of design come the cues for our teaching method. If we are skillful in our teaching we can uncover with the class the urgency that is in them as they face the problem set by the course. Out of this urgency comes the stuff upon which our design is built and the motivation to move forward to the fulfillment of the year’s work indicated in the last units of each course.

The Planning Process

76. The teacher’s own planning must be done in several stages, or on several task levels. Unless teachers are willing to submit themselves to this discipline then it can be said categorically that the class will never get out of the ground and will spin itself out into nothingness. A discipline is nothing more nor less than a structure in which learning can go on. Our particular discipline is based on these tasks:

- (1) Identify the focus or problem area in which the course will take shape.
- (2) Describe this problem area with all of its dimensions.
- (3) Identify the units within the area in functional terms.
- (4) Develop the strategy for each unit as you approach it.
- (5) Plan the lessons with emphasis on the particular aspect of experience that will be explored in the session with hints as to the direction in which the class

might move. This will allow for both freedom within discipline and for the emergence of the class's concerns.

77. With reference to the first task, the focus is given in the manual. It is of prime importance that teachers be able to look at life through the focus in functional rather than propositional terms and to describe their understanding in their own words. That brings us to the second task. Each teacher should work out a descriptive statement to include all the dimensions and angles of the problem area so that it can be seen in all of its fullness. This assignment can be done if the teachers will live into the problem area in their own imaginations by picking up hints from what they know about the kind of people they are likely to have in the class and by recalling their own experience before they made an adult commitment in the Church.

78. When the problem has been worked out, the third task can be undertaken in which the units or levels of the course are identified in their relation to the ongoing design. This is done by making captions for each unit, again in functional terms showing the direction of the class movement. The units must be seen as arising out of the problem area and must be rooted within it. The units must also be understood within the framework of the Christian year. The five major seasons of the year serve as reflections of the fullness of life as understood by Christian folk. If we are to take seriously the class's need for a complete experience by the end of the course, we will take seriously as part of our task giving sufficient sharpness and definition to the aspect of life with which we are dealing in each unit.

79. The fourth task, always tentative, is to note the possible concerns which must be moved through if the intention for each unit is to be fulfilled. These notes take the form of captions which become hints for the first element in lesson planning. These statements must also be related back through the unit caption to the problem area.

80. Five units are worked out for the course within the framework of the Christian year. The five major seasons of the year serve as reflections of life lived among the Christian folk as it is deepened. If we are to take seriously the need for a fulfillment by the end of the course, we will take seriously as part of our task the need to give sufficient sharpness and definition to the selected aspect of life with which we are dealing in each unit.

81. Once these first four tasks have been completed, we must plan for the opening sessions of our class. We can begin by guessing what the first session experience might be like. A concrete introduction must be used which is as viable for the class as for the teachers. This will provide a floor on which the students can move around as they begin to develop enough of a common life within the class for their real concerns to take shape within the problem area. Following the first few sessions, lesson planning will use material generated by the class itself but it will be shaped by continual refreshment of the course design worked out in the first four tasks. Much will emerge which is not of use at the moment, but, especially in Unit I, it should be stockpiled for future use. Each lesson must be firmly rooted in the course design if the year's work is to be kept sharply focused on the problem area. It will be necessary in planning to look back over previous

sessions to spot the turning points, to pick up for use the things that students have said, and to notice where what they said was deepened.

82. A lesson plan should be definite but need not be adhered to rigidly. Flexibility on the part of a teacher cannot be achieved, however, unless the lesson plan has become written inwardly. Good teachers will depart from the plan as necessary so as not to jam the class, but they will know where they detoured off the main highway so that they will know where to come back on. The lesson plan itself provides a net to catch the life of the class which needs to be examined, but which will allow the minnows to wriggle away again into the sea. A standard lesson plan would be as follows:

- (1) A full description of the experience to be tasted in the session, including an issue with all of its dimensions and the area of concern within which the issue arises.
- (2) An indication of a way to pick up the class in a concrete manner and to button onto last week's session.
- (3) A list of the turning points in experience through which the class might move toward the fulfillment of the description given in (1) above. Techniques which could be used in addition to free discussion might also be listed.
- (4) A summary with an open end, pointing up what may have happened during the session and indicating where the class would go in the next session.

