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A SPECULATIVE MODEL OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH: A MELDING OF MATTHEW AND
ERIK ERIKSON

by

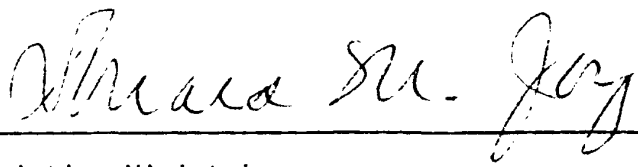
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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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TO GOD BE THE GLORY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1.	Introduction	1
	The Problem	2
	Theoretical Framework	4
	A Review of Literature	11
	Design of the Instrument.	22
	Conclusion	23
2.	What Am I To Be?.	25
	Growth	25
	Be Perfect.	28
	Becoming Perfect.	38
	Conclusion	44
3.	The Building of Disciples	46
	Building the Arch, Level One.	52
	Stone One: "Follow Me" (1:1-4:25)	52
	Stone Two: Lifeways of the New Humanity (5:1-7:27)	57
	Building the Arch, Level Two	64
	Stone Three: Learn Compassion (8:1-9:38)	64
	Stone Four: Freely Give (10:1-42).	67
	Building the Arch, Level Three.	68
	Stone Five: Expectations and Delusions (11:1-12:50)	68
	Stone Six: The Nature of the Kingdom (13:1-52)	72
	Building the Arch, Level Four	74
	Stone Seven: Weaning Continued (13:53-17:27)	74
	Stone Eight: The New Community, the Church (18:1-35)	79
	Building the Arch, Level Five	82
	Stone Nine: The King Comes Home (19:1-23:38)	82
	Stone Ten: The King is Coming Again (24:1-25:46)	86

Chapter	Page
The Keystone: The Cross and Resurrection (26:1-28:20)	91
Conclusion	95
4. A Theory of Development	100
Eight Stages of the Life Cycle	106
Infancy: Trust vs Mistrust--Hope	106
Early Childhood: Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt--Will (Power)	107
Play Age: Initiative vs Guilt--Purpose	109
School Age: Industry vs Inferiority--Competence.	110
Adolescence: Identity vs Identity Diffusion--Fidelity	111
Young Adulthood: Intimacy vs Isolation--Love	114
Maturity: Generativity vs Self-Absorption--Care.	116
Old Age: Integrity vs Despair, Disgust--Wisdom	117
Conclusion	118
5. A New Model for Christian Life Development	120
The Transformation Chain	125
Anchor Bolt: Conversion.	125
Link One: God Working In Me	130
Link Two: God Working Around Me.	134
Link Three: God Working Through Me	137
Link Four: Forging An Identity	140
Link Five: Faithful Love	144
Link Six: Fulfilling My Ministry	147
Link Seven: Finishing The Course	150
6. Design of the Tool.	153
History	154
The Instrument	158
Conclusion	165
7. The Administration of the Research.	167
Administration	170
Conclusion	177

Chapter	Page
8. The Findings of the Research: Case Histories	178
"Alan" - [1]	179
"Barry" - [2]	181
"Carl" - [3]	183
"Dan" - [4]	185
"Earl" - [5]	187
"Felix" - [6]	189
"Gary" - [7]	189
"Helen" - [8]	190
"Ian" - [9]	192
"Jackie" - [10]	194
"Karen" - [11]	195
"Lee" - [12]	197
"Mabel" - [13].	200
"Nancy" - [14].	201
"Oliver" - [15]	203
"Paula" - [16].	203
Conclusion	206
9. The Findings of the Research: The Links.	211
Research into Six Transforming Links.	212
Link One: God Working In Me.	212
Link Two: God Working Around Me.	216
Link Three: God Working Through Me	220
Link Four: Forging An Identity	223
Link Five: Faithful Love	225
Link Six: Fulfilling My Ministry	228

Chapter	Page
The Question of Sequence	231
Conclusion	235
10. Until Christ Is Formed Within	237
Theoretical Conclusions	237
Research Conclusions	239
Further Research	241
Final Words	244
Appendix A Link 1 - God Working In Me.	245
Appendix B Link 2 - God Working Around Me.	253
Appendix C Link 3 - God Working Through Me	263
Appendix D Link 4 - Identity	268
Appendix E Link 5 - Itimacy	279
Appendix F Link 6 - Ministry	288
Appendix G CRG/CG Final Assignment	296
Appendix H "UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"	300
Bibliography	301

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
Figure 1	The Arch	99
Figure 2	Conversion	129
Figure 3	God Working In Me	133
Figure 4	God Working Around Me	136
Figure 5	God Working Through You	139
Figure 6	Forging an Identity.	143
Figure 7	Faithful Love	146
Figure 8	Fulfilling My Ministry	149
Figure 9	Finishing the Course	151
Figure 10	Growth Patterns Since Conversion	207
Figure 11	Average Years Since Conversion	209
Figure 12	Matrix of Transformation	243

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The process of caterpillars entombing themselves in cocoons, only to emerge as butterflies has been known for centuries. From a totally external view, two different creatures are involved. For the scientist, the inner continuity between egg, larva, pupa and adult merely illustrate stages of complete metamorphosis.¹

Long before being borrowed by scientists, the apostle Paul used the same Greek word μεταμορφοομι to describe the process by which Christians were to be changed. In a transforming process analogous to the complete metamorphosis of a caterpillar, the Christian was being urged to allow the motivation of the mercies of God to be the catalyst for the passive imperative:² let God transform you.³

Not only is it important to know how a person enters the kingdom of God, it is also important to know how a person is changed in that process.⁴ To be born is one miracle. To be changed "until Christ is

1. Gretchen M. Alexander, Life Science (Glenville, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1983), p. 183.

2. All references to Greek language structure will be referencing Barbara Friberg and Timothy Friberg, Analytical Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

3. Rom. 12:2. Both there and in II Cor. 3:18, Paul uses the passive tense to indicate God as the active agent.

4. Systematic theology distinguishes the two as justification and sanctification. The first occurs once. The second is an ongoing process.

formed" (Gal. 4:19)⁵ may be an even greater miracle. It is to the exploration of a transformation chain as gleaned from Matthew through the bifocal lenses of biblical reality and psychological possibility, that the following pages are centered.

The Problem

The purpose of this study is to understand ways in which the Holy Spirit has led sixteen adult Christians toward various points of maturity in Christ as seen through a speculative model of Christian growth. That model was devised through a melding⁶ of the Gospel of Matthew and Erikson's "Eight Stages of the Life Cycle."

The New Testament's view of people is dynamic. As people enter the Kingdom through new birth, they enter as infants. They are to grow through the gifts of the risen Lord until all "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). In that process, they move from infants "blown here and there" to people who

5. All biblical quotations are from the New International Version of the Bible, unless stated otherwise.

6. The word "melding" is used according to its second meaning: "to unite; merge" (World Book Dictionary, s.v. "meld.") because of the sense of something new coming out of two separate entities. The merging of the two sources produces a third entity, whose relative strength or weakness depends on how closely the product employs the strength of either source.

have "grow up in . . . Christ" (Eph. 4:14-15).⁷

Christians generally agree on the ultimate terminus of the Christian life: eternal bliss in heaven as the bride of the exalted Lord Jesus Christ. Their present experience of God through the Holy Spirit is know as downpayment/earnest of the inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14) to be experienced forever. Eternity becomes the place where the quality and quantity of life will develop fully.

Agreement is more difficult to reach when the terminus is moved to this present life. Christians turn in vain to their theologies to find consensus on the penultimate. What can they expect "in Christ" during their lifetimes? They are new creations, but how much can be known and/or experienced in life here and now?⁸ However clear may be the call to grow up into Christ, specifics on the process of growth are not clear. No New Testament writer gives explicit steps for growth.⁹

7. For the writer of Hebrews, the dominant motif is that of pilgrimage. The person of faith cannot rest on their laurels, but must press on. It is not enough to be a statistic under the heading, "People of God." They must also be growing from only needing milk to eating solid food.

8. Johnston notes the shifting theological emphases in the past three decades, concluding that "the cutting edge of theological reflection has moved from the divine to the human. The God-intended shape of human life has become the overarching concern of evangelicals and ecumenicals alike." Robert K. Johnson, "What is the Major Shift in Theological Focus?" Christianity Today 28, no. 2 (February 1984): 78-79.

9. II Pet. 1:5-8 may be an exception, as the readers are encouraged to "make every effort to add to your faith"

Christians are told to look for the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), but are not given a technology of husbandry which will produce that fruit.

Theoretical Framework

The closest approach to a technology of growth in Scripture is the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus' first recorded words to the nascent disciples are an imperative which sets the tone: "Come, follow me" (4:19).¹⁰ His last words include the imperative, "make disciples of all nations" (28:19). Between these two commands, Matthew sketches out a catechism for new converts¹¹ which will enable succeeding generations of followers to fulfill those imperatives. Always the person of Jesus Christ will be central. Always the imperative will take them out of themselves into the "nations."

As the First Gospel is approached through the eyes of a new

 10. All references to the Gospel of Matthew will be recorded as numbers, with references to other books of the Bible recorded with book and numbers.

11. See Krister Stendahl, The School of St. Matthew (CWK Gleerup: Lund, 1967) and Glenn W. Barker, William L. Lane and J. Ramsey Michaels, The New Testament Speaks (New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 263.

convert, certain specific steps in growth in Christ emerge. Matthew has organized the material so that the teaching of Jesus might be assimilated more clearly.¹² For example, the Sermon on the Mount (5--7) collects the teaching of Jesus on the life-ways of Christians. The "Little Apocalypse" (24--25, Mark 13 & Luke 21) tempts even older disciples to scratch their heads. Matthew clearly outlines the three questions asked (24:3), and provides answers to those questions, first through didactic style (24:4-31), then through seven parables (24:32-25:46). From the rich treasury of the teaching of Jesus known through the early church, only part of which was ever recorded (John 21:25),¹³ Matthew includes five more parables of the kingdom to the two provided by Mark (13:1-52 and Mark 4:1-20, 30-32).

However, each generation approaches the biblical text with the

12. "Since so much material is grouped, it is impossible for Matthew to be in perfect chronological order. Rather Matthew uses groups where it suits his purpose and places these groups in a chronological order." Stanley D. Toussiant, Behold the King: A Study of Matthew (Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1980). p. 22. It is not this author's intention to get into discussion of the synoptic problem and related issues. Albright and Mann provide almost two hundred pages of "Introduction." W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, Matthew. Vol 26. The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), pp. xix-cxviii. Stonehouse, although dated, (1963) provides the classic evangelical handling of the synoptic problem. Ned B. Stonehouse, Origins of the Synoptic Gospels: Some Basic Questions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963).

13. This author rejects the assertion or implication that Matthew "invented" material to place in Jesus' mouth. Redaction criticism moves in that direction. The recent action by the Evangelical Theological Society in censuring Robert Gundry for asserting that Matthew "made up" accounts of the magi, the star, and the slaughter of infants, provides an excellent illustration of an important line that should not be crossed.

questions of its age. The mind-sets of the day both limit and launch new directions for study.¹⁴ Ours is a psychological age. For decades, skirmishes have been fought between theologians and psychologists. Yet, even though the battle lines have not yet totally disappeared,¹⁵ psychology can be of immense help in getting us to some of the reality behind the biblical text.¹⁶ "Theology describes the WHO as well as the who and the why, and psychology describes the what and the how."¹⁷

Of particular benefit to the study of Matthew is the discipline of developmental psychology. Jung, Kohlberg, Levinson, Sheehy, Maslow, Gilligan and Fowler are becoming familiar names. Each posits an epigenetic structure to human life. Crawling precedes walking, for walking needs the lessons and muscles of crawling. People grow through

14. Flew and LaRondelle give perceptive insights into the ways in which Christian thought about the doctrine of perfection was shaped by the thought forms of their day. See R. Newton Flew, The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology: An Historical Study of the Christian Ideal for the Present Life, (Oxford University Press, 1934) and Hans Karl LaRondelle, Perfection and Perfectionism, (Kampen: Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam, J. H. Kok. N.V., 1971).

15. Everett and Bachmeyer's "trilateral analysis" points to the complexity of the interaction between theology and the behavioral sciences. Farnsworth integrates the two disciplines around their common search for truth. See William W. Everett and T. J. Bachmeyer, Disciplines in Transformation: A Guide to Theology and the Behavioral Sciences, (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1979) and Kirk E. Farnsworth, Integrating Psychology and Theology: Elbows Together but Hearts Apart, (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1981).

16. D. L. Bartlett, "Biblical Scholarship Today: A Diversity of New Approaches," Christian Century 98, no. 34 (1981): 1090-1094.

17. Farnsworth, p. 7.

distinct stages¹⁸ much as plants grow through an observable process of "first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head" (Mark 4:28).

Interesting new paths emerge when the conclusions of developmental psychology are brought to the biblical text. Duska and Whelan (1975:47-49) state four qualities of stage development which have been "reinforced" through Kohlberg studies:

Stage development is invariant subjects cannot comprehend moral reasoning at a stage more than one stage beyond their own subjects are cognitively attracted to reasoning one level above their own predominant level (and) movement through the stages is effected when cognitive disequilibrium is created.

A fifth must be added: Development is not homogeneous. That is, a mixture of the stages can be expected in actual life. A person will not be a "pure" Stage 5!

Does this mean that there is a definite track along which normal spiritual growth occurs? If so, is the sequence invariant? Does the adequacy of our early faith experiences strengthen our growth to maturity? Can certain pathologies be traced to their beginnings, and thus corrected? Can biblical insights be sharpened by developmental psychology in such a way that we become more skilled in the "cure of

18. Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, Levinson and others use the terminology of "stages" while Sheehy prefers "passages." This author will later introduce the word "links" to describe an interrelated process through which Christians grow.

souls"? Do the appetites we have for certain truths give a clue to our growth? Do ways of thinking about truth change as one matures?

These questions become sharper when applied to a biblical text such as Matthew, which is designed for leading new converts through a certain sequence of study. Why is mission (10) before confession (16:13ff)? Is it necessary or happenstance that Jesus initiates conflict at a certain juncture of the disciples' development (14)? Why did he not do it sooner? What is the significance of alternating between sermon and narrative? Are the narrative sections only the story line of the life of Jesus, or do they also fill a need in the maturation of the disciple?¹⁹

The following pages allows one theory of developmental psychology to ask questions of the Gospel of Matthew for the purpose of discovering the latent pattern used by Jesus to transform followers into apostles; fishermen into makers of disciples of the risen Lord. In Matthew, certain building blocks suggest themselves in the sequential development of people as they follow Jesus. As narrative and sermon complement each other, the growth of Christians can be likened to the building of an arch. One pier finds its strength from the sermons, the other from the lessons of life, with the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus forming the anchoring keystone. When the "Eight

 19. The emergence of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) has underlined for western educators the fact that good education is not limited to the traditional classroom.

Stages of Life" posited by Erik Erikson are used as a grid²⁰ to ask questions of the reality beneath the agenda of Jesus in Matthew, the issues of transformation become clearer. The theory which began as ten building blocks with a keystone has developed into six epigenetic links in a transformation chain, taking a person from spiritual infancy to the verge of adult ministry, as "Christ is (being) formed in you" (Gal. 4:19).

Certain basic assumptions are implicit in the following pages. First, Scripture is assumed to have foundational authority. Where Scripture speaks clearly, it speaks authoritatively. However, Scripture does not answer all the questions asked. The Bible was not designed by God to be an encyclopedia accessible to our alphabetized inquiry. Rather it is ever God's Word to which we must listen, with which we must struggle, in which we find the triune God, and through which we find eternal life.

Second, just as Scripture involves two axes, the divine and the human, so life for Christians involve the supernatural activity of God operating in and through their humanness. Created both out of the common dust of the universe and in the image of God, the Christian

20. Hutcheson, speaking to the issue of using management techniques from a Christian perspective, offers three standards. Of special importance to the following pages is his second standard: "Biblical/theological and organizational insights must be integrated, rather than overlaid one on the other. Despite its transcendent dimension, the church is undeniably a human organization." Richard G. Hutcheson, Wheel Within the Wheel, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 57-58.

cannot be content with either myopic or telescopic vision. Made with two eyes, the Christian focuses both on the humanness that is near at hand and the resurrection power of the risen Lord.

Third, common grace declares that knowledge congruent with reality is available to non-Christians. Even though certain levels are accessible only to the person in whom resides the Spirit of God, other levels are the common heritage of humanity. Thus, true knowledge²¹ can be found in places other than Scripture. Once adequate allowance has been made, both for the normacy of Scripture and the presuppositions used by other disciplines, any human inquiry can be helpful to the Christian.

Certain limitations chart the course of this study. First, the biblical field of inquiry will be confined, as much as possible, to Matthew. Some interaction with other biblical writers will take place in the footnotes. The impossibility of taking into consideration the entire biblical teaching on this subject forces this limitation.

Second, with the exception of their input into the doctrine of perfection, use of systematic theology will be limited. The discipline of biblical theology will be more in evidence.

21. A distinction must be made between true knowledge as the "formal truth of the facts in question" and "truth" in the biblical sense of what is available only through divine revelation. Gottfried Quell, Gerhard Kittel and Rudolph Bultmann, "Αληθεια et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. I, ed., G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) p. 246.

In using the insights of developmental psychology, the entire stream of thinking that flows from Piaget-Kohlberg has been omitted. Instead, inquiry has been limited to Erikson and those students who use his model as a basis for their inquiries.

Finally, no attempt will be made to interact with other descriptions of maturity, either psychological or Christian. Such a task is necessary. However, the focus of the present inquiry is to meld Matthew and Erikson, not to assess the resultant melded product against contemporary works on Christian maturity.

A Review of Literature

The two areas of greatest relevance for the pages that follow will be reviewed. First, the present state of Matthean studies, then the literature of developmental psychology will be reviewed, especially as it flows through the stream posited by Erikson.

"In the course of the last thirty years attention has been paid to Luke-Acts and to John, with continuing work on Mark, to the almost total neglect of Matthew."²² Were Albright writing now, he might temper that statement, as a new cycle of Matthean studies have been launched

22. Albright and Mann, p. cxci.

since that time.²³

Three books need mention prior to 1961. Albright (p. cxcv) considered Allen's (1907) commentary as still the "most valuable commentary on this gospel in English which we possess."²⁴ Plummer (1928) early saw in the formulae quotations an outline of the life and ministry of Jesus.²⁵ With Bacon (1930), the twinning of narrative with discourse to produce five books began.²⁶ For him, the church was the center of Matthew's thought.

M'Neile (1961) opened the '60's with his solid commentary.²⁷ He saw Matthew as attempting to take two elements of Jesus teaching and keep them in their initial living balance. However, those strands of Jewish and something supra-Jewish suffered slightly in Matthew's hands. Jesus transformed four major Jewish teachings: the kingdom, righteousness, Son of Man, and atonement.

23. Gundry provides a "select" bibliography of over a hundred books, almost half of them (47%) published since 1970. Robert H. Gundry, Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. xiii.

24. Witt Allen, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1907).

25. Alfred Plummer, Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew (London: Robert Scott, 1928)

26. Benjamin W. Bacon, Studies in Matthew (New York: Henry Holt, 1930).

27. Alan Hugh M'Neile, The Gospel According to St. Matthew (London: Macmillan, 1961).

Jeremias (1961) concluded that the Sermon on the Mount was an early Christian catechism.²⁸ Prepared especially for baptismal candidates, it presented a way of life distinct from Jewish contemporaries. Both Franzmann (1961)²⁹ and Bonhoeffer (1963)³⁰ wrote from the perspective of discipleship. Bornkamm (1963)³¹ broke new ground by using redaction criticism to understand the genesis of the gospel. He saw Matthew as developed around three themes within the context of Jewish Christianity: Christology, the Church and eschatology. In McConnell (1964)³² and Batdorf (1966)³³ one sees the updating of Plummer and Bacon. McConnell followed the lead of Plummer in seeing the formulae quotations as an outline of the life and ministry of Jesus, and Batdorf outlined Matthew combining narratives and discourses into five books and the Cross/Resurrection event.

28. Joachim Jeremias, The Sermon on the Mount (London: Athlone Press, 1961).

29. Martin H. Franzmann, Follow Me: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1961).

30. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Cost of Discipleship (New York: Macmillan, 1963). Although this book was first published in German in 1937, it did not gain its deserved English readership until the late '50's and early '60's.

31. G. Bornkamm, G. Barth and H. S. Hold, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

32. Richard McConnell, Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel (Basel: n. p., 1964).

33. Irvin W. Batdorf, Interpreting the Beatitudes (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966).

Krister Stendahl (1967) also charted a new course. Concluding that Matthew was a handbook for teachers and leaders, Stendahl postulated that the book was written in the milieu of study and teaching. Known for his work in explicating the formulae quotation, he would not go as far as positing them as an outline for the book. Neither was he persuaded that narrative and discourse made up a book. Rigaux (1968) understood the ministry of Jesus in terms of a "deeper righteousness" (5:20) that Jesus came to give.³⁴

Since Kingsbury's publication (1969) of a redaction of chapter 13, his name has become synonymous with Matthew studies.³⁵ Up to (13:52), Jesus addressed all of Israel. Following that point, only true Israel, his disciples, were addressed. In the same year Kassmann (1969) deduced the sitz im leben to be a controversy between enthusiastic piety on the one hand and Christian rabbinism on the other.³⁶ Matthew favored the second, even though within a generation or so it had degenerated into legal rigorism. Albright (1971) found in the discoveries of Qumran important clues for the understanding of Matthew, especially the use of midrash in interpretation of the Old Testament.

 34. Beda Rigaux, Testimony of St. Matthew, Trans. Oligny (Chicago, Illinois: Franciscan Press, 1968).

35. J. D. Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13 (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1969).

36. Ernst Kassmann, "The Beginnings of Christian Theology," Journal for Theology and Church 6 (1969): 17-46.

Thompson started the new decade (1970) by veering away from preoccupation with matters of redaction and its focus on sources to consider the end product.³⁷ He makes an important contribution by widening the circle of disciples (18:1), insisting that neither the Twelve nor leadership were in mind. He saw the stress being placed by Jesus on doing the Father's will. Two years later saw another style of study. Sanders (1972) published a devotional exposition of the Sermon on the Mount.³⁸ Intended not for the scholar but for the lay person, sermonic style was its forte. Ellis (1974) made an important contribution.³⁹ Starting with the former emphasis of narrative/discourse being the structural plan, he went on to suggest that the Gospel was a deliberate attempt to build on the analogy of the Pentateuch, since the synagogue was across the street. His most significant contribution lay in uncovering the structural purpose of the final pericope of each sermon: to summarize or emphasize the message. The ten themes found in the Great Commission (28:16-20) summarize many of the themes of the Gospel.

Kingsbury's second book (1975) was an important contribution to Christology.⁴⁰ Characterized by extensive discussions of the titles of

37. W. G. Thompson, Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1970).

38. J. Oswald Sanders, Real Discipleship: A Devotional Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972).

39. Peter F. Ellis, Matthew, His Mind and His Message (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1974).

40. J. D. Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology and Kingdom (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1975).

Jesus in Matthew, he made the point that Christology, not ecclesiology, molds the history of salvation. Matthew was a theologian whose center of thought was Christ. Pregeant (1975) came to the book from the perspective of a process hermeneutic and reached a different conclusion.⁴¹ Love was the center, not Christ. The basis of salvation for Pregeant was not Christology but an ethical soteriology that built from anthropology. The basis of salvation for him was a rightly interpreted Torah. Krentz (1977) saw in the community of the church the authentic end-time Israel.⁴² Kingsbury's two articles (1978) both underscored important characteristics of that community: the commitment and the cost of following Jesus, plus the distinctiveness of Christ's community over against contemporary Israel.⁴³

Hoerber (1981) made an important contribution to understanding the imperatives of the Sermon on the Mount.⁴⁴ It would be helpful if he

41. Russell Pregeant, "The Matthean Undercurrent: Process Hermeneutic and the 'Parable of the Last Judgment,'" Society of Biblical Literature: 1975 Seminar Papers, vol. 2, George W. MacRae, ed. (Missoula, Montana: Society of Biblical Literature).

42. E. Krentz, "The Egalitarian Church of Matthew," Currents in Theology and Mission 4, no. 6 (1977): 333-341.

43. J. D. Kingsbury, "Observation on the 'Miracle Chapters' of Matthew 8-9," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 40, no. 4 (1978): 559-573; and "The Verb Akolouthein (to follow) as an Index of Matthew's View of His Community," Journal of Biblical Literature 97, no. 1 (1978): 56-73.

44. R. G. Hoerber, "Implication of the Imperative in the Sermon on the Mount," Concordia Journal 7, no. 3 (1981): 100-103.

would continue throughout the Gospel to test whether the difference between aorist and present imperatives would continue to stand.

Two very important books by evangelical scholars have appeared in 1982. Gundry (1982) explored the freedom and style with which Matthew used his sources. This book has already created a storm of major proportions within evangelical circles, and may well be the book that will force evangelical scholarship to set limits. The Evangelical Theological Society already has. It will be extremely interesting to watch the fallout of that decision. Also appearing was the comprehensive commentary on the Sermon on the Mount by Guelich (1982).⁴⁵ Combining keen scholarship and engaging readability, this book will become the standard for probing the meanings of the Sermon.

Debate will continue over the structural importance of the sermons, just as it will over whether Christology, ecclesiology, or eschatology was intended to be the dominant focus. Especially among evangelicals, the limits of redaction criticism will engage the attention of scholars. However the debates among scholars turn out, the canonical form of the Gospel will continue to speak powerfully to our generation.

To review the field of developmental psychology posed a difficult

45. Robert A. Guelich, The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding (Texas: Word, 1982).

problem. In order to make the task manageable, it was necessary to omit certain lines of investigation. Therefore, only information helpful to understand the branch fostered by Erikson will be explored.

All contemporary psychology owes part of its rootage to Freud (1856-1939). Developmental psychology is no exception. Freud posited that the key to understanding human growth was five psychosexual stages reaching from infancy to adolescence. Limited as he was by working only with the developmentally ill, Freud's bases still form the benchmark from which or against which most psychology works. Carl Jung (1875-1961) deserves the title of "father of the modern study of adult development"⁴⁶ as he built on Freud's work, expanding it to encompass the whole of life. Not stopping with adolescence, Jung built a coherent model of adult development.

In lineage, Erikson was the third great figure in developmental psychology. Building on Freud's base of identifiable stages and Jung's concentration on the social, environmental pressures, Erikson concluded with eight stages of a normal life cycle, starting with infancy and ending with old age. Coining the term "epigenetic" to underline the unfolding nature of life, Erikson has done much to make us aware of the natural struggle of life to develop according to our highest potential. To fail at one point makes the next more difficult.

46. Daniel J. Levinson, The Seasons of a Man's Life (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978). p. 4.

Erikson wrote ten books between 1950 and 1982, plus edited another. In addition, countless articles have been authored or co-authored by him. Childhood and Society ignited his career.⁴⁷ In chapter seven of that book, he set forth for the reader the eight stages of man. His early books concentrated on the issues of identity. By the mid-sixties, the concentration had shifted to the issues of adulthood, culminating in a book of that name which he edited.⁴⁸ His latest book, predictably, spoke to the "discovery" of old age.⁴⁹

Four different books will give a well-rounded introduction to Erikson and his thinking. Evans (1967) provided a thorough introduction to the eight stages through an interview format with Erikson.⁵⁰ Capps and Bradford (1977) presented Erikson's thoughts against the background of many different relationships, providing an expanded explanation of Erikson's thinking.⁵¹ O'Connell and O'Connell (1980) presented a textbook summary of Erikson's position, as well as

47. Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950).

48. Erik Erikson, ed., Adulthood (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978).

49. Erik Erikson, The Life Cycle Completed (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1982).

50. Richard I. Evans, Dialogue with Erik Erikson (Evanston and London: Harper & Row, 1967).

51. D. Capps and M. G. Bradford, eds., Encounter with Erikson (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977).

other thinkers.⁵² Mehrabian (1968) set out to analyze personality theories, including Erikson.⁵³ These two latter books helped to put Erikson in a larger intellectual context. Finally, a lead article by Hall (1983) gave interesting views of Erikson the man.⁵⁴

Levinson (1978) and Stewart (1977)⁵⁵ took Erikson's basic framework and expanded it in two directions. Levinson focused on adult males from late teens to late forties, with the concentration on the decade after thirty-five. Stewart took an insight of Erikson that women's growth differed from the growth of men, added the categories of Levinson, and studied women eighteen to forty-five years of age. One of her conclusions was that while men and women have similar agendas, women's development tends to be much more flexible in the order taken. Scarf (1980) also studied the specific differences in growth between men and women in her extensive book.⁵⁶

Finally, some literature needs to be mentioned that attempts to tie in Erikson with the development of spirituality. Piediscalzi's

52. April O'Connell and Vincent O'Connell, Choice and Change (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980).

53. Albert Mehrabian, An Analysis of Personality Theories (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1968).

54. Elizabeth Hall, "A Conversation with Erik Erikson," Psychology Today 17, no. 6 (June 1983): 22-30.

55. Wendy A. Stewart, "Psychosocial Study of the Formation of the Early Adult Life Structure in Women," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1977).

56. Maggie Scarf, Unfinished Business (New York: Doubleday, 1980).

article (1973) delineated Erikson's approach to religion, his definition of religion as found in Young Man Luther, and Erikson's insights as to why both Luther and Ghandi could be, out of their intense struggles, major religious figures.⁵⁷ Aden's article (1976) offered an excellent discussion of faith and Erikson, with input from Tillich's ideas of faith development.⁵⁸ In this article, eight developmental forms of faith are explored, from faith as trust to faith as unconditional surrender. Browde (1976) compared Erikson with Maslow and Havighurst as to what comprised religious maturity.⁵⁹ Droege (1978) tried his hand at attempting to understand ancient controversies from the viewpoint of different stages of faith development.⁶⁰ Baptism and confirmation both signaled different aspects of faith. By far the best understanding of Erikson's impact on the spiritual life was given by Gleason (1975).⁶¹ By contrast, Clinebell's (1979) attempts to expand Erikson's eight stages to fourteen stages in the spiritual life of a

57. Nicholas Piediscalzi, "Erik H. Erikson's Psychology of Religion," comp. H. B. Clark (Ontario, Canada: American Academy of Religion, 1973).

58. LeRoy Aden, "Faith and the Developmental Cycle," Pastoral Psychology 24 (September 1976): 215-230.

59. Joseph A. Browde, "Maturity: A Comparative Approach to Maslow, Havighurst & Erikson," Character Potential: A Record of Research 7, no. 4 (April 1976): 181-188.

60. Thomas A. Droege, Self-Realization and Faith: Being and Becoming in Relation to God (Chicago: Lutheran Education Association, 1978).

61. John J. Gleason, Jr., Growing Up to God: Eight Stages in Religious Development (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1975).

person appeared forced.⁶² Whitehead and Whitehead (1979), concentrating on adult life, also depended on Erikson to chart Christian life patterns.⁶³ Giving much more extensive descriptions of the meaning of each stage than either Gleason or Clinebell, Whitehead's strengths lie more in the psychological and generally religious realm than in the biblical. Thus for someone needing insight into implications, e.g., of intimacy, Whitehead provides more information.

The above review has sketched the main lines of investigation that have been catalyzed through studies of Erikson's insights, with special view toward spiritual faith development. Much still needs to be done.

Design of the Instrument

In order to test the validity of a new model of spiritual life development created by the melding of the Gospel of Matthew and Erikson's Life Cycle, two groups were set up. One, the Congregational Reflection Group (CRG), consisted of eleven adult Christians from the Perinton Community Church (PCC) of Fairport, New York. Chosen as a representative group from within the church, they ranged in age from

62. Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Growth Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979).

63. Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, Christian Life Patterns (New York: Doubleday, 1979).

mid-twenties to mid-fifties. Of the eleven, five had been converted as adults, the other six in early childhood. The other group, the Colleague Group (CG), was made up of four pastors and one Christian counselor. All five were members of the Greater Rochester Association of Evangelicals; two were also members of Perinton Community Church. Of the five, two experienced adult conversion; three, conversion as children.

Each person was given the same set of questions to answer, each set designed around one of six specific Links in the Transformation Chain.⁶⁴ Answers were to be brought to the group meetings, providing content for discussion. The written answers were later collated, to be examined by the two groups and by the author. A seventh set dealt with the questions of sequence of experiences. The discussions of the CRG were taped and transcribed. Notes were taken of the CG.

Conclusion

The stage is now set to proceed with the project. A model will be proposed that will explicate a Transformation Chain by which people are changed into the image of Jesus Christ. That chain will be made up of

64. Appendices A-G give the written responses to each of those questions. Appendix H is a chart which depicts the interrelatedness between Matthew, Erikson and the final Transformation Chain.

eight identifiable Links.

This theoretical framework has two bases. The first and primary base is the Gospel of Matthew seen as a manual for the deep formation of disciples of Jesus Christ. The secondary base is the understanding of human growth brought to the surface by the work of Erik Erikson.

The research tool was designed for both individual and collective input. Allowing for both isolated and sequential exploration of faith histories gave a larger canvass of information. The findings of that instrument will help clarify the concerns that have driven the exploration of growth in Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

What Am I To Be?

Before wrestling with the question of how to get somewhere, one must get a sense of where one wants to go. Examining the Gospel of Matthew to gain a sense of the goal of the Christian life takes precedence over technological questions of how to reach the goal. This chapter will sketch in broad strokes this end point, as well as the assumptions shaping the ministry of Jesus. Central to this search will be the word τελειος, its meaning in Old and New Testaments, and a brief word as to its application in Christian history. This search will serve as backdrop for exploring Matthew's understanding of what Christians are to be and where changes are to be seen.

Growth

The synoptic Jesus both assumes and teaches growth in the life of the individual disciple and in the kingdom.¹ Of the eleven parables of the kingdom in Matthew,² two assume botanical growth: the wheat and

1. Noting that the words "increase," "grow," and "abound" hardly occur in Johannine writings, Flew concludes that "in John there is no emphasis on growth in the spiritual" (p. 116).

2. The eleven all have the formula "the kingdom of heaven is like. . ." They are the wheat and the tares (13:24-30), the mustard seed

tares and the mustard seed. The parable of leaven assumes growth of another kind. The parable of the sower (13:1-9), although without the formula "the kingdom of heaven is like. . .," not only assumes growth, but the whole point is whether the conditions of the soil will allow the full potential of the seed to emerge.

In addition to the parables which assume growth, Jesus commands us to watch the lily grow³ as His antidote for anxiety (6:28). Presumably, watching the process from burial of seed to full flower, with sunlight and darkness, rain and drought, wind and calm, would do much to remind the anxiety-ridden disciple to see God who does "much

(13:31-32), leaven (13:33), hidden treasure (13:44), pearl of great price (13:45-46), the dragnet (13:47-51), the scribe (13:52), the unmerciful slave (18:23-35), laborers in the vineyard (20:1-16), wedding feast (22:2-14), and the ten virgins (25:1-13).

3. Of the 24 uses of αυξω, αυξανω, & αυξησις in the New Testament, five refer to botanical growth (6:28, 13:32, Mark 4:8, Luke 12:27 and 13:19). Luke's two additional uses of the word refer to the growth of John the Baptist and Jesus as children (Luke 1:80, 2:40). John's sole use points to the Baptist's stature relative to Jesus (John 3:30). The four references in Acts (Acts 6:7, 7:17, 12:24, and 19:20) all point in the direction of numerical growth or growth of influence. It is Paul and Peter who take the botanical metaphor and apply it directly to the changes in spiritual life both of individuals and the holy temple of the church. God Himself holds pride of place as the source for growth (I Cor. 3:6--7, II Cor. 9:10, Col. 2:19) while Jesus Christ is the goal of growth (Eph. 4:15). The increase occurs in righteousness, especially in a readiness to give (II Cor. 9:10), faith (II Cor. 10:15), grace (II Peter 3:18), the word (I Peter 2:2), and the knowledge of God (Col.1:10) and our Savior Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18). In addition to this primary emphasis on individuals, the Body also grows (Eph. 2:21, 4:16). If we lose the botanical, natural growth orientation of the word "increase" we miss the developmental process orientation that is assumed.

more."

Jesus' example of fruit as being the test of whether the tree is good, rotten (7:16-20, 12:33) or repentance real (3:8-10) presupposes that only time will tell the inner qualities of each tree. Fruit is not expected year-around. Only after normal seasonal growth has occurred is fruit expected. The fruit which appears to determine the fate of individual branches⁴ demonstrates not only the origin but also the inner health of the invisible. Jesus' preference for analogies from the botanical world to demonstrate spiritual growth led Ted Ward to conclude that His "consistent use of metaphors from the plant realm underlines creational truth: The order of things is within them."⁵

These working assumptions of Jesus on growth and development in the Christian life must be placed beside two statements which seem to encourage childlikeness.⁶ First, in the context of responding to people from cities in which most of His miracles had occurred and

4. John 15:2-16 reports Jesus' words of the vine and the branches. Even though the emphasis is not on the process of growth, but on the fact of fruit, still it would not be immediately obvious if abiding is occurring. Judgments can be made only after sufficient time has passed to produce fruit.

5. Ted W. Ward, "Metaphysics of Spiritual Reality Part 2: Botanical Metaphysics of Development," Bibliotheca Sacra 139, no. 55 (1982): 201.

6. Bouwsma points out the sobering realities of this misunderstanding of Jesus' message. Distinguishing between childishness which rejects growth and childhood which delights in growth, he chides Christians with a negative passivity which eradicates joy. Erikson, Adulthood, pp. 83, 90-91.

messages proclaimed, Jesus turns to the Father, exclaiming, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, and revealed them to little children" (11:25). Far from encouraging perpetual childlikeness, Jesus here reflects the fact that the Good News is of such a basic nature that it can be grasped by "babes" and overlooked by the "wise." The second statement (18:3, cf. Mark 10:15, Luke 18:17) points to childlikeness as the entry condition for the Kingdom.⁷

Be Perfect

By far the most important family of words in the New Testament for our purposes is the τελειοσ family.⁸ All three usages in the teaching

7. Both Paul (I Cor. 3:1) and the author of Hebrews (Heb. 5:13-14) urge us to leave behind the babyishness which does not allow development to spiritual adulthood. Paul cautions against a childhood that leaves us "tossed here and there by worries and carried about by every wind of doctrine by the trickery of men, by craftiness and deceitful scheming" (Eph. 4:14). Although we are to come as children, Paul challenges us not to remain "children in understanding" (I Cor. 14:20) but to press on to mature adulthood in our thinking.

8. Of the 19 uses of τελειοσ, three are in the synoptics (5:48 (2) and 19:21), eight in Paul (I Cor. 2:6, 13:10, 14:20, Eph. 4:13, Phil 3:15, Col 1:28 and 4:12), and eight in the general epistles (Heb. 5:14, 9:11, Jas. 1:4 {2}, 1:17, 1:25, 3:2 and I John 4:18). See Gerhart Delling, "Τελειοσ et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VIII, ed. G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) pp. 49-87; Paul Johannes DuPlessis, Τελειοσ: The Idea of Perfection in the New Testament (Kampen: Uitgave J. H. Kok. N.V., 1959); and LaRondelle for excellent studies of the word, including extensive Old Testament treatments. Flew, LaRondelle and B. B. Warfield, Perfectionism, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931) all study the history

of Jesus are in Matthew,⁹ with 5:48 anchoring New Testament teaching: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The Old Testament helps broaden the context of the call to perfection. The Old Testament person of faith was to be blameless.¹⁰ LaRondelle argues convincingly that one must go to cultic and liturgical texts to understand Old Testament perfection. He points to Deut. 6:4ff, set in a cultic context, where the "dynamic qualification of Israel's perfection is spelled out as loving obedience to Yahweh."¹¹ On those who believed that sacrifices would cover lack of personal faithfulness to God's demands, the prophets heaped biting scorn (cf. Isa. 1:10-20, Mic. 6:1-8). On the other hand, "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless (tamim), who walk according to the law of the Lord" (Ps. 119:1). Far from being an impossible ideal toward which to strive, perfection's trademark is "the reality of whole-hearted obedient walk... or fellowship with God."¹²

of the application of the idea of "perfection" in the history of the church.

9. Gundry (p. 100) notes that "words with the stem τελ- are among his favorites.

10. Abraham (Gen. 17:1) was called to be and Noah (Gen. 6:9) called "blameless" (tamim translated in KJV "perfect"). In the consecration of the Temple, Solomon blessed the "whole assembly of Israel with a loud voice, asking that in all the people, their hearts would be "fully committed" (shalem also translated "perfect" in KJV) to the Lord.

11. LaRondelle, p. 100

12. LaRondelle, p. 101.

Yet perfection's primary focus cannot be found in ethics. Ps. 32:11 is the response of the leader of worship to all the "upright in heart" who have six verses earlier in vs. 5 confessed their "transgressions" and experienced forgiveness from the guilt of their sin. Far from assuming sinlessness, the Psalmist points to the constant need for forgiveness especially when standing to proclaim the righteousness of God in the "great assembly" (Ps. 40:6-12). It is God who gives both "righteousness" and "innocence" even while people are confessing their guilt and unrighteousness. "Such a heart or soul is saddiq, completely righteous, since it enjoys a living covenant relationship in cultus and ethos. That soul is tamim, perfect, or innocent, since he is undivided and in his social conduct intent upon the will of Yahweh only."¹³

In the New Testament, several major strands of thinking converge in τελειοσ. First is the ontological idea of "developing potentialities."¹⁴ Carter goes on to state that to be perfect as our Father is perfect "does not mean we are to become divine or as holy as God, but to be as . . . fully developed as He is." Not that we will become like God, but that, as he is "fully developed" as God, so we are to move toward the goal of being fully developed as redeemed humanity,

13. LaRondelle, pp. 136-137.

14. John D. Carter, "Personality and Christian Maturity: A Process Congruity Model," Journal of Psychology and Theology 2 (Summer 1974): 197.

both corporately and individually. This strand frees from comparisons and competitions, for growth is measured against the inner, unique potential of each person, not compared with achievements of others.¹⁵ Perfection is a highly individual matter of fulfilling that for which one was created.¹⁶ Perfection is ontological before it is moral. A mustard plant is compared to the potentiality of its seed, not to the soaring cedars of Lebanon. Therefore, when Jesus was enjoining us to be perfect even as God the Father is perfect, it can be concluded that he is commanding us to fulfill our individual callings.¹⁷

The second strand is implied in the first. "In secular Greek, fruit was spoken of as mature (teleios) when it was ripe."¹⁸ Paul showed the preference for τελειος words when he pointed to maturity

15. Montague summarizes his estimation of the Pauline doctrine of progress stating: "all the riches of the Christian life are possessed integrally and essentially, at least as regards their object, from the moment of the Baptismal consecration, and that the progress of the Christian life thereafter is merely an exploiting of those riches, so that the Pauline injunction to progress can be summed up in the formula: 'Become what you are!'" (emphasis his). George T. Montague, Growth in Christ: A Study of Saint Paul's Theology of Progress (Kirkwood, Missouri: Maryhurst Press, 1961).

16. One biblical writer dared to suggest that even Jesus needed perfecting/maturing (Heb. 2:10). In his case, that was through suffering. When seen as "fulfilling that for which it was created" then the perfecting of Jesus makes sense. Until he fulfilled concretely the will of the Father through suffering, death and resurrection, he could not be "perfect." That was the purpose for which he was born (I Peter 1:20).

17. Compare Phil. 3:12-14.

18. Carter, p. 197. See also R. A. Preston, "Maturing in Faith," Lexington Theological Quarterly 5 (July 1970): 53-63.

because he wanted a word which signified the "final state of a progressive process."¹⁹ Flew will give the meaning: "to reach the ideal."²⁰

However, the choice of words by both Walters and Flew tends to lead to a static conception of an end point at which Christians might arrive. That is unfortunate. If Paul's words can be taken at face value, then the Christian is both "mature" and "pressing on" (Phil. 3:12-15), both ripe and ripening. The earthly arena is not adequate for full moral and spiritual conformity to the will of God. If there is an end point in Paul's thinking, it must be "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), something that cannot be experienced now in its entirety.

Walters adds a third strand when he points to the content of perfection/maturity as the possession of divine love, "the capacity to bestow unearned and undeserved love upon others."²¹ Du Plessis (p. 242) declares it possible to "consider the concept of perfect love ... as synonymous with the quality of perfection" because it is the unswerving devotion of God to man that mankind is called to mirror. Both perfection and love convey not sentimental affection, but the

19. Orville S. Walters, "Maturity: When?" Christianity Today XIII, no. 22 (1969): 975).

20. Flew, p. 86.

21. Walters, p. 975. Gundry concludes his comments on 5:48 with the words, "this perfection of love" (p. 100).

"expression of the new being" in its stance of unreserved commitment to God. Their conclusions are supported by the context of 5:48. Five other times in this chapter, Jesus will say words to the effect, "You have heard . . . but I say" (5:21-22, 27-28, 31-34, 38-39). In each, the first is followed with an imperative from the old law, and the second with a participle with the imperative force for the new law. However, here, the imperative of the first is followed by the first imperative in the second: "Love²² your enemies" (5:44). It is in the context of the direct command to love those who neither earn nor deserve that love that we are pointed to the Father's perfection/maturity.²³

The context of Jesus' other use of perfect/mature is also the context of love (19:16-22). Having responded to the question, "What good thing must I do²⁴ that I may obtain eternal life?" Jesus responds with a series of commands, concluding with, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." As he sees himself as having done all these things since his youth, the man asks, "What am I still lacking?"

22. I Cor. 13:10, Eph. 4:13 and I John 4:18 are also in the direct context of love.

23. Dunn sees in Matthew an insistence that law must be interpreted by love. When Jewish Christianity "began to regard strict observance of the law as more important than the spontaneity of love" it was unacceptable. James D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977).

24. Thieliicke warns of all questions which make human happiness the center. His personal conviction and experience support the statement: "I do not attain the greatest possible development of my personality when I consciously try to develop myself." Helmut Thieliicke, How the World Began (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961).

Jesus makes concrete and specific his love for the neighbor. "If you wish to be complete (perfect/mature) . . ." There is lacking that "unswerving devotion" which can be observed through concrete actions of love for neighbor.

In this meeting with the rich young ruler we have presaged the encounter at the end of the age, where sheep are sheep and goats are goats (25:31-46). The former has been made complete/perfect/mature as the new nature (being sheep) unconsciously produces the fruit which Jesus expects. All the self-conscious bleating (visiting the sick, feeding the poor, obeying the commands from childhood) of goats will not change the inner nature. It is not a matter of copying certain actions, but of being transformed into a new "breed,"²⁵ allowing the full potential of that newness to be developed.

The fourth strand is suggested by DuPlessis who coined the word "redemptive indicative" to discount firmly any notion of perfection as an individual attainment separate from Christ.²⁶ Both Paul and Hebrews "steadfastly maintain" the bond with Christ. It is only in relationship

 25. "Thus it is quite possible that the experience of the new birth actually has, for the child of God, the real effect of re-constituting the individual as a member of an entirely new species. . . . in reality he has been constituted a member of the original species of Homo sapiens which disappeared when man sinned but which is now being re-created." Arthur C. Custance, "The Two Species of Homo Sapiens," Doorway Papers No. 60 (Ottawa, Canada: Custance, 1972): iv. See also Paul's "new creation" (II Cor. 5:17).

26. DuPlessis, p. 243.

with Christ that the will of God can be done. "As indicative perfection it is consummate redemptive grace, and as imperative it is the dynamic perseverance to be in accordance with the measure of this indicative."²⁷

Perhaps that may account for finding "the principal texts (of Paul) which have to do with the progress of the Christian life are prayers."²⁸ In our communication with the Head of the Church, we see how little we have grown in his likeness, while praising him for the progress already made (Phil. 1:3-11). In reaffirming the "totality of devoted discipleship,"²⁹ Paul affirms everything to be a loss "compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8).

When Jesus commands us to "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect,"³⁰ he is sending a complex, yet complementing message. First, develop according to the potential that has been

27. DuPlessis, p. 244.

28. Montague, p. xiii.

29. John Bogart, Orthodox and Heretical Perfectionism in the Johannine Community as Evident in the First Epistle of John (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), p. 112.

30. "The term perfection with respect to God is not primarily an ethical word God's perfection means His perfect or full complete, undivided, faithful will and dedication to man, to save him, to revive him, to keep him saved in the way of sanctification in the fellowship and partnership with the loving Creator, even when man is unfaithful and turns away from his perfect Lover." (LaRondelle, pp. 43-44).

implanted within you at New Birth. Second, do not be content with proximate goals of maturity, but continue to press on in maturing. Third, that perfecting must be in the context of vertical and horizontal love. Finally, perfecting is never in a vacuum, but in fellowship with the Lord of the Church: Jesus Christ. In that strong bond, grace abounds.