83. In all of this we can see that the teachers must constantly refresh themselves on the original identification of the problem area and the design of the course as the class moves through the course's work. It is especially important for teachers to have so well identified and re-identified each unit that they can identify the kind of experience with which they are dealing and the level on which the class is working with it at any given moment. It should thus be clear that in this educational process we are up against something different from what most of us knew when we stated goals and hinted at the problems to be discussed. What we are doing in a living educational process is to state problems so concretely that goals are never set but emerge and fasten themselves onto us as we move along.

84. In our educational process, free conversation under leadership is used a great deal with good results. It can, however, be overdone. We should avoid sinking into one educational pattern. It is necessary to work out carefully a plan for varying the class activity, but in such a way that it will evoke real life. We must keep in mind the use of techniques such as: role plays, interviews, face-to-face discussion groups, stories, songs, and games. This sort of business is part of the planning process.

The Units

85. The prime focus for all units and for all courses is our “place in the structure of the universe.” What are the anxieties which arise because “I have a destiny that I am not fulfilling,” or “That I feel I am not able to fulfill.” Is this not another way of expressing: “How can I know what I am supposed to do with my life?” — A question that is relatively common and that bothers most of all the people who have not learned the trick of covering this up with an assumed sureness and sense of “purpose.” These are the anxieties that are provoked in Unit I in particular situations within the framework of the course. In Unit I they are expressed in terms of life experience, and in the later units these anxieties are explored and their roots discovered.

86. A basic threat underlying all of these courses is the threat of non-being—of not being anyone at all. This fear takes different concrete forms: the fear of not belonging, the fear of being found out as a sinner, or the fear of not being justified. In the light of these fears my life seems to be falling apart and death becomes the reality (see Eph. 2:1 and Rom. 6:3). In our unawareness these things are always covered up, and so we must pick up the class with a fear that is real for them. All of this is part and parcel of the basic anxiety which arises in the threat of non-being. My place in the structure of the universe involves my being a part with a people, and being part as a sinner with a people whose secret gives justification for my existence. If these things come about, I am someone; I have a place in the structure of the universe; I know my destiny and the means through which it will be fulfilled. We, as leaders, need to know how to tap these issues and to tap them as quickly as possible.

87. One of the essential skills in this tapping is our own awareness of how deeply these issues are covered up in people by one means or another. Our problem literally is one of uncovering something that already is present, NOT of adding some problem or problems to the lives of these people. People who have never experienced not belonging to that which they ought to belong are quite unaware of the bite of the importance of belonging. Yet the need to belong is hidden within them. People who are always given the Christ of circumstances as the Savior for what they want (change the circumstances and the problem will no longer be, since the fault lies in the circumstances which have befallen me) are unaware of that in themselves which tells them there is a personal guilt element in all this. And certainly justification of our lives in many varied terms is common with all of us and is in itself a cover-up, which needs to be uncovered as such. Surely we have all engaged in self-justification.

88. The general function of any Unit I is always to develop a situation in which specific issues may be raised. These issues are not pressed for realization until Units II and IV, where they may then be developed more concretely on deeper levels of awareness. We want to be sure not to get into the dynamics and depths of the succeeding Units while we are still in Unit I.

89. The categories of experience as such are always threefold. Their concrete shape in any problem area is defined by the particular conflict itself based on the problem that lies within each of us on account of the necessity confronting us.

- (1) The things that befall me; the given things of real life;

- (2) What is within me; the characteristic interpretation of my life;
- (3) The way I meet what is given in terms of response to a Lord.

While (1) and (2) determine in some sense the shape of (3), nonetheless they are distinct categorical realizations and each can give some hint as to the way in which the exploration of experience in Unit I can be shaped up.