The complexity of Jesus' teaching is mirrored in every age, including the present. Two basic divisions are central to all discussions: how to do justice to the grace of God while still taking seriously the fact of human sinfulness, and how do we understand the fact of our being both "made" and "in the making."³¹

Some Christians today, growing in the same cultural soil as the human potential movement, tend to drive down the road which can lead to the Corinthian error. So great are their expectations, and in a sense their experiences in the Holy Spirit, that they say, "The resurrection is already past!" (I Cor. 15). To live life as if most of the glory will be encountered this side of the grave is to both deplete the fullness of eternity and detract from the seriousness of sin.

31. Warfield (vol. 2, p. 131) attributes this terminology to Luther. Montague (pp. 186-189) charts nineteen words used by Paul in both "constitutive" and "progressive" senses. They include such basic words as salvation, holiness, glorification, Christ in Christians, calling and resurrection. Carter (p. 190-201) focuses on three verbs: to save, to sanctify, and to glorify; demonstrating that they are each used in the past, present and future.

The Reformed tradition continues to emphasize such seriousness.³² Original sin is so deeply entrenched that Christians cannot hope to escape its clutches in this life. The Princeton theologians, such as Hodge, "firmly resisted the idea of God's grace overcoming sin in this life. In doing this they came perilously close to making the sinful state a normative one."³³ Warfield (vol. 2, p. 131) feared that if the Christian outgrew sin, they would also "outgrow dependence on the pardoning grace of God." Even though Calvin presses for "evangelical perfection"³⁴ many do not attain that goal. Each person must stretch "as far as his humble ability enables"³⁵ because the Lord looks for singlemindedness in one's pursuit of full fellowship with God.

The Methodist tradition,³⁶ on the other hand, is receptive to the idea that grace can overcome sin in this life. Wesley's famous phrase set the stage: "Love expelling sin." In 1759, he defined Christian perfection as "loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and -----"

32. Warfield (vol. 2, pp. 113-132) outlines the Reformed position, which he entitles "miserable-sinner Christianity."

33. Donald W. Dayton, Discovering an Evangelical Heritage (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 131.

34. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 vols., Trans. H. Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964).

35. Calvin, vol. 2, p. 5.

36. Wesley's A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (many different editions are available) is his defense and explanation of the doctrine of Perfection. Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification (Stockholm: Nya Bokforlags Aktiebolaget, 1946) provides help for a student working through the meaning of Wesley's teaching.

strength. This implies, that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words and actions, are governed by pure love."³⁷ Yet he immediately defined limits to that expulsion, as he acknowledged that "infirmities, ignorance, and mistake(s)" are not excluded by such perfection.

Becoming Perfect

Since biblical unity is never monochromatic but prismatic, then our task is not to define the only way in which maturity can be achieved, but to describe one New Testament way. Matthew presents a process of becoming "perfect" which will clarify to us his understanding of how to "make disciples of all nations" (28:19). Unifying all processes that are biblical, versus heretical, is Jesus Christ as the center, source and goal of all efforts to grow up.

The first teaching of Jesus to His disciples is commonly identified as the Sermon on the Mount (5-7).³⁸ Dispensational theology

37. John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (London: Epworth Press, 1952), p. 51.

38. Bibliographies are almost endless. Guelich is perhaps the most comprehensive of the commentaries available on the Sermon. He offers a short history of interpretation (pp. 14-22).

has tended to place the fulfillment of the Sermon totally in a future millennium.³⁹ Liberal theology sees these three chapters as the distilled essence of Christianity: ethics. A third choice is to consider these verses as an ideal which we cannot hope to achieve in this life.

However, another choice is feasible. Taking the clue from those who see the Beatitudes as "lineaments of a character"⁴⁰ instead of a new legalism, the Sermon is a description of what the Lord will do within the disciples who are no longer goats, but now are sheep.⁴¹ The Beatitudes, which have both beguiled and baffled hosts of commentators, are the description by Jesus of the inner character which will be developed while following Him. This is both an accomplished fact and an anticipated hope.⁴² Immediately following the Beatitudes, Jesus identified disciples as "salt" (5:13) and "light" (5:14). Yet "saltiness" can be lost, and light can be hid (5:13-16). With the decision to follow Him, the seed of the kingdom has been planted. In

39. Toussiant (pp. 86-93), a dispensational scholar, rejects this Millennial or Kingdom approach, along with four others.

40. Sanders, p. 7.

41. "He taught that the ideal community over whom God would reign by His Agent was to consist of those whose characters were in accordance with the moral principles that he laid down. Though the sovereignty of God was to be established transcendentally, it was in its nature immanent and spiritual; and the spiritual life of men was complementary to it" (M'Neile, pp. xxi-xxii).

42. An "already/not yet" tension found throughout the New Testament should not surprise us here. The fact that the kingdom is still future does not invalidate those Scriptures that insist that it must be entered now.

an act analogous to genetic engineering, the new has taken root. The old as the sole determiner of the future has passed away. The new being has taken its place.

The sharpness of that difference becomes clear when one attempts to describe the opposite of the Beatitudes. Such an exercise merely delineates the character expectations of a large segment of today's culture. Instead of a sense of need (poor in spirit) one finds the expectation of an arrogance which will not allow hints of needing others, especially God. Instead of a hungering and thirsting for the right way, one echoes Noah's day, applauding people for their wickedness (Gen. 6:4-5). To follow Jesus will cause this new creation to develop a singlemindedness (pure in heart) which will cause some to be persecuted. New creations no longer fit comfortably into the surroundings.

To keep the new disciple from looking quickly to an external legalism⁴³ modeled so pervasively by Judaism's great lay movement called the Pharisees, Jesus points immediately to the quality of righteousness⁴⁴ which must be more than external. Entrance to the

43. Often Christians look to Peter's idea of imitating Christ (I Pet. 2:21) in a purely external sense. Charles M. Sheldon's In His Steps: "What Would Jesus Do?" (New York and Boston: Books, Inc., n.d.) has kept that sense alive. Yet following Christ must always be more than keeping external rules and expectations.

44. Jesus' use of righteousness in Matthew is not the same as Paul's. Instead of referring to the "righteousness of Christ" which is imputed to us in salvation, Matthew points instead to the righteousness which is known by right actions.

Kingdom requires a righteousness that is "deeper than" the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law (5:20).⁴⁵ The deepening cannot be limited to external criteria. Otherwise the goats would have a legitimate argument at the final hour (25:31-46). The disciple "surpasses" by going deeper. The character of the disciple is radically changed.

In other places in the New Testament, the creation of a new person within is specifically stated as being "Christ in you." Paul likens his labors among the Galatians as the "pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). When the new life is seen not so much as the mimicking of certain actions but as the metamorphic development of Jesus Christ within, the Christian life takes on a limitless horizon. Jesus Christ walks on earth again--not as a solitary man of Nazareth but as millions who walk the earth from pole to pole.

"Believe, that as sure as you are in the Way of God, you must meet with Temptations."⁴⁶ Opposition embraces the disciple immediately. The balance of the Sermon outlines the various ways in which the new life will be attacked, and what the disciple is expected to be able to do now that new life is a fact. Hoerber finds in the use of the present

45. Rigaux, p. 70.

46. John Bunyan, The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded and I Will Pray with the Spirit, ed. Richard Green (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 285.

imperative in the Sermon the command to continue certain behaviors, and in the aorist imperative to start other behaviors.⁴⁷ As the disciple learns obedience (cf. Heb. 5:8), the new inner life comes to the surface. Toward the end of the Sermon, Jesus utters serious words of warning (7:15-23). It is not enough to say certain correct words ("Lord, Lord") or to do extraordinary things ("Did we not prophesy in your name . . . cast out demons and perform many miracles?"). What matters is whether He knows you as one of His. All these point to the need for deep changes to occur at the core of one's life.

The final parable of Jesus (25:31-46) points in the same direction as the first teaching. Set in the context of the end of the age when all the nations will be gathered together before the Son of Man in His glory, the King on His throne separates the sheep from the goats. The surprise of all parties provides the key to understanding. Turning to the sheep, Jesus praises them for acts that, to them, are so natural they do them without conscious decision. The goats complain. "If you'd only told us what to do, we would have done it! You're not being fair." Not so. The new life that the Son of Man seeks is as obvious to Him as distinguishing between sheep and goats would be for a shepherd, and wheat and weeds to angels (13:24-30, 36-43).

In the final words of Jesus, the Great Commission (28:16-20), disciple-makers are instructed to teach them "to obey everything I have

47. Hoerber, p. 100.

commanded you."⁴⁸ Agnew's distinction between the "perfective and preceptive" commands in the New Testament clarifies two of the three directions needing attention.⁴⁹ Behind the preceptive lies the idea of "norm as law."⁵⁰ Thus, sometimes biblical writers sound the ethical imperative: do this or else. Beyond that stands another norm: the achievement of a goal. Perfective commands hold before the reader a hope, an ideal.

Matthew stresses both. He emphasizes commands that need obedience, albeit in a deeper fashion than a shallow legalism. Gundry insists that, even though the "balancing doctrine of the indwelling Spirit, through whose life and power alone Jesus' disciples can fulfill the righteous requirements of the law" is not present, "it is good to have Matthew's emphases without that balance; for in some situations to introduce the doctrine of the Spirit too quickly is to dull the edge of the demands made on Jesus' disciples. They might fail to feel the pain caused by the sharp edge of those demands."⁵¹

Yet obedience for the disciple is a far lighter burden than obedience to human ordinances because of the third direction: source.

48. Approximately two hundred and ninety times, the imperative mood, or other forms with imperative sense, are used by Matthew.

49. F. Agnew, "The Norm of Moral Activity in the New Testament," American Ecclesiastical Review 169, no. 10 (1975): 651-659.

50. Agnew, p. 651.

51. Gundry, p. 9.

The righteousness which Jesus is developing within the core of the disciple "consists not in a moral quality that must be maintained at all costs but in a relationship of favor and peace with God that is the source (rather than the consequence) of moral effort."⁵²

Conclusion

Jesus assumed growth. He used parables built on the premise of growth. Early he instructed his disciples to look to botanical world to see the Father while dealing with practical problems of their lives. He did not leave them to grow as weeds, but held out before them the Father as that One to be loved and against whom to be compared.⁵³ As people within whom has been implanted the character of Jesus as described in the Beatitudes, disciples both are and should be different.

However correct Agnew may be in insisting that the place of the preceptive is at the beginning of a Christian's life (p. 653), Jesus also offers something else. Matthew's Jesus holds out before the gaze

52. Bouwsma, in Erikson, Adulthood, p. 90.

53. Pitmanson develops the argument that one of the signs of divine origin is the fact that "man is a wholeness-bent creature." People intuitively move toward wholeness, even as the Father is a Whole. Harold H. Pitmanson, "New Insights in the Nature of Man and Implications for Christology," Lutheran Quarterly 23 (1971): 335-355.

of all⁵⁴ a perfective imperative growing out of the redemptive indicative: be perfect/mature.

54. Roman Catholics tend to build a "two-storied morality . . . one reserved for the perfect, the other for the common man" (Rigaux, p. 66). The New Testament holds out the goal of maturity to all, nowhere limiting its "achievement to an elite." See Robert J. Banks, Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Church in their Historical Settings (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 143. LaRondelle (p. 183) states categorically that Paul's "ethos of perfection and sanctity never constitutes an autonomous ethical quality which is reserved only for a selected elite class." Paul's hope was for all to reflect the Lord's glory, and in that process, all be transformed "into his likeness with ever-increasing glory" (II Cor. 3:18).

CHAPTER THREE

The Building of Disciples

The ideal has been set before us: "be perfect." Ideals are noble but must be translated into workable steps in order to achieve the goal. How did Jesus transform four fishermen, a tax collector, two political extremists, a doubter, and four other men into apostles? What help can be gleaned from the Gospel of Matthew that will assist us in replicating that process today?¹ While realizing that the "technology of piety"² can be intimidating" and spirituality "terribly easy to mismanage,"³ yet the call comes to provide ways in which an average Christian can be changed, without diverting attention from the Source: Jesus.

This chapter will move beyond the search for assumptions and end points of Chapter Two, and move forward to specific steps in training

1. The classic in the field continues to be A. B. Bruce's The Training of the Twelve, published first in 1894. Collating, as he does, material from all four gospels, he does not utilize the unique contribution of Matthew. Instead, he provides an excellent commentary on the life of Christ.

2. Charles Hummell, "The Search for the One Best Way," Pastoral Renewal 8, no. 6 (January 1984): 65-66, 74-76; suggests ways in which the entire technological mentality is keeping the church away from its God-given life and mission.

3. Richard Lovelace, "Spiritual Growth and Church Renewal," Theology, News and Notes, (October 1982): 11, 10.

neophyte followers to become "sent out ones" who will change the world. Jesus, as portrayed in Matthew, has a specific agenda in mind, both for learning and for experiencing. This writer will now turn to the discovery of that agenda

In order to accomplish this, a deliberate change of perspective is required. The Dutch artist Escher did many paintings in which he deliberately designed two pictures. Depending on one's perspective, you saw either a day scene or a night scene in his "Day and Night." More familiar is the dualistic frame of a white vase against a dark background, versus two face-to-face profiles against a light background. The Gospel of Matthew is first of all a life of Jesus. To that end, 4:17 and 16:21 divide the book into three major blocks: the beginnings of Jesus; his public preaching, teaching and healing; and his more private ministry with the disciples leading up to his death and resurrection. "But this division of the gospel hardly tells the whole story."⁴ The five discourses and the formulae quotations both move the gospel in other directions. One of those other directions is a catechism for new converts to Jesus Christ.

Accepting the premise that Matthew is designed for the discipling of new converts, the text opens up in unexpected directions. When Matthew is compared with Mark, Matthew interrupts⁵ the story line five

4. Gundry, p. 10.

5. Chapters 5--7, 10, 13, 18 and 23--25.

times to place additional teachings of Jesus.⁶ Examining more closely these five major changes, an impressive array of facts emerges. Each change can be identified as a sermon of Jesus. Each ends with words similar to 7:28: "when Jesus had finished saying these things"⁷ Each sermon's final pericope provides either climax or recapitulation of the theme.⁸ Each sermon is preceded by a narrative section which prepares the reader for the sermon, with the final pericope of the narrative often providing the direct transition.⁹

Debate will continue over whether the five sermons were spoken as a single unit to be condensed by Matthew to pass on to coming generations, or whether he used one of Jesus' sermons as the core around which he collected other sayings of Jesus on the same subject. Were decisions like this decided by vote among interpreters today, the second alternative would win by a large majority.¹⁰ If it is accepted

6. Mark 3:13-19 reports the choosing of the Twelve. Matthew appropriates 42 verses to choose and train the Twelve (10:1-42).

7. See 11:1, 13:53, 19:1 and 26:1.

8. Ellis (p. 20-22) makes a strong case for the Great Commission (28:18-20) to be seen as the recapitulation of the entire book. These three verses provide the major tasks and their supporting themes.

9. Praying for harvesters (9:38) prepares the Twelve to be chosen, instructed and sent out (10).

10. "Apart from some belated exegete, everyone today admits that the Sermon on the Mount is definitely a composition in which either the last editor or his source grouped a number of instructions together into a large discourse which other sources or Jesus himself had given on several occasions" (Rigaux, p. 68).

that one of the major functions of the gospel is to provide a manual for the "deep formation of disciples" (Rigaux, p. 212), then the form of collecting materials of a similar nature makes eminent sense. When new disciples wrestle with the questions of new life-ways expected as a follower of Jesus, they turn to 5--7. It would not be necessary to thumb through the entire book, as they must in Luke. The function (to help new Christians) determines the form (to collect in one place teachings of Jesus on a specific subject).

Throughout, some aids to the memory are given. The eleven formulae quotations of Matthew¹¹ are spaced throughout the book and can be used as an outline (McConnell) of the gospel. The frequency with which Matthew groups his material in trios is unparalleled. Among his thirty-eight triplets¹² are the opening three divisions of the genealogy (1:1-16), and the closing tripartite command to make disciples, baptize and teach in the name of the Triune God (28:18-200). His seven parables of the kingdom (13:1-52) find their match in the seven parables of the end (24:32-25:46). It may be that this particular arrangement was chosen to aid in remembering. Matthew and Luke differ on the order in which the temptations of Jesus were reported. Possibly, Matthew found it easier to remember temptations moving from

 11. See 1:22, 2:15,17,23, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 26:54,56 and 27:9. 27:35 is found in some translations, but is from less certain textual tradition. The most extensive treatment is by Stendahl.

12. Plummer, p. xix-xx.

the desert - - > to the pinnacle of the temple - - > to the mountains of the world.

However, making disciples cannot be limited to learning facts.¹³ Mental excellence was one of the hallmarks of the Pharisees yet they received the sternest denunciations of Jesus (23). Their lives, even though marked with external moral vigor, were inadequate by His standards. "What is true in the Bible becomes true [in life] . . . only when it is embodied in . . . action. Exegesis must be actualized in the way one lives before it can become effective in what one says."¹⁴ Disciples of Jesus Christ will be sheep, not "whitewashed tombs" (23:27). They will live in such a way that the Father will be glorified (5:16).¹⁵ They will exhibit the fruit of the new nature.

New life in Christ must make sense both in the classroom and in life. Jesus will spend most of the time teaching. Yet His teaching style will be broader than usually considered. Some of the time He will teach certain doctrines, perceptions, field questions while posing

13. Eller highlights this concern from his study of Kierkegaard who "was convinced that Christianity must be life-centered and so resisted passionately any tendencies that might make it thought-centered." Vernard Eller, Kierkegaard and Radical Discipleship (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968). pp. 5-6.

14. Paul A. Minear and Paul W. Morimoto, Kierkegaard and the Bible: An Index (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1953), p. 8.

15. Glover makes the telling point that "real education . . . is, first, not so much to take in what the Master says, but how the Master thinks it, why He thinks so, and how He reacts to it." T. R. Glover, The Disciple (Cambridge at the University Press, 1942), p. 4.

others in a classroom setting. However, the bulk of His teaching will occur in the course of ordinary life situations. The first is seen best in His sermons, the latter in the narrative sections between. From the narrative sections emerge lessons to be learned from experience.

For this reason, the initial call makes sense: "Come, follow Me" (4:19). The invitation is not to learn new facts, or enroll in an advanced course of theology, although, of course, those will happen. Instead, the invitation is to walk along beside Jesus and observe Him, learning through example. In that shadowing, reality will be clarified, character transmitted, and apostles formed.

The image of an arch clarifies the task before the disciple-maker. One pier of the arch is made up of five building stones, the narrative sections. This can be identified as life-centered learning. The other pier is also made up of five building stones, these from the sermons. This is learning-centered life. The Cross and Resurrection together comprise the keystone, tying together the two piers. When all is in place, eleven building blocks illustrate the process of building-up individuals to become dwellings in which God resides through the Holy Spirit.¹⁶

16. Eph. 2:19-22.

Building the Arch, Level One

Stone One: "Follow Me" (1:1-4:25)

The first experiential step is to hear and obey the call of Jesus: "Come, follow Me" (4:17). Two questions dominate. Who is this Jesus, and what is discipleship?¹⁷

Throughout this first narrative section the person of Jesus dominates. He is the one toward whom the history of the people of Abraham has been moving (1:1-17). He is the one whom angels announce as Immanuel coming to "save his people from their sins (1:18-25); whom magi worship and Herod fears (2:2-12). Prophetic silence is shattered by John the Baptist and heaven speaks because of this Jesus (3:1-16). The devil hears what heaven had said, as Jesus is led by the Spirit of God to be tempted as the Son of God (4:1-11). His message will not be

17. Donald McGavran distinguishes among three different ways in which the term is used in "How About That New Verb 'To Disciple?'" Church Growth Bulletin (May 1979). D1 refers to enough people becoming Christian in a non-Christian society so that to be a Christian no longer means "leaving tribe or cast." D2 defines those individuals who are converted in a nominally Christian society, and D3 the "later stages of the process by which an individual Christian becomes an informed, illuminated, thoroughly dedicated follower of Jesus Christ." Olson objects to the first two being "discipling," even though it would "seem to be a valid usage based upon . . . Matthew 28:18-20." Instead, common evangelical usage focus on the "post-conversion demand of discipleship as taught by the Lord Jesus." C. Gordon Olson, "What About People-Movement Conversion?" Evangelical Missions Quarterly 15, no. 3 (July 1979): 136.

new (4:17 is an echo of 3:1) but will fulfill Isaiah's promise: "the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned" (4:16). This is the man who says, "Come, follow me" (4:19).

The call to discipleship¹⁸ remains a call to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Kingsbury has identified two factors characterizing Jesus' use of ακολουθεω "to follow" as it applied to disciples: personal commitment and cost.¹⁹

In the Old Testament, rarely does one have the idea of following God. Instead, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Deuteronomy use the words "to follow after" as a technical term for apostasy. In the New Testament, the term is never applied to God, only to those who "followed" Jesus in His earthly ministry.²⁰ There is no evidence of a noun developed from the verb. Thus it is not "followers" as a concept, but people engaged in the action of walking alongside Jesus. "To follow" is not to imitate his example, but to participate with him in life.

 18. The word "discipleship" will be used throughout to refer to the entire earthly process which begins with conversion/new birth and concludes with death.

19. Kingsbury, The Verb Ακολουθεω. Of the twenty-five uses of the verb in Matthew, as compared to Mark's eighteen and Luke's twenty-seven uses, only the following are clearly "discipleship" texts: 4:20,22, 8:19,22, 9:9, 10:38, 16:24, 19:21,27,28 and 27:55.

20. Paul could not properly be called a follower of Jesus because he never accompanied him on the dusty roads of Galilee, Samaria and Judea.

The designation "disciple" points in the same direction. The noun comes from the verb μαθησασθαι: "to learn."²¹ To the Greek, it is always an "intellectual process which serves to develop the personality."²² To the Jew, it brings to mind the person who submits himself to the doing of the will of God. After the first century, it tended to become a totally intellectual process, where the practice of the will of God became less important than its study.

The noun "disciple" is the normal designation of the follower of Jesus.²³ To the Greek mind, two ideas dominate. First, a structured educational task is in view. The disciple is an apprentice engaged in learning a task, skill or body of knowledge. Also, there is a strong emphasis on fellowship between the master and the disciple with its attendant effects. At its best, the teacher is but the first among equals who seeks disciples with whom he can have fellowship, not merely pupils with whom to exchange information.

The Old Testament does not contain the concept of disciples. Instead, the emphasis focuses on God as being the only teacher. Nowhere in the Old Testament are people elevated because they are a

21. The verb form is relatively rare in the New Testament, occurring only twenty-five times, three of them in Matthew (9:13, 11:29 and 24:32).

22. H. H. Rengstorff, "μαθησασθαι et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II, ed., G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967): 392.

23. The noun form appears 268 times, all in the gospels and Acts.

mouthpiece for God. God will not ensure the force of his Word by coattailing on the personality of a person considered great. God's Word contains its own adequate justification. Yet by the time of Jesus, rabbis were gathering students around them, much as did the Greeks.

To his contemporaries, Jesus was just another itinerant rabbi with his group of disciples. However, important differences emerge. First, Jesus initiated the call to discipleship (4:19, 9:9).²⁴ Second, also in contrast with the rabbis, Jesus' call was personal. The rabbis attracted disciples because of their knowledge and skill. Jesus baldly stated, "Follow me" (4:19, 9:9) and "Come to me" (11:28). Third, Jesus expected personal obedience (7:21). Fourth, their call included a task. That task would be similar [fishers] yet dissimilar [of men] (4:19); beyond them, yet built on present strengths. Finally, the individual call was a call to enter community.²⁵ To follow Jesus was to walk in close proximity with others who also walked with Jesus. Jesus did not deal solely with Peter for a year; then with Andrew, James and John for nine months each; six months with the other seven; and finally, two weeks with Judas. Mixing doubters and believers, political

24. 8:19 is an exception to the normal practice of Jesus as reflected in the gospels.

25. Community may not be the right word. "If one word must be chosen to describe the circle around Jesus it would be 'movement' rather than 'community' It is important to realize that this movement centered and depended wholly and solely on Jesus himself. Discipleship meant 'following' Jesus." (Dunn, p. 106).

radicals and quislings, country bumpkins and urban sophisticates, pragmatists and dreamers, Jesus worked his miracle in the "Community of the Twelve" for three years.

Peter's experience illustrates the breadth of discipleship as "a journey, a pilgrimage, with ever-new challenges, decisions, and returnings to the Lord as the constant point of reference."²⁶ With his brother he left the family business to answer the call: "Follow me" (4:20). He witnessed the healing of his mother-in-law (8:14-15). With eleven others, he was chosen, instructed and sent out (10). In the face of Jesus' power, he asked for permission to try the impossible (28-29). He asked for clarification, even though it opened him up to being assessed as one of those "still dull" (15:15-16). Blessed for his openness to the revelation of the Father and rebuked for being the mouthpiece of Satan,²⁷ Peter lead the disciples in confession (16:13-23). Witnessing transfiguration²⁸ awakened both willingness to work and terror (17:4,6). Even payment of taxes did not escape the attention of Jesus (17:24-27). The serious question of the limits of forgiveness (18:21) preceeded questions of profit in following Jesus

 26. Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture, "Lausanne Occasional Papers: No. 2" (Wheaton, Illinois: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978): 22).

27. Rengstorf (p. 455) reminds us that the New Testament teaching on discipleship does not emphasize being "faithful mediators of insights."

28. The same root word is in Rom. 12:2, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

(19:27). Jesus' knowledge of Peter's denial, even though Peter could not see it (26:33-35), did not invalidate the invitation to prayer at Gethsemane (26:37). Our final focused view of Peter finds this great man weeping bitter tears (26:58, 69-75).

Peter witnessed to Jesus. Peter heard and obeyed the call of Jesus to follow. His initial decision to trust Jesus was reinforced and tested through a complex process of growth through which he was transformed. He had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).²⁹

Stone Two: Life-Ways of the New Humanity (5:1-7:27)

Matthew shows us Jesus as he went throughout Galilee teaching, preaching and healing (4:23). So effective was his ministry that large crowds "followed"³⁰ from all of Jewry (4:25). The outline of his preaching (4:17) has already been given. Now, we will get a taste of both his teaching (5:1-7:27)³¹ and his healing ministries (8:1-9:38).

29. In centering the eye on Jesus, the evangelical church has been most helpful to the universal church. Evangelicals insist that Christianity at its essence is not a matter of creed, or liturgy, or worship experience, or excellence of catechism, or historical longevity, or apostolic succession. To be a Christian means first of all to be centered on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

30. This use of "to follow" is understood in a normal, pedestrian way, even though Gundry (p. 66) sees this as an "indication of discipleship."

31. One learns a new appreciation for the proverb "of making many books there is no end" (Ecc. 12:12) when bibliographies are consulted on the Sermon on the Mount. Ethicists, preachers, philosophers, radicals,

The final pericope of this sermon (7:24-27) underscores that this is not teaching merely to be heard. To hear Jesus without responding is rank foolishness. In a theme that James will echo a generation later, Jesus declares that real wisdom moves hearing to doing.

The first wisdom to be heard and meshed into actions is Jesus' description of the "New Me"³² which is now a fact since the choice has been made to follow Jesus. Because of new birth, we are salt and light (5:13-16). These distinctive qualities are a result of the new state of blessedness within, described by the Beatitudes (5:3-12).

In the Beatitudes, disciples come face to face with the good news³³ of God's action in their personal lives. Instead of being a "challenge to most exceptional effort,"³⁴ they are treated to the joy of having described for them what God is doing within them. No longer

politicians, pacifists, aesthetes and hedonists all turn here to find justification for their views. The most comprehensive commentary is that of Guelich.

32. Kierkegaard's parable is much to the point here. Even though beginning with barnyard chickens, our true nature responds to the piercing cry from the sky. We are eagles made to "play tag with the clouds." The good news of how we're different from barnyard chickens we discover in the Beatitudes.

33. Gospel means "good news." When we enter the kingdom, we should see over the entrance: "Welcome to joy!" "I cannot keep count of the number of people in whom . . . the love of God and the desire to serve him . . . lead only to a life of sterility." Paul Tournier, The Person Reborn (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 82.

34. Jeremias, p. 14.

merely highly moral religious people, they have been implanted with God's own gift of blessedness. Disciples are "blessed" because within them since the time of new birth are these eight personality traits.

The Beatitudes can be situated in bold relief by developing synonyms and antonyms for each.³⁵ Collating words used by many authors to describe what it means and what it cannot mean to be poor in spirit, produced the following lists. Synonyms for "poor in spirit" included humility, sense of need before God, awareness of limitations, denial of one's own diety, confession, calling to God for help, confidence in God, absence of pride, spiritual inability, spiritual inadequacy, admission of weakness, trust and a sense of security. On the other hand, antonyms were arrogance, pushiness, claiming to know everything, claiming infallibility, self-sufficiency, calling the tune for God, scorning others, materialistic view, self-security, power, spiritual pride, self-confidence, believing self to be godlike, and testing God.

For the individual disciple, the question then becomes one of asking whether there is a growing sense of need before God or increasing self-sufficiency.³⁶

35. In 1979, Dr. Robert Suggs of Messiah College and this author began developing a "Christian Character Inventory" (CCI) based on the premise that questions could be developed to indicate how close a person is to each Beatitude's synonym or antonym.

36. In working through the information from the 1300+ people who took the initial CCI, the sense of need is high for the first five years after the doctrines of Christ come alive, plateauing lower for approximately fifteen years, and then climbing to a new high between the years of 21-29. It is also statistically significant that out of a total raw score of 80, the median for women was 64, while men's median

If each beatitude can be viewed as the product of a struggle between polar opposites, then neither pole is ever totally absent or totally present. Nor can the battle ever be finished. The dynamic tension between the two continues even if the balance is firmly in one direction. The development of Christian growth becomes, then, the maturing of eight fruits through eight individual mini-battles. The Beatitude and the struggle out of which they grow could be charted this way:

Poor in Spirit	Sense of Need Before God vs. Self-Sufficiency
Mourn	Empathic Compassion vs. Cold-Heartedness
Meek	Gentleness of Great Strength vs. Undisciplined Selfishness
Hunger and Thirst	Deep Craving for God's Will & Way vs. Desire for Wrong
Merciful	Committed to Kindness vs. Vengeful
Pure in Heart	Single Focus vs. Fragmented, Inner Conflict
Peacemakers	Makers of Peace vs. Trouble-Makers
Persecuted	Standing on the Side of God vs. Fit Easily into Culture

The Beatitudes describe a radical departure from the expectations of today's culture. The new creation departs radically from conventional norms. Most elements of our culture gives their blessing to the arrogant in spirit rather than the poor in spirit. For many,

was 58. Only under the second beatitude is the difference greater.

the tearless eye is admirable. For disciples, the challenge is to be a living, visible demonstrations of the "balanced and variegated character"³⁷ of the people of God which is appealingly, threateningly opposite that of the world.

The second wisdom dominates the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount (5:17-7:23). The outgrowth of that implanted newness will not be without struggle. Many are the side trails off the narrow road. Many temptations³⁸ surround the disciple that would hasten the process of losing "saltiness" (5:13) and hiding "light" (5:15).³⁹ To know what they are will disarm much of temptations's sharpness.⁴⁰

In four short verses, Matthew introduces this struggle (5:17-20). Jesus comes to fulfill the Law and the prophets. Far from relaxing the demands, Jesus intensifies them. The great ones in the kingdom of heaven practice and teach even the least of the commands. Not

37. John R. W. Stott, Christian Counterculture (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), p. 31.

38. Paul reminds us that temptation is common (I Cor. 10:13).

39. "The mass man, the organization man, may be characterized by anomie, anonymity and alienation." In the first he has no norm for behavior, secondly he has lost a sense of personal identity, and in the third place, he has lost the ability to be neighborly. Myron S. Augsburger, Invitation to Discipleship (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1964), pp. 43-44.

40. Richard Lovelace, Dynamics of Spiritual Life (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), pp. 136-144, stresses the need for developing a "practical Satanology" if we are going to exercise the spiritual authority we already possess.

polishing the outside, but heightening the inner, Jesus works until morality goes deeper than the righteousness of the Pharisees.⁴¹

What that means for relationships is illustrated in five contrasts (5:21-48).⁴² Contemptuous, belittling anger will be rooted out long before it becomes murder as concentration is placed on reconciliation. Long before adultery becomes a physical act, lust inflamed the imagination.⁴³ Only radical cooperation based on the seriousness of the inner warp will change lust. The disciple does not look for excuses to write out "certificate(s) of divorce." Instead of searching for ways to say one thing and mean another, our relationships must be characterized by simple honesty: our "yes" means "yes," and our "no" means "no." Because the disciple's focus is on the other person and not on defending one's turf, it is possible to "turn the other cheek."⁴⁴

41. Hoerber (pp. 100-103) distinguishes between the aorist and the present imperatives, the former when Jesus encourages the disciples to begin new practices, and the latter when they need to continue present practices.

42. It is possible that the order in which these are placed is in itself an aid to memory. Starting with the two "big" sins of murder and adultery, adultery leads to divorce, which is breaking of vows, which ignites desire for vengeance, as they must be an enemy. Full circle demands the recognition of the command to love even the enemy.

43. Yochelson and Samenow conclude the same for criminal activity. "No crimes have occurred when they were thought of for the first time What is so striking and consistent is that, to a man, our criminals have eventually revealed to us that what they did was an exercise of choice, and that all crimes were products of prior thinking." Samuel Yochelson and Stanton E. Samenow, The Criminal Personality (New York: Jason Aronson, 1976), p. 453.

44. Far from being a proof text for non-resistance of all kinds, "striking on the cheek" is usually an attempt to insult or belittle, not to inflict bodily harm. Tournier's telling insights help

Disciples are not to use their energies to resist the evil person; instead, they are expected to do active good.⁴⁵ Because of the righteousness which Jesus develops within, the disciple's relationships will show something more. Summarized, the new nature should mirror the love of God in this world, not the behavior of tax collectors and pagans.

Secondly, this struggle will affect our religious life (6:1-18). Three exercises characterized the normal piety of the Jew: giving alms, prayer, and fasting. In each of them, a central temptation looms: doing "acts of righteousness" in front of people to be seen by them (6:1), and losing the Father's reward (6:4,6,14). Deeper righteousness remains focused on the Father.

Third, there are specific struggles which come to disciples solely because of their sense of responsibility (6:19-34). In identifying their ultimate master, each disciple is forced to choose God or money. What and where are those values, things, and people which are valued, admired and treasured? The more responsible disciples are, the more

distinguish between whether non-resistance is a "victory" over a person's own strength, or whether it is "cowardice." Paul Tournier, The Strong and the Weak (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 182-183.

45. Romans 12:17-21 is Paul commentary on this doctrine of Jesus. An excellent contemporary treatment of the response of the Christian to evil is that of Richard H. Bube, "Response to Evil: A Christian Dilemma," Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation 35, no. 4 (December 1983): pp. 225-254.

open to anxiety they can be. Answering the eight questions of 6:25-31 will clarify "first things" in life: the kingdom of God or all these things.

Finally, some of these new struggles are a matter of learning how to respond in this new narrow way (7:1-23). What begins as a categorical imperative, "Do not judge,"⁴⁶ expands into an introduction to the Golden Rule. The choice is not whether judgments are allowed the disciple. At issue is the choice of measures.

Building the Arch, Level Two

Stone Three: Learn Compassion (8:1-9:38)

Lest disciples get immersed too deeply into classroom learning and ignore experience, Jesus led them into life situations to learn compassion. Jesus "does not conceive of His miracles as a planned demonstration of His Messiahship. The miracle is always incidental in character, occasioned by the need and agony of man as they confronted

46. In verse 3, Jesus begins an impressive list of judgments to be made: sawdust/plank, dogs/sacred, pigs/pearls, bread/stone, fish/snake, narrow/wide gate, narrow/broad way, false prophets, sheep's clothing/within wolves, grapes/thornbushes, figs/thistles, good/bad tree, good/bad fruit, say/do and miracles/known by Jesus.

Jesus."⁴⁷ Kingsbury points to 8:17 as the place to begin.⁴⁸ Through a formula quotation taken from Isaiah, the disciples were not to see this merely as a show put on to impress either them or the crowd, but Jesus taking on himself the infirmities and diseases of hurting people. There is no sense that Jesus put together a special tour to impress the disciples. He was simply exercising his ordinary authority through his actions. They were to discover that He was Messiah because of what he was doing.

The final pericope of the narrative section (9:35-38) again provides the sense of these chapters. Both teaching and preaching occur. Yet the major emphasis is the healing ministry. Jesus' compassion focuses on people "harassed and helpless." Faced with more opportunities than can be met even by the Incarnate Son of God, Jesus calls the disciples together to pray that others be sent out to replicate him in the harvest fields.⁴⁹

Two major features of this section are important to note. First, this section encompasses the largest concentration of miracles to individual people in the book. Twelve different times, encircling a wide spectrum of experiences, Jesus steps forward to exercise

47. Franzmann, pp. 67-8.

48. "Observations on the 'Miracle Chapters.'"

49. He invites them to pray before going. Their lives--like his-- must be centered in the will of God not the urgency of the need. "He bids them pray, in order that they might consciously and resolutely unite their will with the compassionate will of God and thus become co-workers with God." Franzmann, p. 80.

compassion freely. The second major feature is that all of the other material focuses on discipleship.⁵⁰

Ellis highlights the exquisite balance of these two chapters. The three miracles of cleansing the leper, the great faith of the centurion, and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (8:1-15) precede three discipleship stories focusing on the cost of following Jesus: the teacher of the law who would follow, the disciple who must leave his father, and the disciples who are afraid (8:18-27). Two more descriptions of the action of Jesus ensue: freeing from the demonic can be dangerous to real estate, and his authority goes beyond releasing from paralysis to forgiving sin (8:28-9:8). The next three accounts of discipleship focus on the other side of the coin, its joy: the call of an outcast to follow, the wider call to the sinners to enjoy mercy, and the new wine joy of the groom (9:9-18). Finally, four more stories are sketched of the compassionate action of Jesus: raising the dead daughter of a ruler, an anonymous woman's bleeding stanching, two blind men see, and a demon-possessed man without power of speech is released from Satan's power (9:20-34).

Watching Jesus live and minister from day to day forces disciples to come to grips with the iron of his compassion and with the double dimension of discipleship. The first opens them up to the wider

50. Ellis (p. 148) notes that of the four characteristics of Matthew's recounting of miracles, one is that he "tends to turn miracle accounts into didactic conversations which emphasize faith."

possibilities of what God can do. The second calls for reevaluation of that initial decision to follow.

Stone Four: Freely Give (10:1-42)

The final pericope of this sermon (10:40-42) recapitulates the tone in which the disciples were to begin their ministry. Disciples were learning what it meant to go in the name of Jesus. To receive or reject disciples on their lonely mission was to receive or reject Jesus himself. Even small gestures like giving a cup of cold water⁵¹ to a weary disciple would be noted by God.

Out of the larger group of disciples who watched and wondered at the authoritative compassion of Jesus, he chose twelve men (10:1-4).⁵² He gave them authority. Evil spirits, disease and sickness cannot stand erect before them. They who had watched now acted for Jesus. They put into action the preaching, teaching and healing ministry of Jesus. What they had received so freely from the hand of Jesus, they were to give.

Jesus also gave them instructions (10:5-15). He told them where to

51. In a culture without refrigerators, cold water was a special gift.

52. Within Judaism, ten men could start a new synagogue. More probably, Jesus was reconstituting Israel, with the Twelve replacing the twelve sons of Jacob.

go, what to say, what to do, and what not to take. Specific details on how to find a place to stay and when to leave were included. To those rejecting the messenger, harsh judgment will come.

Lest they take their mission lightly, serious problems which would arise are openly discussed (10:16-39). As sheep among wolves, be wise but don't worry. The Spirit of your Father speaks through you. In the face of family betrayal, endure to the end. Since Jesus had been accused of being in league with Beelzebub (9:34), so will his followers. The only person to fear is the "one who can destroy both body and soul in hell" (10:28). Compared to that One, no enemies on earth can compete. Keeping concentration in mission on Jesus will not always bring peace, but it will bring the security of being acknowledged openly by Jesus before the Father. Losing one's life for his sake is the only life style worthy of him.

Building the Arch, Level Three

Stone Five: Expectations and Delusions (11:1-12:50)

A new element is introduced into the training of the disciples. The ministry of Jesus raises questions of a fundamental nature within the context of orthodox Judaism of the first century. He doesn't fit the expected mold. The gathering of the Twelve precipitates questions

of how this new community of Jesus fits into the greater community of Israel.⁵³ These questions and others will not be dodged by Jesus, but will be confronted.

The final pericope of the narrative section (12:46-50) echoes the theme of "doing the will of my Father" that is found in the final words of the Sermon on the Mount (7:21,24-27). The new is that in the doing, a new family circle opens, which sometimes will exclude the old.⁵⁴

The first questions come from an unexpected source: Elijah who has come, John the Baptist (11:1-15). The ministry of Jesus does not measure up to John's expectations. The voice from heaven notwithstanding (3:17), John still asks, "should we expect someone else?" Fundamental questions from within the household of faith can be harder to handle than questions from outsiders. With firm gentleness, Jesus offers the data of his ministry, adding a beatitude for those who do "not fall away" while struggling with questions.

The ensuing questions spring from the arrogant delusions and

53. This question does not disappear, but persists throughout the days of the early church. Bruce sees the possibility that in the days immediately following Pentecost, "they may have been recognized as a separate synagogue . . . within the Jewish community, the 'Synagogue of the Nazarenes.'" F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 1953 reprint (London: Tyndale Press, 1969). p. 101.

54. Looking ahead to 13:52 reinforces the insight that this stage of training lies in discerning between the new and old, in order to take treasures from each.

demands of "this generation" (11:16-24). Unlike those of Tyre and Sidon, this generation keeps demanding of God dances and dirges according to their whims. They watch miracles with no sense that God is at work within their borders. Unlike the gentle answer to John, Jesus here openly denounces the mind-set which will not and cannot see God working.

By far, the largest cluster of questions come from Pharisees, self-appointed watchdogs of orthodox Judaism (12:1-14, 22-45). Up to this point, they had questioned the disciples (9:11) or corrected the crowd (9:34). Now, Pharisees and Jesus go head to head. Deliberately flaunting Sabbath regulations (12:1-14),⁵⁵ Jesus defends his actions by appeal to precedent, priority of mercy, and his own primacy. Disciples must learn to distinguish between man-made rules, and the meaning of the words of God.

Is an earlier charge (9:34) really accurate? Does Jesus receive his power through Beelzebub (12:22-37)? There is one unforgivable sin: to refuse to see God at work. Does Jesus do the work of God or the work of Satan? Disciples must confront again basic issues: "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

55. In the Mishna and the Talmud, the development of legalistic minutiae comes to its climax. Thirty-nine classes of forbidden work were each sub-divided into thirty-nine sub-classes, giving a "mere" one thousand, five hundred and twenty-one things not to do on the Sabbath. R. H. Charles, The Decalogue (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1926), p. 127.

Multiplying the miraculous (12:38-45) solves nothing.⁵⁶ Instead, it opens the door to more judgment. Merely casting out evil spirits is not enough. Vacuum must be filled. This generation has experienced much casting out, but finds itself in a "worse" condition. "Seven other spirits more wicked" have taken over, because God has not been invited in to fill the vacuum. Disciples must learn that the miraculous is not enough, as other explanations can always be found.

In refreshing contrast are the "little children" who have had revealed to them "these things" (11:25-30). They are the "weary and burdened" who have come to take the yoke of Jesus on their shoulders. Unlike the yoke of the Law⁵⁷ accepted by every male Jew entering adulthood, his yoke is "easy".⁵⁸ Jesus chose this word in order to "contrast His message with that of Judaism" since it contains "the fullness of the kindness and friendliness of God manifested in His person and work."⁵⁹ His ministry fulfills the graciousness seen by

 56. Barker's excellent discussion of the miraculous element of the ministry of Jesus concludes that "miracles proved both too little and too much." The most important fact remains: "They do not compel belief or violate the free decision of man either for or against Jesus." Barker, pp.38-45.

57. "The 'yoke' was a rabbinical term for the law." (Ellis, p. 58)

58. *χρηστος* appears seven times in the New Testament, and, with three other words from the same family, is translated "goodness, kind, kindness, gracious."

59. Konrad Weiss, "*χρηστος* et al." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol IX, ed., G.Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 487.

Isaiah (12:18-21).

Stone Six: The Nature of the Kingdom (13:1:52)

Questions have been raised which cannot be evaded. What is the nature of this new "kingdom of heaven" that distresses so many and delights so many more? This is an issue that must be addressed in a larger context than the Twelve, so Jesus talks first to the crowds (13:1). Later, explanations will be given to the disciples (13:11-23,36-43).

The final pericope of the sermon explains the syllabus (13:52).⁶⁰ Teachers of the law need more education. Once instruction about the kingdom has been assimilated, then proper choices can be made. Much of the old law will remain, but deepened and fulfilled by Jesus.

Much discussion has been held over why Jesus chose the medium of parables (13:10-17). To a people trained since childhood in theological debate, his style must have appeared too simplistic. Jesus' explanation found its biblical basis again in Isaiah. The style chosen provided a filter that kept "them" from seeing, hearing and ultimately understanding. To people who quoted extensively from their Scriptures,

60. Gundry (p. 10) understands this section as "the discourse on understanding the kingdom as a requirement of discipleship."

the covenant love of God contained no surprises.⁶¹ Parables broke through that ossified doctrine⁶² to bring new life. The picture given of how God operates in the world differed radically from the orthodox picture.⁶³

In seven parables Jesus outlined his theology of the kingdom (13:3-50). Today, whenever theology is mentioned, technical jargon is used: justification, sanctification, Christology, prolegomena, sovereignty, vicarious substitutionary atonement, etc. When Jesus turns the attention of the disciple to theology, he uses words like seed, pearl, treasure, wheat, mustard seed, fishing nets, devils and angels. Instead of giving definitive answers, Jesus told stories. Yet when asked, "Have you understood all these things," they confidently

61. Commenting on essential elements of Messianic expectations, Rengstorf states: "the only sure point is that He is strictly just, and will freely give His people nothing." H. H. Rengstorf, "Ελπιση et al." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. II, ed., G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) p. 525.

62. "The parables of Jesus were stories of God that profoundly scandalized those who heard them." They were "instruments of controversy" designed, "to portray, as winningly vs he could, how God acts." Those who "try to deal with God by bargaining, by demanding favor to which they have earned a right through their own good deeds . . . are confounded and fall on their faces. While those who have no right to mercy and love . . . are astonished to be swept up in irresistible and overwhelming grace." Andrew M. Greeley, Ascent Into Hell (New York: Warner Books, 1983), pp. 369-370.

63. Barclay's discussion of Messiah concludes with six ways in which Jesus did not fit into the picture. Most contemporary views of Messiah were selfishly nationalistic, focused on a material kingdom, basically otherworldly, apocalyptic, would utterly destroy the sinner and had no hint of a suffering Messiah. James Barclay, Jesus As They Saw Him (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 93-159.

respond, "Yes."

The seven parables of the kingdom will not tell us all there is to know. Of the seven, two are explained: the sower and the wheat and weeds. They point to key theological centers:

- The kingdom of God is like seed which depends on the condition of the soil.
- The kingdom of God can be counterfeited, with the responsibility to separate the real from the counterfeit left to angels at the end of the age.
- The kingdom of God will have observable growth, growth out of proportion to its beginnings.
- The kingdom of God operates invisibly and affects its environment.
- The kingdom of God is an unexpected discovery, a "serendipity" which once found should never be let go!
- The kingdom of God is the end point of a lifelong search; once found it should always be cherished.
- The action of the kingdom of God will bring in all kinds of people.

Nowhere is it assumed that the task of doing theology is simple. Even the greatest person born of woman was confused (11:2-3)! Even so, the disciple must struggle with the issues of the relationship of the kingdom of God that Jesus launched with the world.

Building the Arch, Level Four

Stone Seven: Weaning Continued (13:53-17:27)

Jesus had begun the weaning process earlier (11:1-12:50) as He uncovered the expectations and delusions of official faith around them. He continues that process during this narrative section. By example and teaching, the nature of Jesus is being developed in their lives as they live his priorities. However, there must be developed a firmer sense of community which models his value system. Thus Jesus will both pull them away from something old and point them toward something new.

In this case, the final pericope of this section (17:24-27) offers no help in understanding what precedes. Instead, the contrasts evident at Caesarea Philippi are more indicative of the training of the disciples (16:13-20). Most helpful of the guides are the words of 16:21, "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples" the cross and resurrection. His ministry, begun in Galilee (4:17) with much the same words, has now shifted its concentration to the disciples and their preparation for his cross and resurrection.