90. The problem is always to get into Unit I quickly and in such a way that when real issues emerge we can see them under one of these categories of experience and then latch onto them quickly. In Unit I we sharpen and deepen the issues and then move on rapidly, waiting for Units II, III and IV for a full realization of the significance of the issues. Unit I entails three things: a) awareness; b) urgency, and c) the shape of the problem. These all come up in a reciprocal relationship with each other. Here the intimations of concrete issues are sharpened enough so that they have importance.

Units II, III, and IV develop these issues to the point where reality can be seen through them in the church belonging of Unit V (as dramatized in the services). In Unit I we must see, with meaning, these concrete issues when they happen, see them in categories of experience and see our choice of the new way in which we meet them. One of our biggest dangers is to let the opening gambit which we use to get into Unit I sprawl so that it becomes the year's course, and we never move out of Unit I.

91. If what is hinted at in Unit V happens — that is, if the leaders are within the framework of Unit V during the course of the year and if what Unit V is talking about is actually dramatized within the class itself — then we will not teach captions but will teach life. The class members will emerge from the class knowing the meaning of their own experience, rather than having learned about something. Meaning becomes a matter of discovery at all times rather than being definitions on the blackboard. Belonging will be experienced if the class becomes a belonging group — if real value is found in it by its members. This value will be in terms of support and interpretation of life. The actual issues discussed will then be dramatized by and in the class. All of this only happens in situations that are real enough for the talkers to talk in a real fashion. It is by actual living within the meaning of Unit V that things can become real in Unit I as the class discovers the actual shape the problem of the course will take.

92 Throughout, the conditions for belonging need to be touched with real awareness, rather than being left as abstractions until the end. As we understand them, these conditions are basic for being part of any faith community. We all do fulfill them — of necessity and as part of living. They must be fulfilled to bring to pass the promise that any group holds out. We have to be very careful that in interpreting them that we take up the conditions functionally — as people actually fulfill them — rather than abstractly when they become unreal.

93. The conditions for belonging are: (see the promises made by the candidates or their sponsors at Baptism, new Prayer Book pp. 302-303).

(1) That I will turn myself towards this faith belonging with discipline; that is, that I will have the ability to give my attention to this. Most people do not like the phrase “pay attention.” The world values broad-mindedness; “paying attention” to something implies narrow-mindedness. Because of great distractions, it is difficult to give attention and to be disciplined. And yet — when asked if I will give attention to this faith group — the answer has to be: “Yes, with my life.” To become a person, I have to give attention to what promises me personhood. This is a desperately difficult condition for us to fulfill because of our cultural conviction that broad-mindedness is the gateway to freedom, whereas the giving of attention is in fact the gateway.

(2) That I will have a real sense that in this fellowship is a secret of immense value in making me a person. I don't get to be part of any fellowship until this secret becomes part of my life and compels me. This fellowship must have a quality that is real for me in terms of value and that gets me moving of my own volition. No one else has to yank me up and force the discipline of attention upon me. I know this secret of immense value is there, and I will put myself in the situation where I can begin to understand it and where the secret can become real to me. This shall become mine. It becomes mine by living, by a real “yes” given in terms of my life.

(3) That I will have a real desire to be in this fellowship and have its secret for my own. I will choose this for myself. This decision requires that I be a person of sufficient responsibility to make the choice sound and true. This is choosing to be myself in the Power that created me; i.e., choosing to be what I already am.

94. Wherever these conditions are met, the promise is ours. The conditions are constantly being met somewhere. Where do our people meet them? In what way? With what fullness? Toward what Lord? These conditions will underlie and undergird all of the life we live together. They must be touched on with real awareness as part of our lives. The biting questions are: What is the promise we seek? What is the promise offered by the various fellowships? In what way is it fulfilled? If what we are after is a place in the structure of the universe, these conditions involve death, and the promise is new life, as a real person.

95. The promise of fulfillment, beginning at Baptism and later confirmed is re-enacted in the Communion Service experience where the promise is made again and again. The promise is always an eternal destiny which is mine in the Church.