It is these contrasts that best describe the learning of the disciple at this juncture. Even the greatest can be put to death by the whim of a tyrant (14:1-12). In response to that apparent injustice, Jesus withdraws to a "solitary place," prelude to feeding the five thousand men along with their families (14:13-21). Death, injustice, apparent powerlessness in one place does not make unavailable God's power on large scale in another place. Even the power to walk on water

(14:22-32) is available to Peter, as long as there isn't doubt. Compassion, empowered by the kingdom as present in Jesus, continues to heal all who "touched him" (14:34-36).

Still dull of understanding, disciples have difficulty perceiving the point of Jesus' parables warning the crowd of the Pharisees (15:1-20). To become experts in honoring God with their lips while having hearts far from him, or concentrating on externals like washing hands according to prescribed ceremonial fashion, says nothing about the heart of a person. The disciple must learn to distinguish between what looks good on the outside and what comes from the heart.

Great faith is found in unexpected places in an unlikely person.⁶⁴ Jesus again demonstrates his willingness to take the little someone has and multiply it to meet obvious needs by feeding four thousand from seven loaves and a few fish (15:29-39). Even miracles do not clear up the mind-patterns of the disciples. They are of "little faith" because they cannot understand his warning (16:1-12). Finally, they do comprehend.

Sharper contrasts surface at Caesarea Philippi (16:13-28). Peter responds to the inner revelation of the Father to confess that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Something of Jesus' excitement can still be sensed in his "Blessed are you." On the rock of this

64. The two people who impressed Jesus with their faith were both non-Jews, the centurion (8:10) and the Canaanite woman here.

confession, the church of Jesus Christ will be built and the gates of Hades will "not prove stronger than it."⁶⁵ Keys of the kingdom are now available.⁶⁶ Binding and loosing⁶⁷ does not mean that God will "ratify at the last judgment what Peter does in the present age, but that Peter does in the present age what God has already determined."⁶⁸

Immediately Peter misuses the keys. He cannot loose Jesus from the Cross. The keys do not give him the right to rebuke Jesus and change the direction of the will of the Father.⁶⁹ The Cross comes from the mind of the Father. From the pinnacle of confession and commissioning, Peter is confronted with the stern words, "Out of my sight, Satan!" Temptation as real as the original three (4:1-11) whips Jesus. Out of confession which clarified the central issue comes confusion about the means. "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (16:24-25, cf. 10:39). To follow means more than just leaving the nets. To follow

65. Alternate translation from footnote.

66. What is given Peter here is repeated for the Twelve (18:18).

67. "In rabbinic literature, binding and loosing usually signify interpretative decisions of prohibition and permission; but they also signify condemnation and acquittal in disciplining members of the synagogue who disobey the interpretative decisions" (Gundry, p. 336).

68. Gundry, p. 335.

69. The literal translation of "Never, Lord!" is "May God be gracious to you" (16:22). Peter is saying, "May God in his mercy spare you the sorrow, the suffering, and the dark silence of God." Peter did not understand the greater mercy of God was to send his Son to the cross.

Jesus means a conscious commitment to replace concerns for security with a glad willingness to lose everything for the sake of Jesus Christ.⁷⁰

The final contrasts in the training of the disciples can be seen in the striking contrasts between pietists and activists. The pietist presses on for the vision of God.⁷¹ In the Transfiguration (17:1-13), Jesus allows some of his pre-incarnate deity to show through the humanity in which it was cloaked. Only three of the disciples are invited to observe.⁷² The other nine are placed in the role of activists, as they are pressed to respond to obvious, physical needs (17:14-21). Neither group comes out of its experience without further learning. Pietists must resist the temptation to make permanent their experience by putting up shelters. They must come down from the mountain. Activists must learn to exercise their faith.⁷³ Mere

70. See Heb. 12:2, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross."

71. "The first earmark of mystical religion is that it is centered in a direct or immediate experience of ultimate reality." Donald Bloesch, Crisis of Piety (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 98.

72. "In their traditions, the Jews said that four rabbis had had this vision of God. Ben Azai had seen the glory and had died. Ben Soma beheld it and went mad. Acher saw it and 'cut up the young plants,' that is, in spite of the vision he became a heretic and ruined the Garden of Truth. Akiba alone ascended in peace and in peace came back." William Barclay, Letter to the Corinthians (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), p. 256.

73. Mark's account (9:29) adds another part of Jesus' answer, "This kind can come out only by prayer." Later texts of Matthew harmonize by adding verse 21, "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

activity will never suffice.

Stone Eight: The New Community, the Church (18:1-35)

Weaning the disciples from the old is not enough. Jesus must also begin to describe for the disciple the new community he intends to create. This community will model for the world the standards and priorities of its Lord.

The final pericope for this sermon carries its full structural force (18:21-35). Any discussion of the marks of the church must take into consideration not only this entire chapter, but particularly this parable. Peter knows that more is demanded of disciples than of the Pharisees. He takes the rabbinic limit to forgiveness of three and asks if seven is the new limit. Jesus answers, "No." Only unlimited forgiveness will adequately take into account the new situation.⁷⁴ Why? Because disciples have been forgiven an astronomical debt.⁷⁵ Against the background of being forgiven that awesome, unpayable debt,

74. The phrase "seventy times seven" is found only one other time in Scripture. In Gen. 4:24 Lamech claims the right of unlimited revenge. Jesus here envisions the church as the place where unlimited forgiveness has taken the place of unlimited revenge.

75. Wallace accurately understands the economics of first-century Rome, when he has someone ask, "Who but Caesar hath fifty talents at order?" Jesus uses the figure of ten thousand talents, a mind-boggling amount. See Lew Wallace, Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ (New York, Harper & Row, 1898), p 353.

the servant in the parable goes out to find someone who owes him one hundred denarii.⁷⁶ If there is one mark that must characterize the Church of Jesus Christ it must be: A community of forgiven and forgiving sinners.

It is part of human nature to compete instead of complement. Uppermost in the minds of the disciples is not the cross, but "who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (18:1)?⁷⁷ At this point in their development is the discouraging fact that they ask the question. Encouragement comes from seeing that they knew Jesus' ideas were different.

This forgiven/forgiving community is also the place where children model entrance into the kingdom and humility (18:1-9). The welcome given children in the community determines greatness.⁷⁸ Extreme care must be taken to avoid being an obstacle for stumbling by the "little ones." Death by drowning, being maimed or crippled, is to be preferred to causing "one of these little ones who believe in me to sin" (18:6). The reality of life within this confessional community which models the

76. A denarii is equivalent to a day's wage for a common laborer.

77. See also 19:17-19, 20-28 where the same combination occurs.

78. The Old Testament expected the people of God to give special protection to the alien, fatherless and widow, because they were once slaves themselves, and know powerlessness (Deut. 24:17-18, 22). Richard Adam's novel Shardik is a powerful commentary both on manipulating God and providing community for children.

value system of Jesus is that stumbling blocks will occur.⁷⁹ The individual disciple watches carefully so as not to be the one who offends.

The new forgiven/forgiving community watches carefully lest an attitude of arrogant superiority arise when dealing with the "little ones" (18:10-14).⁸⁰ Instead of being content with the shelter and safety of the ninety-nine percent, this community goes after the one per cent who is wandering away. The great ones do not consider one out of a hundred as too minor a problem. Yet even in their going out and finding, some will refuse the church and can be counted as "a pagan or a tax collector" (18:17).

It must be obvious by now that this forgiven/forgiving community is not an utopia where nobody gets hurt. The reality of life is that we still fail God, ourselves and others. In short, we sin. What process allows us to handle sin?

Estrangement cannot be allowed to germinate within this community (18:15-20). The process of reconciliation outlined is both patently simple and incredibly hard. Three steps are outlined. If all fails, the disciple⁸¹ is released from the responsibility to reconcile. No

79. All attempts to set up a perfect church on earth must be doomed to failure by this verse, and the entire chapter.

80. Compare this with Paul's concern that spiritual restorers might forget their vulnerability to temptation (Gal. 6:1)

81. The "you" of verse 17 is singular. Jesus is not talking about excommunication from the church, just the cessation of personal responsibility.

longer is the person a wandering sheep to be sought. This is the context in which the keys are in proper operation. Because they are gathered as his representatives, in his name, Jesus is in their midst. Here the reality of the present Lord is so real that what they agree on is the Father's will that will be done on earth.

Building the Arch: Level Five

Stone Nine: The King Comes Home (19:1-23:38)

Disciples are poised on the threshold of the final week in the life of Jesus. In this, the longest of the narrative sections, disciples will watch Jesus through Passion Week, up to the preparation for Passover. He will dominate official Judaism, something he has not done up to this point. He will judge them and find them wanting. By word and action, Jesus stakes out his claim to be King.

The final pericope of this narrative section closes out with a long lament, the climax of stern denunciation (23:37-39). The longing of the King to gather his people "as a hen gathers her chicks" lies unfulfilled. The sadness over the realization of impending doom clouds the horizon. Until there is a joy at his coming, there is nothing but judgment. The disciple sees clearly the irreconcilable difference between faith without Jesus and faith following Jesus.

Questions fill the narrative.⁸² Asked about divorce, King Jesus points back to creation to discover the intent of the Creator in marriage (19:3-12). What Moses permitted was not God's original intent. Divorce is permitted because of a refusal to allow God to soften hearts.⁸³

The question of the rich young man triggers questions of reward for the follower who has "left everything" (19:16-30). External compliance with the laws has been the experience of this young man since childhood. Respectable in every way, there is missing a "deeper righteousness" which makes it impossible to enter the kingdom. He is not willing to let go of treasures on earth, richness keeping him from transferring trust to Jesus. Money has kept him from becoming the new creation. For now, even the disciples are concentrating on the external, not the inner reality. "What then will there be in it for us" they ask. Jesus solemnly swears that their reward will be a "hundred times" what they have left, and in addition to that, eternal life.⁸⁴

82. Three questions structure chapter 19 (vs. 3, 16, 27) and four questions chapter 22 (vs. 17, 28, 36, 42).

83. A good survey of how biblical texts have been interpreted and applied in historic Catholicism, early Protestant Reformers and the English Reformers can be found in Viggo Norskon Olson, The New Testament Logia on Divorce (Tubingen: Mohr, 1971).

84. "Salvation as traditionally understood is not a goal of Christian experience, only a gracious by-product." C. D. Batson, J. C. Beker and W. M. Clarke, Commitment Without Ideology (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1973), p. 69.

Three examples of the generosity of God surround Jesus' last prediction of his death (20:17-19). At issue in the first parable is the question, "Is God allowed to be generous?" (20:1-16) To the person who has worked all day, the generosity of God is not so apparent. Then for the mother of James and John, she needed guarantees on the generosity of God. Would her sons would get "paid" adequately for all their effort (20:20-28). However, to concern oneself with such requests, or to discover that someone else made the request first, shows lack of awareness of the deep reality: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." Concern over status should be rooted out in the deep formation of disciples, as it reveals a preoccupation with self. Third, even on the road to Jerusalem to die, Jesus had time for exercising generous compassion toward others.

During those days in Jerusalem, three themes dominated: the authority of Jesus (21:1-27), the last call to repentance (21:28-22:14), and "Woe" (23:1-39). Jesus entered Jerusalem as King (21:1-11). He could have entered quietly. He didn't. Amid the excited clamor of millions of Passover pilgrims,⁸⁵ Jesus entered the temple to restore it to its original design: a place of prayer for many nations,

85. Josephus estimated the number of pilgrims in Jerusalem at the time of Passover during Nero's reign to be 2,700,200. William Barclay, The Mind of Jesus (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 183.

a place of gracious wonders, and the place where the praise of children could echo throughout the courts (21:12-17). Such high-handed actions by an itinerant rabbi from Galilee sparked intense questions of authorization. Knowing their refusal to face truth as truth, Jesus declined to answer. Disciples saw modeled for them the grace of God and authentic exercises of judgment (cf. 7:1-2,6).

Reverting to His favorite style of preaching, Jesus offered three final parables of repentance. In the parable of the two sons (21:28-32), perhaps the unrepentant yet morally upright would see that words without actions are meaningless. Repentance and belief were not evident. The issue continued to be, who is doing the will of the Father? (cf. 7:21) How could they see the seriousness of their continued refusal? Perhaps the story of the tenants would so exercise their indignation that they would understand what they were doing (21:33-46). No. They knew that they bore the brunt of the story, but still would not face truth. Let's talk about a party, a wedding feast (22:1-14)! But, as in the story, "they paid no attention." Opportunities to repent were being offered. Orthodox, official Judaism refused. Disciples saw the patience of Jesus in dealing with those who continued to turn their backs on truth.

The final section of chapter 22 records the last of the four questions which ends with the rout of Jerusalem's spokesmen (22:41-46). That rout begins with questions on paying taxes to Caesar (22:15-22). "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." The

Sadducees, relishing the rout of the Pharisees, spring their own trap (22:23-33). It ensnares them. The crowd loves it! Trying to regain control, experts of the law are stymied by his answer to which law is the greatest (22:34-40). Throughout, Jesus emerges as King Jesus.

Jesus set up a clear standard (23:1-36). No longer can there be any question about where he stood. To the teachers of the Law, Pharisees and hypocrites, he had one word: "Woe." Seven times this cry of wrath mingled with grief echoed. Nowhere was the contrast sharper. The community created by the Pharisees⁸⁶ was the polar opposite of that community created by Jesus.

Dramatically the disciple was brought up short: which person am I? The externally religious person hearing "woe" or the religious person of deeper righteousness in whom the new creation is stirring hearing "blessed." Had the authority of King Jesus become normative?

Stone Ten: The King Is Coming Again (24:1-25:46)

There is a profound conviction that surges from one end of the New

86. Listing the characteristics of the "Church of the Pharisee" is a depressing exercise, and a stern warning for much of contemporary evangelicalism. Scrupulous in details, zealous in outreach, concerned for appearances, attentive to titles, expert in casuistry, blind to history, yet neglecting the "more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness" (23:23).

Testament to the other: Jesus is coming again! Above all the words of our existence stands the word of Jesus, "(You) will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory" (24:30). Now that the days of His sojourn on earth were limited, Jesus turned the attention of the disciples to the future.

As contemporary disciples of Jesus look over these two chapters, a difference emerges. Unlike much contemporary handling of these issues, prediction is low and admonition high. "No one knows about that day or hour" (24:36). "Therefore, keep watch be ready" (24:42,44).

The final pericope of the sermon (25:31-46) encapsulates the entire teaching of Jesus on the inner development of the new creation. The major issues are not the identity of the nations or the "least." Neither is the issue one of what works must be done to guarantee a seat in the kingdom. At issue is this central question: are they sheep or are they goats. Goats, no matter how hard they work at imitating sheep, remain goats (7:15-23). Sheep, those new creations that once were goats, act in certain ways congruent with their natures. They who were pronounced "blessed" at the beginning of his teaching (5:3ff) are here identified as "you who are blessed by my Father."⁸⁷ The fruit has been tested, and it is good. The full circle of blessedness has been

87. Jesus is often pictured as a bridge over which a person may change geographically. Lacking is any note of whether that person changes fundamentally. A better picture might be to see Jesus as the cocoon in which the caterpillar turns into the butterfly.

completed.

The final pericope also culminates Jesus' claims for Himself. In the strongest statements of the book, Jesus accepts the role of sole judge of the nations. It is his word that determines final destiny: "eternal fire" or "the kingdom prepared for you."

Matthew helps the disciple understand the material of these two chapters by clarifying the three questions with which Jesus is dealing. The disciples ask, "When will this (the destruction of Jerusalem) happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (24:3)⁸⁸ He will answer them in two styles, first straight didactic style, then in characteristic parabolic style. "Even the Gospel writers did not presume to know their final significance."⁸⁹

The most common division of 24:4-31 is into three paragraphs: vs. 4-14, 15-28 and 29-31. The first paragraph must deal with the third question. "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (24:14). In the light of the conditions prior to the end, the disciple is urged not to allow love to grow cold, but to stand firm to the end.

88. Paul also makes a distinction between the coming and the end (I Cor. 15:23-24).

89. Barker, p. 112.

The second paragraph (24:15-28) has the strongest Judean flavor. It is not the time of the second coming (24:26ff). There will be no mistaking Jesus' return. If it is accurate to say that Jesus is referring primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem here,⁹⁰ (and the presumption is strong), then features like the "abomination of desolation"⁹¹ and the "great distress" had already become history. They knew what some of the false signs and prophets had purported. They would not have been led astray as easily again.

The short third paragraph (24:29-31) deals with the return of Jesus. His appearing, earth's mourning, the glory and power of that return, and the blast of the trumpet that heralds the gathering of the elect; all lift up the weary hearts with hope.

The remaining seven parables cover the same three questions, in the order first asked.⁹² The parable of the fig tree (24:32-35) speaks of Israel. The observer can tell with some confidence when "it" (the destruction of Jerusalem) is near. It does occur within "this

90. Assuming that the gospel was written during the 70's from Syria, the first readers would know this prophecy as history. They would know that of the 600,000 reported dead, few were Christians because they had already fled across Jordon as instructed (24:16). Christ did not return to stop the bloodbath.

91. Was this the giving of the high priesthood in November, 67 to the clown Phanni?

92. It has been a truism in Dispensational Theology to see the "lesson from the fig tree" as referring to the time before the return of Jesus. Structurally, that thesis cannot be supported, as can be seen below.

generation." It is not the proud Temple in all its splendor that is invincible, but "my words."

The next four parables (24:36-25:13)⁹³ must be looked at together, for they all contain a similar phrase, "No one knows about that day or hour" (24:36,42,44,50 and 25:13). There is but one true sign. "The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky" (24:30). As in the days before the flood, life will go on as normal until sudden separation. His coming will be at an unexpected time, so be careful of your behavior. Sleeping while waiting is permitted; not planning for the long haul isn't. Disciples must learn to live in a world to which Jesus will return, but where they must remain faithful.

The final two parables (25:14-46) remind the disciple, not only that the King is coming again, but that judgment will follow at the end. The servant/disciple who is cast into darkness is the one who "hid his master's money" in the ground, afraid even to give it to a bank. Paralyzed by fear, he fails to be faithful in the few things he has. Forgetting that the talent is a loan, he refuses to act as responsible steward of these resources of the master. The requirement of the master at the end of history will be faithfulness with what you have.

93. The flood (24:36-41), the thief (24:42-44), the faithful slave (24:45-51), and five wise virgins (25:1-13).

The Keystone

The Cross and Resurrection (26:1-28:20)

From the scene in heaven where the Son of Man sits on the throne in all his glory judging the nations of the world, we are rudely jarred back to earth, where procurators of provinces sit in judgment on Jesus and send him to the cross. Will despair rule? Will the certainty of God hold them in darkness?⁹⁴ Will the disciples, like Christians of the middle ages, remain fixed on the crucifixion? Or will resurrection, with its awesome spectacle, imprint itself indelibly on their minds?

The final pericope of the book (28:16-20) will pull these threads of despair together by reminding us that all this was part of the ongoing plan of God. All authority in the universe does belong to Jesus, so the cross cannot be understood as the impotence of God. The way was now clear to go into the nations making disciples. Baptizing meant more than repentance. The way to new life has been opened. Immanuel promised (1:23) had been through the Cross and resurrection. His renewed promise to be Immanuel carried with it the validation of resurrection.

Plots, anointing and betrayal set the scene (26:1-16). Jesus knew

 94. Of the traditional "Seven Words from the Cross," Matthew records only one: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (27:46)

what was to happen even before Judas made his final decision to betray. Plotting by enemies, expensive offerings of love, indignation of disciples, thirty pieces of silver; all left unruffled the focus of all that activity: Jesus.

He continued to be the calm center in the gathering storm. Knowledge of imminent betrayal did not diminish the Passover celebration, but heightened it (26:17-30). The new covenant was introduced. Promises were made that will be fulfilled in eternity.

The road from the upper room to the judgment hall found Jesus curiously unmoved, except once. Jesus knew that all his disciples would fall away, even in the face of Peter's firm assurance to the contrary (26:31-35). When arrested, Jesus assisted the arresting officers, and rebuked zealous protectors (26:47-56). In the home of the high priest, others spat, struck, tore their robes and lied. Jesus quoted from Daniel (26:57-68). In the midst of all the swirling currents, Jesus stood firm, except once (26:36-46). At Gethsemane, he asked for the support of his friends in prayer. They slept. Three times he prayed for his will to be meshed fully, totally with the Father's will. Jesus was not looking forward to dying. Yet since it was the Father's will, he needed the strength to follow.⁹⁵

95. "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

Because Jesus watched and prayed, he stood. Peter slept, and fell (26:69-75). Even bitter tears would not change the fact. It would only open the way for reconciliation and commissioning. Judas was "seized with remorse." Instead of coming back, he turned even further away and hanged himself (27:1-10). His was not repentance.

Jesus amazed Pilate, disturbing the governor's wife (27:11-26). Substitutions were rejected. Crowds cried, "Crucify him!" Accompanied by Pilate's washing his hands of the responsibility for Jesus' death, the people seal their judgment, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"⁹⁶ Something is at work here far beyond mere mob frenzy.⁹⁷

Soldiers stripped him, mocked him, and beat him before crowning him with thorns (26:27-44).⁹⁸ A foreigner is pressed into service to carry the cross. Crucified, at his feet sit the soldiers, and at his head the multi-lingual assertion: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Around the cross eddy insulting crowds, mocking leaders of

96. This cannot be used to excuse anti-Semitism in any form, mild or virulent.

97. Both C.S. Lewis in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (New York: Macmillan, 1972) and Calvin Miller in The Singer (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975) catch some of the unrelenting forces at work behind the cross and the resurrecting forces that "turned death backward."

98. Crucifixion "was the most ignominious of punishments, inflicted only on slaves and the lowest of people; and if free men were at any time subjected to crucifixion . . . the sentence could not be executed till they were put into the category of slaves by degradation." George Smeaton, The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), p. 15.

faith, and insulting companions in death. At a distance, stand faithful women (27:55-56).

Death comes quickly (27:45-56).⁹⁹ Crying with a loud voice, Jesus witnesses to his sense of being forsaken, and dies. Earthquake and early resurrection herald the new day: Jesus has died for the sins of the world. The barrier into the presence of God has been torn in two. For centuries, the disciple has dared call this Friday "Good." While the leaders of the people congratulate themselves at the expedient way in which another problem has been settled, God clears the way for the creation of a new species: Christians.

All that remained was to bury Jesus and guard the tomb (27:57-66), or so the faithful and the fearful thought. Jesus had told them to look for joy after crucifixion (16:21 & 20:19), but they couldn't understand. Evidently, enemies took the promise more seriously than disciples.

After that Sabbath, history was never to be the same (28:1-15). Resurrection has entered the world. If death is no longer to be feared what can earth do? What can Satan do?

In scenes sketched to overpower with awe, violent earthquake and

99. Crucifixion was designed primarily as a means of torture that ended in death. Many people lasted days. Soldiers who came to break the legs of the crucified to hasten death were surprised to see Jesus already dead (John 19:31-33). Jesus died in three hours.

brilliant angel announced "He is not here; he has risen." To the women and disciples, the words of that first resurrection morning were, "Do not be afraid." The empty tomb could fit other explanations, meeting the resurrected Lord led to worship.

Far from being an epilogue appended to the end of a manual for the deep instruction of disciples, the Cross and Resurrection completes the maturing process. Immaturity is too weak to comprehend. Facts may be known. But prostrate worship after the fact of the Cross and resurrection belong to maturity.¹⁰⁰

Filled with awe, restored to fellowship, disciples stand poised for the task for which they have been created: making disciples (28:16-20). Authorized by the Lord of the universe into whose hands has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, they will fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord. Baptizing and teaching in all the nations, they have the firm guarantee: in this delegated task, the Lord of the Church will be Immanuel.

Conclusion

100. We echo the prayer of Paul. "that he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit . . . (that you) may have the power . . . to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Eph. 3:14-19).

The disciples are ready for ministry. Three years of following Jesus have prepared them for Pentecost and the ends of the earth. Only in retrospect have the steps through which the Master has brought them become clear. Building blocks have been quietly placed. They have known and experienced a call to discipleship transforming them into new creations. Blessed because of that newness, their distinctiveness works as salt, appears as light. They continue to struggle with the ourworking of that newness. Jesus has both demonstrated authoritative words and acts, and delegated them to the disciples. The kingdom of heaven has broken into history with compassion. Confession and confusion have been experienced. They have been made charter members of the community of forgiven and forgiving sinners who make up the Church. Jesus weeping at Gethsemane and transfigured on the Mount are remembered. Jesus hanging on the Cross will never be forgotten. Throughout it all, Jesus has remained the center.

However, even these words say too little. What does one mean when one speaks of Jesus as the center of one's life? Modern studies of people's thought patterns have shown that "our mind forms categories in at least three different ways, and each of the three kinds of categories has its own structural characteristics."¹⁰¹ Hiebert's excellent discussion of two of those three, point out that people from the West tend to think in bounded sets. Definition, precision,

101. Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion, Culture and Cognitive Categories," Gospel in Context 4 (October 1978): 26.

uniformity, essential characteristics, and static categories mark the ways most Americans think. Much of the non-Western world think in terms of centered sets. The center, movement toward or away from that center, closeness and distance, movement and dynamic categories, mark this way of thinking. To know a lot about theology but to be moving away from Christ is to be a Pharisee. To know very little about Christ, but to know and confess that he is Lord is to be a Christian. "He is the center around which their life revolves."¹⁰²

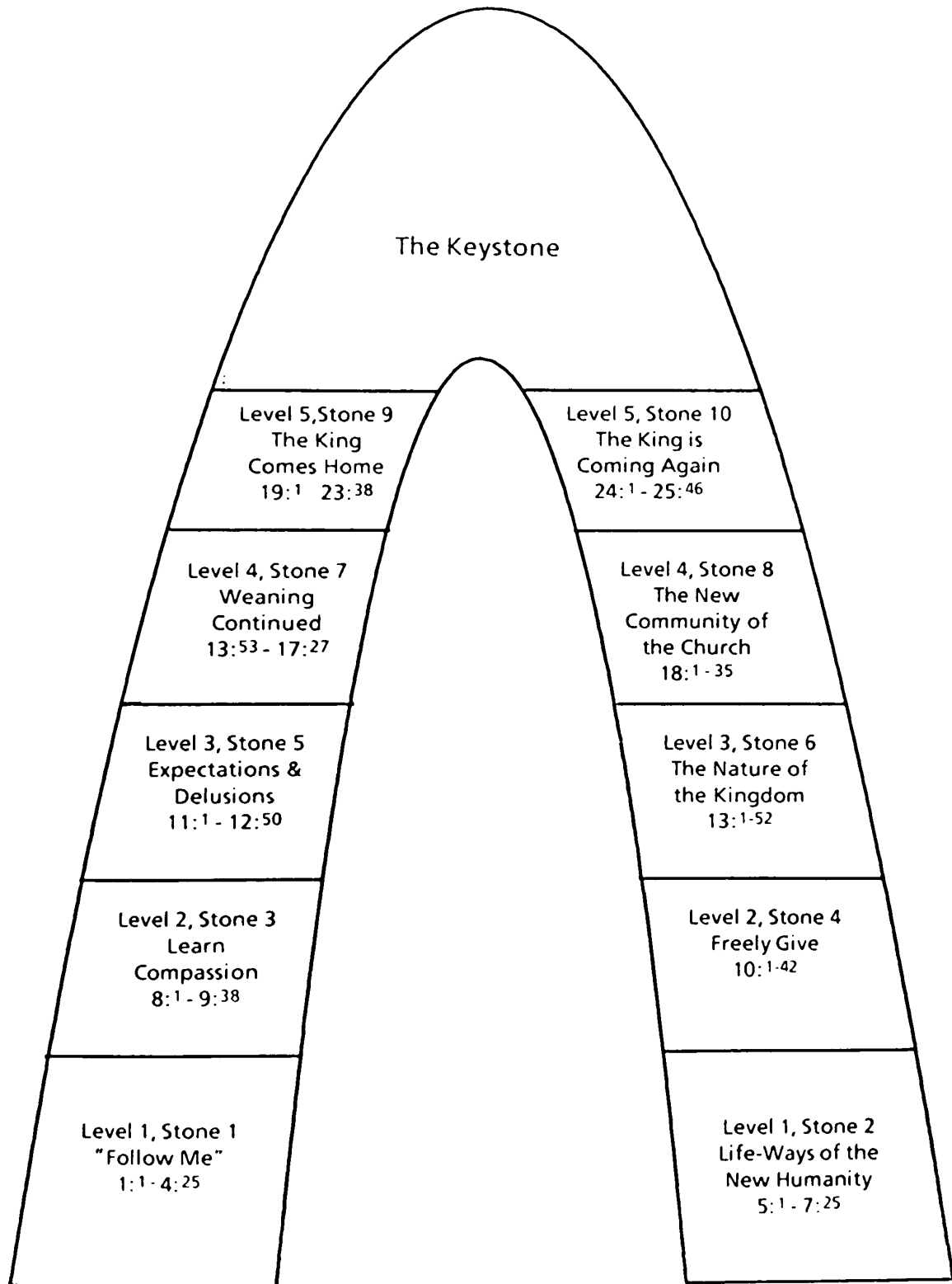
It is not enough to know the information of Scripture. The very blinders we wear filter what we hear from the Holy Spirit. Not that the Holy Spirit is unable to break through those filters. He can and does. Yet the inability to identify those blinders will limit perceptions of God, of ourselves, and of others.

One of the gifts of common grace given by God is the ability to understand some of those blinders. Through the disciplines of psychology, people are able to understand what was once automatic reaction and control it through measured action. It is to one of those disciplines within psychology that this author now turns, seeking for ways in which the response of people to Jesus' transformation within can be augmented. People cannot blindly surge ahead, resting in the confidence of right words and actions (7:21-23). Neither can mouthing Scripture guarantee correctness (4:6). The Christian must take not only

102. Hiebert, p. 28.

the normative words of Scripture but also the descriptive words of human psychology to confirm the deep formation intended by Jesus being shaped within.

The Cross & the Resurrection



The Arch
Figure 1

CHAPTER FOUR

A Theory of Development

For the past two chapters, an attempt has been made to explicate from the Gospel of Matthew both the benchmarks of Christian discipleship and the shape of that new creation which Christians are. However, since it is the deep formation of disciples that is the point of concern, other studies can be used by the Holy Spirit to assist in probing dimensions not explicitly clear in the biblical text. It is to those other studies, most concretely Erik Erikson, that we now turn.

One of the safer assumptions that one can make is that Christians are not the only ones concerned with maturity. Science may not be able to agree on what a normal person should be able to do,¹ yet science will seek to discover answers to the question. For the Christian, some answers will startle, others will calm settle.

Because of common grace and general revelation, Christians understand that they are not the only ones in the universe who are able to discover truth. God's grace has made certain levels of truth

1. Allport points first to Freud who said a normal person should be able to love and work then to Cabot who doubled the list by adding two more: play and worship. "Whether we prefer the first list or the second, our choice is based on ethical grounds, and not on scientific fact. Science alone can never tell what is sound, healthy or good." Gordon Allport, Pattern and Growth in Personality (New York: Holy, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), pp. 275-276.

accessible to the seeker. Joy states that answers to the questions of what are available to all. Christians move beyond mere empiricism, finding in Scripture answers to questions of whence, why and whither.²

However, Christians cannot ignore the data of the senses. The fact that they are more than hunger and thirst does not invalidate their search for food and drink. They need both. They are a unity.³

This chapter will present one of those sets of answers to what, the answers of Erik Erikson. Now in his eighties, Erikson's "Eight Stages of the Life Cycle" enjoys wide acceptance. Not the final word, they provide a helpful mapping of life's contours for normal people.⁴ Determined to "turn psychoanalysis away from fascination with weakness toward detection of strength,"⁵ he provides hopeful realism for one's growing. Not blind to human weaknesses, he nevertheless is a force behind "growth psychology" which is creative, orientated towards the uniqueness of each person, and emphasizes growth. This approach denies

2. Donald Joy ed., Moral Development Foundations (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), p. 23.

3. The current emphasis on holistic understandings can be very helpful and healthy in a culture such as ours which has bought the maxim: the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. Humanity is more than a mere sum. The whole is always more than individual sums.

4. Freud observed and built his theories on problem people. As a result, his insights illustrate the backward pull of humanity. Erikson, on the other hand, observed normal people and illustrates the forward pull.

5. Capps, p. 113.

that adjusting the person to society is the ultimate goal of either. Instead, "this approach works toward freeing those untapped resources and abilities within each person that can lead to a fuller, more thoughtful, more rewarding ways of living (O'Connell, p. 10.) If his view of human maturing and human maturity is true to reality, then it will be of help for the Christian.

Of the many branches within the discipline of psychology, the branch of present focus is developmental psychology. Erikson is neither the first member nor its only member. However, he continues to be a dominant figure.⁶ Hall makes the extravagant claim that "Erik Homburger Erikson is the only thinker to have put forth a coherent theory of personality development that covers the entire life span."⁷

Many psychoanalysts have taken an interest in personality development through childhood and adolescence.⁸ However, of more recent interest is the focus on adult development. Carl Jung can justly be considered the "father of the modern study of adult development."⁹ Dividing life into four large areas, while paying

6. Kohlberg admits that when moving from general characteristics to more individual life experiences, theories such as his begin "to seem limited and abstract. At this point, one begins to draw upon theories such as Erikson's. . . ." Thomas Lickona, ed., Moral Development and Behavior: Theory, Research, and Social Issues (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1976), p. 52.

7. Hall, p. 22.

8. Freud's schema ended with the phallic stage, just prior to adolescence.

9. Levinson, p. 4.

particular attention to the second half of life, Jung gave an understanding of development that did justice to both "internal psychological processes and exterior cultural forces."¹⁰ Since the publication of Childhood and Society in 1950, Erikson has increasingly turned his attention to adult development. Levinson has built on both Jung and Erikson, concentrating on the mid-life decade of 35 to 45. Finally, Stewart has taken Erikson's insights that women's growth differs from that of men, and has applied Levinson's insights to a study of women's adult development.

The central idea of human development is that "anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole."¹¹ Thus all living things have a "life cycle," with a beginning point, an end point, and a series of periods within that cycle.¹² Erikson coined the word "epigenesis" to express his conviction that "the seeds of subsequent life stages are contained in the previous ones."¹³ Wholeness is always a process by

10. Levinson, p. 4.

11. Droege, p. 21.

12. Mehrabian's analysis of development over time has shown four steps in most cycles. A "steady-state condition" is followed by the experience of "cognitive inadequacy." In turn they are followed by periods of "rapid change and development" until another "steady-state condition" is reached (p. 145).

13. Joy, p. 19.

which one's present growth builds, for better or for worse, on all that has gone before.

Growth involves conflict. Different words, such as cognitive disequilibrium or cognitive inadequacy, are used to describe that sense of inadequacy over the present way of handling a situation. Clinebell goes too far when he insists that the "process by which this (growth) occurs is never automatic, always intentional."¹⁴ Levinson and his researchers discovered that the "developmental process throughout a man's life, related not to socioeconomic level, not to profession, not to experiences, not even to intelligence, but to age-related factors."¹⁵ Growth occurs as age-related experiences provides impetus to intentionally deal more effectively with life. Just as infants are no longer content to crawl on the floor when possibilities of walking and running captivate their imagination, likewise past avenues of resolution become inadequate.

Growth involves changes in perception. The many works that have flowed from the pen and the influence of Kohlberg underline the changes in perception that occur in normal development.¹⁶ The process

14. Clinebell, Growth Counseling, p. 158.

15. O'Connell, p. 41.

16. Lying for the pre-schooler is a naughty word. For 6-10 year olds, a lie is something untrue, including mistakes. For children over 10, a lie is anything intentionally false.

undertaken in making decisions, and the definitions one brought to that problem change drastically.¹⁷ The idea of justice begins with the sense of immanence: people who do bad things get caught. Later, justice is filled with the sense of "putting things right" by balancing out the various claims. Finally, justice is an impartial, transcendent issue focusing on the restoration of the offender and the good of the larger number. The actions may be identical with that of a neighbor, yet the reasoning poles apart. We begin life obeying the law because we'll get punished if we don't. We then become law-maintaining, active supporters and upholders of the law. Finally, we make and break laws with an eye for the good of all of society.¹⁸

Erikson's cognitive map of human development discerned eight stages to be transversed.¹⁹ Each stage is characterized by a tension between two poles. The task at each stage involves, not the eradication of one of the choices, but the working out of a "favorable

17. Lande and Slade provide twelve "Dilemmas" with a choice of optional solutions. Each solution is assessed according to Kohlberg's six stages. Nathaniel Lande and Afton Slade, Stages: Understanding How You Make Your Moral Decisions (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).

18. People involved in the Berkeley riots of the '60's were tested against Kohlberg's scale of moral reasoning. The highest percentage of those participating were Stage 6 men and women, followed closely by Stage 2 men. Richard H. Hersh, Promoting Moral Growth from Piaget to Kohlberg (New York & London: Longman, 1979), pp. 96-100.

19. O'Connell provides a helpful charting of the eight stages, complete with age, task, aspects of tasks, what happens if not accomplished, and the lasting accomplishment of successful outcome (pp. 35-37).

balance" between opposites.²⁰ As each stage is resolved favorably, there develops a trait that provides the foundation on which to build the other stages.

Eight Stages of the Life Cycle

Infancy: Trust vs Mistrust --> Hope

"If Hope is the first and fundamental human strength . . . it is clear that the human infant must experience a goodly measure of mistrust in order to learn to trust discerningly, and that there would be neither conviction nor efficacy in an overall hopefulness without a (conscious or unconscious) struggle²¹ with a persistent temptation to succumb to hopelessness."

The first task of human infants is to learn to trust. Completely dependent on others, the parents give the infant the emotional "mothering" that enables the infant to have a will to live.²² If infants are neglected or abused, they "may never learn to trust the world sufficiently to 'grow in grace,'--physically or emotionally

20. "If the crisis of a stage is successfully resolved, the defeated quality doesn't disappear; instead, the balance changes so that there is a preponderance of the positive quality" (Hall, p. 27).

21. Erikson, Adulthood, p. 26.

22. Infants in orphanages who are not held consistently die at an alarming rate. Chimpanzees, when given the choice of a bottle or a warm, furry mass as a substitute mother, prefer the latter.

strong."²³ Everything will not go their own way. Combined with learning to trust is learning what not to trust. To have no mistrust at all is to be gullible.

As children learn to trust, a sense of order and stability emerges which allows them to begin to make sense out of all the sensations of infancy. Finding that center of trust in mother allows freedom to explore, to be hurt, to test; knowing always that someone else can be trusted to be there when sense or no sense can be made of the environment. That basic sense of trust in the face of evil remains as the "source of primal anxiety and of primal hope throughout life."²⁴

Early Childhood: Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt --> Will (Power)

"Will is the unbroken determination to exercise free choice as well as self-control, in spite of early experiences of shame and self-doubt caused by uncontrolled wilfulness and of rage over being controlled."²⁵

As children begin to exercise the possibilities of choice, they learn to let go and to hold on. They become self-willed, taking chances with the trust surrounding them. At this time of toilet training, children gradually learn to control themselves willingly and

23. O'Connell, p. 31.

24. Erikson, Childhood, p. 75.

25. Erikson, Adulthood, p. 30.

by their free choice.²⁶ Firmness must be the hallmark of the parent, protecting the early explorer against the "potential anarchy of his as yet untrained judgment" (p. 80). If all experiences merely underline powerlessness then the child falls back on fake progression or regresses to prior activities.²⁷

At this earliest era of learning the do's and don't's of life, doubt and shame emerge. Shame supposes that one is completely exposed and being observed.²⁸ Doubt, the other side of shame, has to do with the awareness of having a back side, a dark shadow, a "behind." Adult paranoia, with its fears of who and what is hidden "back there" is a signal that shame and doubt have not been placed in a favorable ratio with that sense of autonomy. To develop that autonomy which leads to a sense of self-control without loss of self-esteem, the early trust must be continued. "The infant must come to feel that basic faith in himself and in the world . . . will not be jeopardized by this sudden violent wish to have a choice, to appropriate demandingly, and to -----

26. When this is missing, it can be the source of "later attempts in adult life to govern by the letter, rather than by the spirit." Erikson, Childhood, p. 222.

27. "He will return to an earlier, oral control, that is, by sucking his thumb and becoming whiny and demanding; or he will become hostile and willful, often using the feces (and, later, dirty words) as ammunition; or he will pretend an autonomy and an ability to do without anybody to lean on which he has by no means really gained." Erik Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," Psychological Issues Monograph no. 1 (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), p. 68.

28. "Too much shaming does not result in a sense of propriety but in a secret determination to try to get away with things when unseen . . ." (Erikson, pp. 68-69).

eliminate stubbornly."²⁹

Play Age: Initiative vs Guilt --> Purpose

"Purposefulness is the courage playfully to inquire and energetically to pursue valued goals, uninhibited by the defeat of infantile fantasies, by the guilt they aroused, and by the punishment they elicited."³⁰

The urge to explore comes into its own. Curiosity impels. Forgetting "doing" the walking, children now concentrate on what they can "do with" the walking. Some sense of internal will power has been released, empowering them to develop a sense of purpose. They learn how to play with others, how to plan for tomorrow, what the boundaries of their world may be, and how to begin to cooperate in their world.

Guilt arises from the deep-seated conviction that what children are or do is essentially bad. Sometimes this evidences itself in a great show of tireless initiative, as if what they do can blot out that essential badness. To develop a sense that their worth is tied up in what they do, instead of what they are, is to open them to being inhibited and bound. Infantile guilt can also make children ashamed for mere thoughts and deeds nobody has seen. This may be the

29. Erikson, p. 68.

30. Erikson, Adulthood, pp. 29-30.

cornerstone for the development of individual morality. Yet the "conscience of the child can be primitive, cruel, and uncompromising."³¹ Development of that sense of conscience becomes a struggle.³² Internalizing fundamental values makes it possible to range even further into the world, underscoring initiative according to a developing sense of purpose.

School Age: Industry vs Inferiority --> Competence

"Competence is the free exercise of dexterity and intelligence in the completion of tasks, unimpaired by infantile inferiority."³³

Freud identified this period as the "latency stage, " as the child's intense inner drives are somewhat calm. Still, this is a most important stage socially, as children begin to learn tasks that will enable them to become functioning members of their society. Questions of "how to" surface. Where before, the stages crystallized around other

31. Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 80.

32. "All we know for certain is that the moral proclivity in man does not develop without the establishment of some chronic self-doubt and some truly terrible rage against anybody or anything that reinforces that doubt." Erik Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), p. 223.

33. Erikson, Adulthood, p. 30.

views, here life is approached with the conviction, "I am what I learn."³⁴ Mastery of an increasing number of worthwhile tasks gives "a sense of competence as a person."³⁵ Adjustment is made to the world bigger than parents. Since all such tasks are not done alone, division of labor and sense of whether everyone has the same chance emerge.

However, when repeated failure dogs the steps of the child, a deepening sense of inferiority becomes entrenched. If tools or skills prove inadequate, that reflects wrongly on the child. They abandon a hope of identifying with those who are able to adequately cope with the tools and have the skills. Some overcompensate by becoming too "task-oriented." Others overconform to society. Whatever happens to them, even when good things are praised, cannot dislodge that inner sense of inferiority. The sense of incompetency cripples.

Adolescence: Identity vs Identity Diffusion --> Fidelity

"Fidelity is the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of inevitable contradictions and confusions of value systems."³⁶

With the onset of puberty, the most powerful of the inner drives

34. Infancy: I am what I am given; early childhood: I am what I will; and play age: I am what I can imagine I will be (Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 82).

35. O'Connell, p. 34.

36. Erikson, Adulthood, p. 28.

begins to make itself known.) Sexual maturation with its attendant questions of identity gives adolescence the potential for great good and great evil. All of the samenesses and the continuities of the past are brought up for review. This review makes it necessary for them to "artificially appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play the roles of enemies."³⁷ At issue is the question of whether the emerging person can put together a sense of personal identity,³⁸ that "subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity."³⁹ What is the shape of the "working unity" that takes into account all of life up to now, and redirects the energies for the future?

This identity cannot be forged in a vacuum. Adolescent love is but one of many ways teens strive to understand their own identity by projecting it on to another. The resulting reflection affirms or denies self-understanding. Constant projecting and reflecting enable them to develop a sameness in what they see and what others see. Sameness in clothes, styles, language, and walk reinforces their sense of security while struggling against what has been. "In the struggle to find an identity . . . they try many roles, imitate many persons,

37. Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 228.

38. It was out of his own sense of identity crisis that Erikson began his struggle to understand, not only this crisis, but all others. Growing up with his mother and step-father (as his physical father abandoned his mother before his birth) he chose as his name, not that of his step-father, but "Erik, son of Erik."

39. Capps, p. 281.

and wander through a complex of ideas until they find those that seem best suited to their temperments and personalities."⁴⁰

This stage, as are so many, is filled with both opportunity and danger. For the capacity to commit oneself to someone or something other than themselves is part of the healthy personality.⁴¹ During this period, the person is particularly vulnerable to the demagogue. Ideologies that ask for total commitment⁴² to some absolute hierarchy of values speak to the need of teens to establish identities. Within such a framework, urgent inner questions are given answers by the authoritative other, thus seducing the person from inner, personal struggle.⁴³ Yet men who "wage holy wars" wage them "against those who

40. O'Connell, p. 38.

41. Kilpatrick makes telling points as he compares commitment as seen by Erikson, and transient commitments as projected by Toffler, especially Toffler's 'serial selves' as contrasted with a sense of 'self.' W. Kilpatrick, Identity and Intimacy (New York: Dell Publishing, 1975). p. 29ff.

42. Erikson points out that that total commitment can be to a wide range of possibilities: total obedience to tradition, total resignation, total martial discipline, total inner reform, or total, pragmatic abandon to the processes of production and human teamwork (Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 158. No wonder he coined the word "totalism" to describe this phenomenon (Hall, p. 28).

43. In his studies on both Luther, Young Man Luther (New York: W. W. Norton, 1958) and Gandhi, Gandhi's Truth (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), Erikson describes their unique leadership being possible because their own personal struggles mirrored the struggles of their societies. Their personal struggle gave them insights, credibility and authority in public. Because of their early gifts of hope and trust, they were given the anchor that kept them searching for answers, long after others had quit the field.

seem to question or threaten their unsafe ideological bases."⁴⁴

If this crisis is not negotiated adequately, identity diffusion becomes more pronounced. Instead of a sense of sameness, individuals see themselves as two or more different people. The nerve of continuity is cut through an attempted rupture with their past. Their identity may not become individualized, separate from family. Sexual instability and social immaturity often emerge more sharply. Most pronounced will be their inability to give themselves in faithfulness to another person or ideology.

Young Adulthood: Intimacy vs Isolation --> Love

"Intimacy. . . is, the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises."⁴⁵

Having come to some conclusion as to who they are, young adults are ready for intimacy. Erikson insists again and again that true intimacy is impossible without sureness of identity.* To use intimacy to find identity is to drive into a dead end for intimacies are more

44. Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 158.

45. Erik Erikson, Childhood and Society, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963, p. 263.

than sexual.⁴⁶ True intimacy is the ability to "allow other persons within one's world, to think of their needs, hopes, aspirations, and fears, as well as one's own."⁴⁷ Intimacy is to be able to give one's self fully without fear of loss.

The opposite is the sense of isolation that feeds on distantiating: "the readiness to repudiate, isolate, and, if necessary, destroy those forces in people whose essence seems dangerous to one's own."⁴⁸ Unable to take chances with their own identity by sharing with intimacy, they put distance between the other person and themselves. These people fill life with sensation-seeking and pleasure where the focus is on themselves. Responsibility is avoided. They cannot think in terms of "we," only "me."

Such people cannot understand the deep satisfaction of mutual devotion. Because they live in stereotypes, they cannot see the other as a human being. Because they need to be on their guard at all times lest their territory be taken, there can be no spontaneity. Because of a fear of change, they cannot be readily open to new discoveries or developments. Because of a deep sense of inferiority, they cannot take the chance to reveal who they really are. Hiding behind masks, they

 46. "We make the distinction between 'intimacies' and 'Intimacy' - with a capital 'I.' Sex that is purely recreational involves intimacies. But obviously Intimacy means more for the whole person than intimacies" (Hall, p. 25).

47. O'Connell, p. 39.

48. Erik Erikson, Identity, Youth and Crisis (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), p. 138.

are a shadow of what they could be.

Maturity: Generativity vs Self-Absorption --> Care

"Generativity is primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation or whatever in a given case may become the absorbing object of a parental kind of responsibility."⁴⁹

Adults are now ready for their place in society, helping in the development and perfection of whatever it is the society produces. This parental style of responsibility goes far beyond having children, although that is central. It includes such things as "productivity and creativity,"⁵⁰ where a person cares to do something, or cares for somebody, or takes care of what needs protection and attention, or takes care not to do something destructive.⁵¹ Throughout, the focus is outside the person.

In contradistinction to that is the individual stagnation that comes through self-absorption. Where generativity fails, pseudo-intimacy intrudes, often obsessively. Interpersonal impoverishment becomes a way of life. Growth becomes limited to the

49. Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 231.

50. Erikson, Childhood and Society 2nd. ed., p. 267.

51. Erikson likes the Hindu term: "Maintenance of the world" to describe this stage (Hall, p. 26).

past. Many become "'cog-in-wheel,' automated"⁵² Zest for life becomes replaced by dreary existence.

Old Age: Integrity vs Despair, Disgust --> Wisdom

"Wisdom . . . is the detached and yet active concern with life itself in the face of death itself, and that it maintains and conveys the integrity of experience in spite of the Disdain over human failings and the Dread of ultimate non-being."⁵³

At the final stage of life, it is important to be able to look back on all of it with acceptance that is not fatalism. Without closing eyes to failures and weaknesses, the hills and valleys are surveyed with the sense that it was good. Some sense of order and meaning emerges from the life lived. This new realism recognizes as a given fact the diminishing of faculties and approaching death. Yet, in the face of this, there is also a sense of wonder⁵⁴ that approaches that of childlike wonder. Having left something for following generations, they are ready for death.⁵⁵

52. O'Connell, p. 37.

53. Erikson, Adulthood, p. 26.

54. O'Connell uses the term "luminosity of (the) truly 'wise' person" (p. 37).

55. Erikson (Hall, p. 22) makes a distinction between "Elders" and the "elderlies," the former being those few who have that sense of integrity and wisdom, the latter not.

The other alternative is to give in to despair and disgust. The first bemoans shortness of days still ahead. The latter flagellates because of failures of self, society, God, family, others. Bitterness becomes a constant companion.

The tasks of old age cannot wait until old age. They must occupy a lifetime. "The task of old age is, ironically, the reaping of what one has sown earlier."⁵⁶

"Only a gradually accruing sense of identity, based on the experience of social health and cultural solidarity at the end of each major childhood crisis, promises that periodical balance in human life which . . . makes for a sense of humanity. But wherever this sense is lost, wherever integrity yields to despair and disgust, wherever generativity yields to stagnation, intimacy to isolation, and identity to diffusion, an array of associated infantile fears are apt to become mobilized."⁵⁷

Conclusion

Erikson's "Life Cycle" provides the student of people with a realistic handle to the cycles through which individuals grow, plus

56. O'Connell, p. 40.

57. Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 367.

suggestions for remedial work.⁵⁸ Are those stages analogous to stages through which Christians grow up in Christ? Can Matthew's agenda for making disciples and the life cycle of Erikson be intertwined? Will that intertwining provide both the climate and the content for people to grow in Christ? Can a model be developed that will enable those involved with the "care of souls" to have more adequate diagnostic tools through which the Holy Spirit can work? It is to the outlining of one such model that we now turn.

58. Gleason illustrates each of the stages with a case study, which probes behind the symptoms to the deeper issues involved.

CHAPTER FIVE

A New Model

For Christian Life Development

The attempt to tie in psychological insights with the major truth of the New Testament is not new.¹ Each generation has attempted to take the best insights of its people and apply them to its understanding of the biblical text. Subsequent generations are able to critique their understandings and applications. However, they too bring their biases to the text.

Some students have attempted to take the insights of Erikson and apply them to their own understanding of the Christian life.² The two better ones that have come to the attention of this author are by Gleason and Clinebell. Taking the "Eight Steps of a Life Cycle" of Erikson and turning them into "Eight Steps in Religious Development,"

1. People as widely different as O. Hallesby, Temperment and Christian Faith (n.p.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964); Carl Jung, Psychological Types Vol. 6 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); and Tim LaHaye, Spirit-Controlled Temperment (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1966) have taken the ancient Greek understanding of four basic temperments and applied them to their understanding of theology and individual Christian growth. Most prolific today are those who are taking the insights of Kohlberg and apply them to faith.

2. Even though Erikson did not see religion as an "indispensable ingredient for psychological growth," he did see religion as having a positive psychological function. Peter Homans, ed. Childhood and Selfhood (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 1978).

Gleason uncovers good linkages between the deepening of our faith commitments and practical living.³ Of particular help is Gleason's linking of each step with a major theological doctrine, thus forcing a focus on theological issues. For example, his insights in Chapter Six "Industry and Works" uncovers a theological doctrine of works behind much frenzied Christian activity: the theologically felt assumption that we are "worthless apart from good works and not too convinced of my worth even with good works" (p. 72).

Clinebell, on the other hand, expands Erikson's schema by dividing stages five through eight, ending with fourteen stages of spiritual growth. More of a counselor than a theologian, he offers many enriching insights into the nature of development for the religious person. Writing to a wider audience⁴ than Gleason, Clinebell speaks to broader currents. He does not communicate specifically christological insights.⁵

3. Gleason finds helpful a list of twelve questions developed by Clinebell in Mental Health through Christian Community (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), pp. 30-54, to help separate "mentally healthy from mentally unhealthy religion."

4. Statements such as "profound implications for the programs of churches and temples" show the audience to whom he is writing. Growth Counseling, p. 163.

5. The same can be said for much of Fowler's work. When he is speaking of faith, he is focusing on that inner faculty which develops in a certain hierarchial way that is universally common to mankind. He does not have Christian faith in mind. James W. Fowler, The Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (New York: Harper & Row, 1981).

The following pages will address first the melding of Matthew and Erikson, then the agendas of each stage. As each stage is considered, the biblical result will be presented which arises from the biblical text and the human issues. Definitions for each stage will be offered. As has been mentioned previously, these cannot be thought of as stages through which one passes only once. They are epigenetic. They build on each other. Former blocks never become unnecessary.

To see the Gospel in this way will involve a change of perspective. Mention has already been made to the works of the Dutch artist Escher. So "structurally mixed"⁶ is Matthew that one can see the structure based on the five sermons, or on the formulae quotations, or as a traditional life of Jesus, with 4:17 and 16:21 the two dividing points. Each demands a change of perspective. Each can be seen as true to the original intent of the author.

When this change of perspective was brought to the text, the first attempt to meld the eleven building blocks of Matthew with Erikson's eight stages caused problems. A more careful assessment of content led to the conclusion that this Gospel ends with the beginning of adult ministry for the disciples. They were being released into their lifelong callings as "disciple-makers" of the risen Christ. They were to "take care of their world" in a very specific, special way. Carrying that conclusion across the aisle to Erikson, the Great

6. Gundry, p. 11.

Commission places one on the threshold of "Maturity: Generativity vs Self-Absorption --> Care.

Erikson provided another clue. In his long discussion of the Golden Rule,⁷ he centers his argument on the difference between moral rules based on fear of threats, and ethical rules based on ideals for which to strive. Developing early, moralism is a malignant form of righteousness.⁸ To protect against "his friend's righteousness," Jesus offered the Golden Rule. It is a time of chronic self-doubts. It is a time of struggling with the awareness that all is not well within, that former standards of life are no longer adequate. Matthew 7 fits into the early stages⁹ of learning the do's and don't's: "Early Childhood: Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt --> Will Power."

However, as this author worked with the melding of building blocks and stages, it became apparent that new terminology was needed for the new model. Four inputs assisted in the final decisions on nomenclature. First, from the biological sciences came the concept of a "food chain," where the lower species literally feed the upper species. When links within the food chain disappear, the entire chain is disrupted. Second, from management theory came the idea of a

7. Insight and Responsibility, pp. 219-243.

8. Seen most clearly in 23, yet introduced as early as 5:17-20.

9. This author is aware of Erikson's conclusion: the Golden Rule is experienced best in the context of mutuality, which sound much like "Young Adulthood: Intimacy vs Isolation --> Love.

systems analogy. As each new ingredient is added to the maturing mix, another system is added. Thus, while in childhood only two elements intermix, by adulthood five or six "systems" need meshing. Next, Montague's pointing to Paul's "chain approach in prayer" highlighted the concept of a chain. Using Phil 1:9-11 as example, he sees Paul "indicating that the first gift not only merits the next but contains it. The first gift sets off a chain reaction, as it were, and nothing but a violent resistance to grace could interrupt the process."¹⁰ Finally, the constant reminder of Paul's transformation language made the decision. Commenting on Gal. 4:19, Behm states that "Christ must take form in them. He must in some sense be incarnate afresh in each individual. The nerve of this metaphor . . . is that Christ should come to full growth, to maturity, in the Christian. . . this is a process which is never completed in this aeon, that is is both open and secret, both gift and task."¹¹

Therefore, instead of **stages** in a Spiritual Life Cycle, the terminology will employ **transformation** words. The entire process will be called: **A Transformation Chain**. Within this Chain, are an **Anchor**

10. Montague, p. 214.

11. J. Behm, "Μορφή et al." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. IV, ed., G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967, pp. 753-754. Grundmann makes the same point: "United with Christ, man acquires a share in what Christ is and is thus made like Him. . . this includes a transformation of the being of man . . . Christ will change . . . man in his whole existence." Walter Grundmann, "Συν-μετα et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VII, ed., G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 788.

Bolt, and seven **Links**. The ultimate goal of the transformation is the same as that of Paul in Gal. 4:19: "until Christ is formed in you."

The Transformation Chain

The Anchor Bolt: Conversion

For Erikson, the "first and fundamental human strength" is hope.¹² However, the fundamental reality of spiritual life is not hope¹³ but faith.¹⁴ Yet Erikson may not be far off.¹⁵ Explaining the Old Testament "consideration of faith," Bultmann and Weiser see two "basically different and even contradictory groups of meanings" used for man's relation to God: "fear and trust."¹⁶ Whether using Erikson's trust/mistrust or the Old Testament's trust/fear, both point to the

12. Erikson, Adulthood, p. 26.

13. The noun ἐλπίς does not occur in any of the Gospels, while the verb form ἐλπίζω is found three times in Luke, and once each in Matthew (12:21) and John.

14. Paul encapsulates the gospel that he proclaims in both Jewish and Greek cultures: "They must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus" Acts 20:21."

15. Droege combines the two when he states "that self-realization in relation to God has its roots in promise and its fulfillment in faith" (p. viii).

16. Rudolph Bultmann and A. Weiser, "Πιστεῦν et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. VI, ed., G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968). p. 183.

"living tension and polar dynamic."¹⁷ involved in fundamental realities. Faith cannot be static. Once it becomes static, it dies.

Obviously, not all faith is biblical faith. In recent years, the "'measurement' of religious orientations . . . has been relatively successfully operationalized," resulting in various yardsticks.¹⁸ One of the more helpful is the use of Intrinsic and Extrinsic as "descriptive qualifiers" of an individual's orientation. Extrinsic faith tends to be "self-centered . . . (not) task-centered."¹⁹ Working under "personal feelings of helplessness and futility," these people seek an "externalized, security-giving personal religion that is cognitively restricted."²⁰ Utilitarian instead of intrinsic and personal, the extrinsic religious becomes self-serving and self-protecting.²¹ Intrinsic orientation, on the other hand, comes

17. Bultmann and Weiser, p. 183.

18. Bernard Spilka and Michael Mullin, "Personal Religion and Psychological Schemata: A Research Approach to a Theological Psychology of Religion," Character Potential: A Record of Research 8 (1977): 57.

19. Terry Creagh, "Gordon Allport's Psychology of the Individual: Implications for Pastoral Care," Journal of Pastoral Care 35 (1981).

20. Spilka, p. 60. Chirban reports his findings that extrinsic people rank lower on the scale as charted by Fowler, while intrinsic orientations are "more frequently represented" at the higher stages. John T. Chirban, Human Growth and Faith: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Human Development (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1981). p. 76.

21. Chirban finds that extrinsic people are the "least devout" of all people, as they scored lower in practices such as Bible reading and prayer than even the non-religious group! (p. 34-35).

from within. Stimulated by the received love of God, this orientation has both a high self-esteem and a low sense of powerlessness.²² Faith becomes the means by which their incomplete and divided selves can be unified.²³ With a strong belief in God that is positive, this person can reach out to individuals more freely. One would think that contemporary psychologists were discussing the differences between Jesus and the Pharisees!

The decision to trust Jesus never springs full flower from nothing.²⁴ The original disciples were all part of a religious culture dominated by claims of imminent messiahs. The countryside had been littered regularly with the crosses of those who called Jews to throw off the shackles of Rome, all in the name of God acting through a messiah.²⁵

22. Spilka, p. 58.

23. William James and the American Puritans had this in common: they understood conversion as a means of inner unification (Capps, pp. 281-283).

24. Since 1973, Jim Engel has been using a model of spiritual decision making which sketches six steps between first awareness of a Supreme Being to decision to act for or against Jesus Christ. James F. Engel and Wilbert Norton, What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975).

25. Gamaliel based his plea for moderation on the foundation of remembering revolts and brutal suppression in two separate situations (Acts 5:36-39). A particularly bloody time occurred immediately after the death of Herod the Great.

All disciples must make their decision concerning this man Jesus.²⁶ Is he like all the rest? Will he too disappoint? Will this man ministering in the shadow of John the Baptist be the One? Can he show the way to the Father? Can he be trusted with all of life, here and forever? Will that trust be misplaced? Why don't others trust him? Will I get a sense of stability and order in my universe as I focus on him? Is something missing?

These and other questions impinge on the person deciding to follow Jesus. In some, the struggle to begin to trust Jesus is fierce and long. Yet in the making of that first step, faith is born and the foundations set. The disciple has been converted. Questions will surface and doubts will arise. Many will be the times of weak knees and faint heart. The temptation to give in to hopelessness will not bypass the disciple. Yet as the person develops the habit of deciding for Jesus even when faced with contrary winds, faith builds.²⁷

26. Kennedy lists seven ordinary reasons people receive Jesus: Christian fellowship, love, forgiveness, a Friend in trouble, adoption into a new family, new perspective on life and freedom from fear. D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1977), pp. 74-75.

27. Aden depicts faith as developing according to a definable cycle from infancy to mature age: trust, courage, obedience, assent, identity, self-surrender, unconditional caring and unconditional acceptance.

Biblical Word	ΠΙΣΤΙΣ												
Transforming Link	Faith												
Transformation Chain	Conversion												
Erikson's favorable Result	Hope												
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person												
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs Mistrust												
Matthew's Task	Follow Me	Life-ways of a New Humanity	Learn Compassion	Freely Give	Expectations & Delusions	The Nature of the Kingdom	Weaning Cont'd	New Community Church 18	The King Comes Home	King is Coming Again	Keystone, Cross & Resurr	Great Commission	
	1-4	5-7	8-9	10	11-12	13	14-17		19-23	24-25	26-28	28 ¹⁶ 20	

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

Conversion occurs when trust in Jesus outweighs mistrust, freeing the will to decide to follow him, implanting within the seed of faith characterized by patient, centered trust in Christ.

Figure 2

Link One: God Working In Me

The first question which needs answering after coming to Christ is: "What can I expect God to do in me." Theologically transformation has begun. A new creature has been born. Yet feelings and behavior may not support that statement. Will they go away? Will they get better?

The new Christian faces the double fact of biblical discipleship: God has already begun to do something great within and the old patterns are stubborn. The Holy Spirit has come into the innermost core of a Christian, and through an act akin to spiritual genetic engineering, a new character sketched in the Beatitudes has been implanted.²⁸ The remainder of life in Christ gives opportunity for that newly aligned character to grow and develop "until Christ is formed"²⁹ in us.

The old is not only stubborn, much of it is no longer acceptable. Much as mother no longer makes those smiling cooing noises when changing the diaper of a four year old, so the new disciple begins to

28. Erikson's "favorable ratio" provides a helpful handle in understanding the Beatitudes. For example, the poor in spirit should not be at either extreme: total dependence on God and self-sufficiency. At one end they would be a parasite and the other a pseudo-messiah. Instead, they should be balanced somewhere in between, but firmly on the side of dependence. Yet even the shape of that balance changes over growth. The dependence of an infant is different than the dependence of a teen or an adult.

29. Gal. 4:19.

see that former practices must now be modified. The more they see the large constellation of temptations, the more they question their ability or capacity to change.

The question of ability or capacity resides at the core of what Jesus would have disciples experience. What can God do within? What must the individual disciple do? How do the two work together. Do they possess the power of God because of personal faith in Jesus? If so, how will it be seen individually?

Jesus wants disciples to experience the power of God in their own lives first. They do have the ability or capacity to direct their lives in the direction of their new creation.³⁰ The demands are intensified, not lessened.

Yet to perceive that as a whip is to discern wrongly. The people within whom this new ability or capacity is being created are already the blessed, are already salt and light, are actively experiencing the deeper formation of righteousness, and know that if they act on what they hear their house will stand. There there will be times of failure, but disciples can refuse to give in to the shame and doubt of

30. The New Testament words for power, *δυναμαι* and *δυναμις* are used here in their original meaning of capacity or ability, even though the "important and predominant feature is not force or power but the will which this power must execute and therefore serve." Walter Grundmann, "*Δυναμαι* et al., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. II, ed., G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 291.

their newly discovered nakedness,³¹ standing before the One remaking them with joy. The inner capacities are being enlarged and strengthened in the midst of falling, hurting and failing.³²

31. Paul reassures the Corinthians on the commonness of temptation (I Cor. 10:13). Satan would have one believe in the uniqueness of each temptation, with its attendant unique shamefulness.

32. C. S. Lewis' penetrating insight should be engraved large over this Link: our whole human history "is but the wiping out of a false start in order that the world may then begin a man setting foot on an island, may make a false step. He steadies himself and after that his journey begins. You would not call that steadying of himself a last thing." Perelandra (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 227-228.

Biblical Word	Πιστις	Δυναμις											
Transforming Link	Faith	Power											
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working In Me											
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will Power											
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person											
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs Shame/ Doubt											
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1--4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5--7	Learn Compassion 8--9	Freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11--12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14--17	New Community : Church 18	The King Comes Home 19--23	King is Coming Again 24--25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26--28	Great Commission 28:16-20	

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

God Working In Me produces power, as the disciple becomes aware of being a new creation in the midst of old habits and patterns, and develops new abilities to chart the life they choose to live.

Figure 3

Link Two: God Working Around Me

Lest disciples get preoccupied solely with the one-on-one with Jesus, he takes them out of the classroom into a universe of hurting people. There he will demonstrate mercy and compassion. He will begin to open up new vistas of what this ability and capacity can do outside of their own needs.

Both Micah³³ and Jesus (23:23) agree that mercy is one of the three most important ingredients in the life of faith. Charging his critics with misunderstanding God's will because they allow for the priority of something else other than mercy (9:9-13, 12:7), Jesus will become the incarnation of mercy.³⁴ Mercy must be demonstrated. "Not primarily a disposition but a helpful act . . . or demonstration of assisting faithfulness."³⁵ mercy will take up infirmities, carry diseases, still storms. Long before compassion leads him to pray for more laborers (9:36-38), Jesus will broaden their perspective of what that "invading dominion of God" can do.

33. Mic. 6:8.

34. Of the fifteen uses of the ελεε- family of words in Matthew, twelve of them depend on Matthew's choice (Gundry, p. 643). Gundry's statistical work alone (pp. 641-649) is worth the price of the book.

35. Rudolph Bultmann, "Ελεος et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. II, ed., G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964). pp. 479-480.

Some would-be disciples³⁶ will be attracted to Jesus because of this demonstrated mercy. For them, Jesus has hard words (8:18-22). Whether mercy's pull proved greater than the drawback of the price to be paid, we are not told. We don't know if opening to mercy they were pulled out of their own limits even more, or if shaking their heads over the improbabilities, they inhibited the work of God within.

36. Kingsbury, building from the work of both Foerster and Bornkamm, makes the facinating observation that "Lord" was used only by disciples and those who searched out Jesus on the belief that he can heal and save them. "Teacher," on the other hand, was merely a term of human respect. Applying it to this text (8:18-22) may give a clue as to why Jesus rejected the first man and challenged the second to follow. Kingsbury, Matthew: Structure, Christology and Kingdom, pp. 92, 112-113.

Biblical Word	Πιστις	Δυναμις	Ελεω									
Transforming Link	Faith	Power	Mercy									
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working <u>In</u> Me	God Working <u>Around</u> Me									
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will Power	Purpose									
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person	Basic Family									
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs Shame/ Doubt	Initiative vs. Guilt									
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1-4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5-7	Learn Compassion 8-9	Freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11-12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14-17	New Community Church 18	The King Comes Home 19-23	King is Coming Again 24-25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26-28	Great Commission 28:16-20

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

God Working Around Me produces mercy, as experiencing the breadth of the miraculous compassion of Jesus Christ releases the disciple from limiting what and where God can work, freeing that disciple to take initiative in his name.

Figure 4

Link Three: God Working Through Me

Up to this point, Jesus has been content to leave the disciples in the role of spectators.³⁷ Now ready to confer his authority³⁸ upon them, Jesus commissions them to go out into that whitened harvest field.

The issues are multiple. First is the breadth of that authorization. Unlike the single-note sounded by many communities of faith today, Jesus sends them out with a holistic command: preach, heal, raise the dead, clean the leper, and drive out demons (10:7-8). Whereas today we might not be called by the Lord to raise the dead, still these verses speak to the breadth of God's ability through us.³⁹

Also at issue is the place each will have in the new community. Will they always be spectators? Is there something that they can do for the Master? Will they be trusted with significant work? In the doing of that work, are they poor substitutes or fully authorized to

37. Colson and others bemoan the fact that the American penchant for celebrities has led some to confer instant sainthood on important people who make commitments to the Lord. Importance in one field does not confer immediate maturity in things of the Spirit.

38. Ten times in Matthew the word *εξουσια* is used.

39. Jesus certainly had that in mind when he said, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12).

speak on behalf of Jesus? Do they have "power of attorney?" Realizing that the way people respond to them also parallels the way people respond to Jesus is both an encouragement (10:40ff) and a warning (10:24-25).

By this time disciples have usually developed models of effectiveness. Attempting to identify with those models often frustrates.⁴⁰ When repeated failure accompanies the disciple, a sense of inferiority sets in. The freeing insight for ministry is that we are asked to give only what we have received (10:8).⁴¹ Far from being an intolerable task set before recalcitrant draftees, Jesus here authorizes his disciples to minister as was ministered to them. When they are arrested in the course of ministry, the Spirit of the Father⁴² will give them the right words. Therefore, they are not to worry. Divisions, threats, prioritizing of love, willingness to lose life for the sake of the gospel; these and other factors will be part of the life of ministry.⁴³ Only in this losing will life really be found.

40. "Guilt, for the adult, comes through a violated value and disgust at falling short of the ideal self-image" (Creagh, p. 259).

41. Paul warns the Corinthians about elevating some people because of their gifts. Each is merely a receiver, therefore can take no pride in accomplishment (I Cor 4:6-7).

42. This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit outside the infancy and temptation narratives.

43. Lovelace identifies the fourth primary element of renewal being "Spiritual Authority," that ability to know where and how to stand up to the attacks of the enemy. The development of a practical satanology does not wait until more advanced stages of growing. Dynamics of Spiritual Life, pp. 133-144.

Biblical Word	Πιστις	Δυναμις	Ελεω	Εξουσια								
Transforming Link	Faith	Power	Mercy	Authority								
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working <u>In</u> Me	God Working <u>Around</u> Me	God Working <u>Through</u> Me								
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will Power	Purpose	Competence								
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person	Basic Family	"Neighborhood" School								
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs. Mistrust	Autonomy vs. Shame/ Doubt	Initiative vs. Guilt	Industry vs. Inferiority								
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1-4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5-7	Learn Compassion 8-9	Freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11-12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14-17	New Community : Church 18	The King Comes Home 19-23	King is Coming Again 24-25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26-28	Great Commission 28:16-20

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

God Working Through You produces a sense of spiritual authority, a practiced certainty that, no matter what the obstacles, God's Spirit is reaching through the disciple in an authoritative penetration of compassion into the world.

Figure 5

Link Four: Forging An Identity

One word appears nine times in the Gospel, all between 13:13 and 17:13. Clustered together in chapter 13,⁴⁴ it forms the heart of the concern of Jesus: "Have you understood?" (13:51) The verb form συνιημι means primarily "to bring together" and the noun form means literally, "union."⁴⁵ This understanding is not "a faculty native to man as such. It is the gift of God."⁴⁶

This divinely given gift of understanding is the focus of this stage of growth.⁴⁷ To be able to discern between the old and new, the good and bad, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Beelzebub, the important and the subsidiary, compassion and coercion, demands deepening insights into the nature of reality and their calling. It is a time of heady revelations⁴⁸ and vacuous emptiness, the time of the

44. Six of the nine uses occur in this chapter.

45. Hans Conzelmann, "Συνιημι et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. VII, ed., G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 888-889.

46. Conzelmann, p. 890. Although a gift, the Psalmist exhorts us to pray for it (Ps. 119:34).

47. Matthew also has a preference for Γινωσκω/-ομαι and επιγινωσκω. Ten of the twenty times for the former, and five of the six times for the latter, can be attributed to Matthew's choice (Gundry, pp. 642, 644). Clearly, Jesus is concerned that disciples understand, perceive, know.

48. Peter is quickly rebuked because he does not "have in mind (φθονεω) the things of God" (16:17-24).

unforgivable sin and unbelievable transfigurations. It is a time for thousands to be fed, but crumbs to be withheld, at least temporarily.⁴⁹ It is a time for false gods to be dethroned, even when those gods have the weight of years of religious tradition behind them.⁵⁰

This cannot take place alone. Now, more than ever, the disciples are pulled into a small community of the Twelve, experiencing together the joys and the disappointments of following Jesus. The disciples and Peter continue to test their perceptions with Jesus and each other. Sometimes their understanding delights Jesus; other times their misconceptions angers him. Increasing differentiation takes place as some go to the mountains for the transfiguration and others remain with the troubled crowds.

Out of all that interacting and stretching, grows an increased awareness of who they are. Their identity enfolds both continuity and discontinuity. From that emerging identity comes an ability to commit

49. Jesus' self-limiting (15:21-28) is a sign of maturity, not immaturity. "Only an adolescent can claim the privilege of enjoying all possibility and experience without that limiting commitment which brings us into vital relation with the world of the other. Like Kierkegaard's 'aesthetic man,' he lives in a world of multiple riches yet never tastes real existence." Maurice S. Friedman, To Deny our Nothingness: Contemporary Images of Man (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967) p. 24.

50. Elisabeth Elliot agrees with Wayne Oates in seeing maturity as the process of breaking up ones categories, replacing our images with the living God. Elliot, "Not About Women Only," Christianity Today XXIII, no. 1 (October 1978): 18.

themselves more fully to Jesus. Braggarts they may seem to be, overestimating their ability to remain faithful (26:31-35). The cross remains an enigma. Yet in the struggle to understand, they develop a sense of sameness.

Biblical Word	Πίστις	Δύναμις	ἔλεος	Εξουσία	Εὐνοία							
Transforming Link	Faith	Power	Mercy	Authority	Understanding							
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working <u>In Me</u>	God Working <u>Around Me</u>	God Working <u>Through Me</u>	Forging An Identity							
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will Power	Purpose	Competence	Fidelity							
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person	Basic family	"Neighborhood" School	Peer Groups Out Groups Models of Leadership							
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs. Mistrust	Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt	Initiative vs. Guilt	Industry vs. Inferiority	Identity vs. Identity Diffusion							
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1-4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5-7	Learn Compassion 8-9	Freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11-12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14-17	New Community : Church 18	The King Comes Home 19-23	King is Coming Again 24-25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26-28	Great Commission 28:16-20

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

Forging an Identity occurs when the understanding of the disciple is sharpened in such a way that one's identity in the Kingdom of God transcends the many facets of the individual's identities, faithful to Jesus Christ as the central integration.

Figure 6

Link Five: Faithful Love

Central to the teaching of the parables of the Second Coming of the King is the focus on those who are faithful.⁵¹ Faithful disciples will not be deceived, will understand the signs, will know what to believe, will keep watch with understanding, will have a wisdom to be a good servant over the long-run, will exercise good stewardship, and will exhibit at the last judgment that they have been transformed. No longer goats, they both are and act like sheep.

They have been brought together into a community called the Church. We were created not only for God, but also with the need for community.⁵² That forgiven/forgiving community of sinners in whom the deep restoration is occurring, stands in sharp contrast with the external religiosity of those hearing "Woe". Filled with frantic effort to cover inner deadness, the church of pseudo-faith can never create community, only isolation. Seeing law as something from which one is personally exempt but binding on others, careful always that others see, experts in evading the word of God, elevators of history yet never learning, choosing fear instead of trust, being closed instead of open, stressing conformity instead of individuality, they live as cancer in a

51. All five uses of πιστος in the book are from chapters 24--25.

52. The first "it is not good" in Scripture, stands at the juncture where oneness is not sufficient. A community of two is needed (Gen. 2:18).

colony of stereotypes.

The Old Testament speaks of faithful love as the covenant love of God.⁵³ Not grit-the-teeth faithfulness, but God's full-of-kindness faithfulness. Not faithfulness that faces the cost as a miser, but faithfulness that willingly accepts whatever sacrifices are necessary for the good of the other.⁵⁴ Not faithfulness that lasts merely for days, but faithfulness that reaches past the end point of this age.

Disciples commit themselves in a community which does not squelch individuality. Droege describes with approbation a model proposed by Cassens in which "such a community would be described in terms of balanced polarities: freedom in unity, shared uniqueness."⁵⁵

Faithful love is both individual and communal. Jesus would be alone on the cross. To prepare himself for that test of obedience, he asked for the company of three men to join him in prayer. Jesus knew the community would be shattered by betrayal and fear, yet he called them together for Passover.

 53. The Hebrew word chesed is most commonly translated as "mercy", then "kindness" or "loving-kindness." Both Bultmann, ("Ελεος et al.") and Conzelmann speak of it as active faithfulness in relationships. Covenant grace (Ex. 20:5b-6) is "grace converted into act." Hans Conzelmann, "χαίρω et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol. IX, ed., G. Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 383.

54. Paul speaks of love's constancy in protecting, trusting, hoping and persevering (I Cor. 13:7) and the writer of Hebrews speaks of the joy that accompanied Jesus to the cross (Heb. 12:2).

55. Droege, pp. 98-99. Paul described the Body of Christ both in terms of its unity and its diversity.

Biblical Word	Πίστις	Δουλοῦς	Ἐλεος	Ἐξουσία	Ἐπίγνωσις	Πιστοσύνη						
Transforming Link	Faith	Power	Mercy	Authority	Understanding	Faithfulness						
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working In Me	God Working Around Me	God Working Through Me	Forging An Identity	Faithful Love						
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will/Power	Purpose	Competence	Fidelity	Love						
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person	Basic Family	"Neighborhood" School	Peer Groups Out Groups Models of Leadership	Partners in friendship Sex, Compatibility Co-operation						
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt	Initiative vs Guilt	Industry vs Inferiority	Identity vs Identity Diffusion	Intimacy vs Isolation						
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1-4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5-7	Learn Compassion 8-9	Freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11-12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14-17	New Community: Church 18	The King Comes Home 19-23	King is Coming Again 24-25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26-28	Great Commission 28:16-20

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

Faithful Love is the working out of the disciples' faithfulness to God through a community of Christians, with whom they share a common forgiveness and a centering commitment.

Figure 7

Link Six: Fulfilling My Ministry

Jesus commissions the disciples who have been in training for three years to their life-long ministry: making disciples.⁵⁶ Here on the eve of their adult ministries, Jesus recapitulates some of the major themes of their training: his own authority and centrality, their field of ministry with tasks defined, the means by which the task is to be done, the importance of observing all the commands, and the abiding presence of Immanuel through to the end of the age. Each is being entrusted with their own unique ministry in taking care of the world as representatives of Jesus Christ.

By this time in their maturation process, each Christian⁵⁷ should have found his or her own calling or "vocation."⁵⁸ True callings will

56. Μαθητεω occurs four times in the New Testament. Three of those times occur in Matthew, and all three are peculiar to Matthew (Gundry, p. 645).

57. Passages such as Rom. 12:3 and I Cor. 12:7 indicate clearly the assumption of Scripture: each Christian possesses a measure of faith/gift through which the Body is edified.

58. Paul notion of a call can be seen in passages like I Cor. 1:26, Eph. 4:1, II Thess. 1:11 and II Tim. 1:9. κλησις is a technical Pauline term which points to the "pure act of grace on the part of God" in calling us to himself. K. L. Schmidt, "καλεω et al.," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Vol III, ed., G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 492. Paul specifically identifies his task as apostle as a calling (Rom. 1:1) and the calling of Christians "to be saints" (Rom. 1:7). ". . . in the New Testament, the consequence of the Christian conversion experience is a new sense of mission." Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, eds. Conversions: The Christian Experience (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) p. xi.

find their center in Jesus, take people outside of themselves and face them into taking responsible care of somebody or something.⁵⁹ This "ability to ascertain the true 'calling or vocation' of one's life and then pursue it single-mindedly and creatively"⁶⁰ can often be traumatic. Yet the trauma must be faced in order for the true sense of ministry to be present.

Failure to press on to a genuine sense of ministry may have many reasons, but only one result: stagnation. Falling under the dual weights of powerlessness and uselessness, the disciple withers into bitterness: God is distant, unconcerned about individual human affairs; people can't be trusted; self is a disappointment. Even when the result is not quite so drastic, only empty shells remain of promising beginnings.

59. The question and command to Peter by the lake set the tone. "Do you truly love Me?" If the answer is "Yes," then "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15-17).

60. Roy Carlisle, "The Creation and Vocational Options," TSF News & Reviews 3, no. 5 (April 1980): 2.

Biblical Word	Πίστις	Δύναμις	Ἐλεος	Ἐξουσία	Ἐπίγνωσις	Πίστις	Μαθητεύω					
Transforming Link	Faith	Power	Mercy	Authority	Understanding	Faithfulness	Make Disciples					
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working In Me	God Working Around Me	God Working Through Me	Forging An Identity	Faithful Love	Fulfilling My Ministry					
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will Power	Purpose	Competence	Fidelity	Love	Care					
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person	Basic family	"Neighborhood" School	Peer Groups Out Groups Models of Leadership	Partners in Friendship Sex. Compatibility Co-operation	Divided Labor and Shared Household					
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs Shame/ Doubt	Initiative vs Guilt	Industry vs Inferiority	Identity vs. Identity Diffusion	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Generativity vs Self-Absorption, Stagnation					
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1-4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5-7	Learn Compassion 8-9	freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11-12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14-17	New Community : Church 18	The King Comes Home 19-23	King is Coming Again 24-25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26-28	Great Commission 28:16-20

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

Fulfilling My Ministry is contingent on the disciple's acceptance of the stewardship of their unique calling by God in Christ to minister with the authority and in the presence of Immanuel.

Figure 8

Link Seven: Finishing The Course

Matthew leaves disciples at the threshold of adult ministry. Paul takes them beyond. In words that each Christian should hope to echo, he looks back over his life of ministry. Awaiting death in a Roman prison, Paul has no regrets.⁶¹ Integrity and solid satisfaction, not despair, are his companions. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished⁶² the race, I have kept⁶³ the faith" (II Tim. 4:7).⁶⁴

61. Unless, that is, one points to his lack of scrolls and parchments (II Tim. 4:13)!

62. This word belongs to the same family of words as "perfect" in 5:48.

63. The same Greek word is used in the Great Commission, although translated "to obey" in 28:20.

64. Paul uses the perfect tense in all three verbs to denote a "consummated process." H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (New York: Macmillan, 1927) p. 203.

Biblical Word	Πιστις	Δυναμις	Ελεος	Εξουσια	Ευνημι	Πιστοσ	Μαθητεω	Τελευ				
Transforming Link	Faith	Power	Mercy	Authority	Understanding	Faithfulness	Make Disciples	Complete				
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working In Me	God Working Around Me	God Working Through Me	Forging An Identity	Faithful Love	Fulfilling My Ministry	Finishing My Course				
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will Power	Purpose	Competence	Fidelity	Love	Care	Wisdom				
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person	Basic Family	"Neighborhood" School	Peer Groups Out Groups Models of Leadership	Partners in Friendship Sex, Compatibility Co operation	Divided Labor and Shared Household	"Mankind" "My Kind"				
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs Shame/Doubt	Initiative vs Guilt	Industry vs Inferiority	Identity vs Identity Diffusion	Intimacy vs Isolation	Generativity vs Self-Absorption, Stagnation	Integrity vs Despair				
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1-4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5-7	Learn Compassion 8-9	Freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11-12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14-17	New Community Church 18	The King Comes Home 19-23	King is Coming Again 24-25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26-28	Great Commission 28:16-20

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

Finishing the Course is that settled certainty that the stewardship with which the disciple had been entrusted has been completed within the integrity of grace in deep thankfulness to Jesus, the living center of their transformation.

Figure 9

Conclusion

A model has been presented which has attempted to be faithful to the biblical text of Matthew, with supporting insights from Erik Erikson. Within the double poles of the changeless Word and changing theories of human reality, the agendas for each link of growth for Christian transformation have been shaped from first faith to full maturity.

We must now turn to the hard data of experience. Sixteen adult Christians have, to some extent, allowed their stories to be known. Within the diversities of spiritual life histories, common threads will be culled. The threads will then be compared with the above theory. There is no sense in which this can provide a "proof" for the validity of the theory. That task still remains undone. However, tentative conclusions will be offered, along with avenues of potential further research.

CHAPTER SIX

Design of the Tool

Central to any discussion of theory is the exploration of how the theory fits the facts of human existence. Legion are the times when theories have been challenged by new information.¹ Even time honored theories, e.g., the earth is flat, disintegrate with new information. As new information and insights are perceived, initial theories become altered. Yet no theory would ever come into being had not the initial theory been proposed.

This chapter will describe the designing of the instrument which was used to assess the spiritual life histories of sixteen people according to the model of spiritual growth presented. This writer will then discuss the administration of the research in the next chapter. Findings, tentative directions and conclusions uncovered will be posited against the theory proposed in order to outline the points of congruence, dissonance, further study, and adequacy.

1. Masson has recently challenged orthodox Freudian theory by pointing out Freud's unwillingness to keep with an early discovery that childhood sexual abuse can lead to serious adult neurosis. That unwillingness has badly malformed basic psychotherapeutic practice. Jeffrey M. Masson, The Assault on Truth (n.p.: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1983).

History

Three factors shaped the design of this instrument. First, there was the need for concrete information on the realities of spiritual formation of people whose faith is centered on Jesus Christ as opposed to all other types of growth. More and more, the secrets of spiritual life are being discovered by patient investigations of students of the spiritual life. Allport's "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" as discussed earlier have proved helpful. Allen and Spilka have coined the terms "committed" and "consensual" in the study of religion.² Bloesch described types of spirituality³ while Fowler charted how faith will develop according to an adaptation of Kohlberg's schema. Perhaps most ambitious has been the work of The Association of Theological Schools in their Readiness for Ministry research. Their research has yielded sixty-four characteristics of ministry, which they have divided into eleven major categories, aligned according to four broad categories as to style of ministry. From ecumenical sources such as Alban Institute in Washington, D. C., and many Catholic schools which focus on the development of spirituality, much new information is coming to the

2. R. O. Allen and B. Spilka, "Committed and Consensual Religion: A Specification of Religion-Prejudice Relationships," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 6 (1967):191-206.

3. Donald Bloesch, Crisis of Piety (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968).

surface. Both Kao⁴ and Carter⁵ ask what it means to be mature. However, no information was found to have direct application in the evaluation of the proposed model.

The second factor which determined the design of the instrument was the Congregational Reflection Group (CRG) of Perinton Community Church. Meeting since September of 1982, the CRG raised many questions and made the ultimate decisions on design. By the December meeting, they were raising many questions. Was spiritual life developmental or random? Were the factors of spiritual life stairs to be ascended or pieces of a pie to be consumed? Was the Christian life a deepening spiral or a straight line? What were the differences between maturity and maturing? Which would be the focus of our endeavor? How can spiritual life development mesh with human development? Which sets the pace? Can the work of the Holy Spirit be objectified? What was the place of a sense of ministry in growth?

Throughout the spring of 1983, other questions surfaced as the CRG struggled over questions of design and suitability. Initially, a research instrument was to be designed to help the individual disciple of Jesus know where they were in their Christian growth. Favorably

4. See Charles Kao, Search for Maturity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), and Psychological & Religious Development: Maturity & Maturation (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1981).

5. John D. Carter, "Maturity: Psychological and Biblical," Journal of Psychology & Theology 2 (1974): 89-96.

impressed with the design of the Readiness for Ministry package,⁶ two instruments began to be crafted. The first would be a self-administered instrument, and second instrument would be completed by three other people⁷ on behalf of the person. For the first, seventy-six questions were designed around real life situations across a wide range of experiences. The CRG was to take those seventy-six situations and suggest various responses that could be made. Those responses would be charted against the Links. Two examples were given. Example 1 was, "A colleague at work is getting rave notices for an idea that originally was your idea." Under that example were seven possible responses, ranging from doing nothing to going to the boss. The individual would indicate whether each response would be very unlikely, unlikely, likely, or very likely. The second instrument was to be designed as a second step.

As the CRG met in their April 1983 meeting, the common consensus was that the use of this instrument was not the direction in which they should go. A second meeting was called for April, and still no decision could be reached except that the instrument should be designed more for the discipler than the disciple. In May, the suggestion was made to adopt a less structured approach to exploring the experience of

6. Three separate tests were administered. First, a modified case study approach in which the respondent circled probable actions in situations, then an adaptation of that instrument which was to be filled out by lay people within the church context as to their perceptions of how the respondent ministered, and finally, a tape interview.

7. A Christian friend, a family member, and a work colleague were suggested as the three people.

growing in Christ. That suggestion met with full acceptance. This researcher was asked to prepare sets of questions around each of the Transformation Links as proposed in the model. These questions would be answered individually by the members of the CRG and our group sessions would be devoted to the sharing of those insights.

The third factor in the design of the instrument was the freely acknowledged dependence on the Holy Spirit to speak through the CRG. Meeting as present day disciples of Jesus in His Name, agreement was unanimous that the decision process was more than human engineering. The Holy Spirit speaking through the group would be the final arbitrator as to what we could do and what should be done. Thus, by May of 1983 there was the unanimous sense of direction which satisfied both external concerns and inner witness, and the CRG committed themselves in that direction.

Three other decisions were made in the design and should be noted. One was that only six of the eight Links would be handled in the above fashion. Since the focus was on growth,⁸ conversion was not addressed. Also, since we did not have people who were in the final

8. We have known since 1933 that "the motives with which men turn to Christian faith play a smaller part in developing Christian character than good postbaptismal care." See Donald McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 326. The parable of the sower (13:3-9) also underlines the primary importance of what happens after the seed germinates. Thus although exploration into the beginnings are important, they were set aside for the purposes of this research.

stage, we eliminated this from consideration. Secondly, the six links were not considered in sequential order, but in random order. This was to make it more probable that each would be looked at individually, not as a step in a process. Third, both the CRG and the Colleague Group (CG) were to work through the same process, giving the additional possibility of noting any differences in perceptions between professional Christian pastors and counselors as compared to the perceptions of the Christian layperson.

The Instrument

Link One: God Working In Me was designed to proceed in the following directions. From Erikson came the concerns to ask questions of early significant context of people and environment, plus questions of expectations and dissonance, and the questioning of the present sense of what God is doing within. If these factors are epigenetic, then there needs to be a continuing sense of the inworking God. From the biblical text came the concern to probe expectations and sense of dissonance, but in the context of what sense God expected of you, and how early the sense of being different occurred. Recognizing those early days could not be recalled with pristine clarity, a "looking back" question was added.

This first link was explored as the second assignment through the

following seven questions:⁹

1. What were the dominant factors in your first few months as a Christian?
2. Who were the dominant people in your first few months as a Christian?
3. What were your initial expectations of what God was going to do in and for you?
4. In what areas did you experience dissonance between what you thought was expected of you and your former patterns of life?
5. How would you describe the "new" in your first few months as a Christian?
6. As you look back on those early days as a Christian,
 - What have you left behind?
 - What have you gone beyond?
7. Describe your present sense of what God is doing in you.

The questions for **Link Two: God Working Around Me** were designed to probe the awareness of if and how God worked outside their own set of personal needs. Input from Erikson was limited to the elements of dissonance, surprise, and the effects on a person's spiritual life. The biblical categories of the unmistakable working of God in "outsiders" took precedence.

The eight questions to explore the experience of Link Two were:

1. Describe your early awareness of God actually making a difference in people around you.
2. After you became a Christian, when did you notice what God was doing in other people, and what affect did it have on your spiritual life?

9. The following order was taken in the assignments: 1 - Link 3; 2 - Link 1; 3 - Link 6; 4 - Link 4; 5 - Link 2; and 6 - Link 5.

3. What were some of your inner feelings and impressions when you began to see that authentic faith was present in people who did not belong to your church or religious tradition?

4. Clarify your early expectations as to what God could do in the world.

5. Sketch one or two specific instances where you perceived that God was unmistakably at work in other people.

6. What were some of your early surprises as you watched God's action in the world?

7. What were some of your early disappointments as you watched God's action in the world?

8. In what ways has it been increasingly difficult or clear to identify God's hand in the world?

The first assignment of the CRG and the CG probed **Link Three: God Working Through Me**. Only four questions were designed inasmuch as it was not yet clear what type of questions would elicit adequate responses. The expectation that general questions might elicit much discussion proved inadequate. As both the author and the two groups worked through the process, it became more obvious that the more specific the questions, the better the information received. Only one of the four questions probed history, again an indication of start-up. The three other questions would deal with present senses, thoughts, and helps. Separating the input of both Erikson and Matthew in these four questions is futile as their design was to examine the concrete sense of **God Working Through**, not its deeper dimensions.

The four questions designed to research Link Three were:

1. What were your first experiences sensing God working through you?
2. What is your present sense of the extent God is working through you?
3. What experiences and/or teachings help you understand

God's working through you?

4. What experiences and/or teachings do you think would have been helpful to you?

Seven questions were offered to assist in the researching of **Link Four: Forging An Identity**. Amid the questions of fashioning integrating frameworks, the demands on sustaining loyalty and obedience, and the handling of doubts, Erikson is very much in evidence. Matthew adds the emphases on difference from parental faith, centering on Jesus, and the sense of whether the demands of Jesus fit well. Of special importance comes the question of putting together a framework that includes both sacred and secular from the definition of identity as the sense of sameness.

The seven questions with which identity was uncovered were:

1. Describe your journey as you have been fashioning a framework which includes both the secular and sacred segments of your life.
2. In what way (and how did it happen) is your understanding of the Christian faith and life different from that of your parents?
3. Comment on the statement: "Jesus Christ is the integrating center of my life."
4. Jesus Christ is our Savior. When, and what effect did it have on you when you struggled with the fact that He demanded obedience and loyalty?
5. How well-fitted to your strengths and weaknesses are the demands of Jesus on you?
6. Reflect on your ability and desire to sustain a loyalty to Jesus Christ no matter what the contradictions, confusion, or confrontation encountered.
7. How did you handle your doubts after you came to faith?

For this researcher, designing questions around **Link Five: Faithful Love**, were the most difficult. Perhaps this is why the questions are more wordy than the others. From Erikson came the streams of interdependence, stereotyping, perceived threats, vulnerability in reaching out, the urge to fortify and levels of commitments. From the biblical text came the determination to make the church the context for many of the questions. Lacking in these questions are any which probe a sense of intimacy with the Lord of the Church: Jesus. The author's present inability to discern the differences between the vertical and horizontal intimacies, their interplay, and their optimal health, played a part in this deficiency.

The eight questions which were designed to look at the issues of intimacy were:

1. Describe your sense of interdependence with other Christians.
2. Where do your relationships within the Body of Christ tend to be stereotyped, and when naturally you?
3. In what situations within the Body do I tend to find my sense of value as a person in Christ threatened?
4. In a recent experience of failing to live up to your spiritual expectations of yourself, what were some of your feelings, fears, hopes, certainties?
5. Describe your journey as you reach out to someone who is hurting. Center especially on your inner motivations as you left comfortable surroundings to venture out for someone else.
6. What tendencies are there in you to fortify your spiritual territory against all comers? E.g., over-magnifying small differences?
7. What is the group of Christians who have your deepest commitment and how would you describe your level of commitment to them?
8. Talk about your past and current commitment to love others as Christ has loved you.

The sixth set of questions were designed around Link Six: **Fulfilling My Ministry**. The formation of this set involved little dependence on either Erikson or the biblical text. Only generally was Erikson's sense of "taking care of the world" important. Were these questions to be redesigned, assessing an individual's sense of responsibility would be important. The biblical call to "make disciples" was translated into the more general term, "ministry." The sense of having a ministry, whether it keeps one growing in Christ, its core and its future, were the central concerns in charting these questions.

The seven questions which clustered around the sense in which each person was fulfilling their own ministry were:

1. What is your present sense of ministry as it relates to your church connected life?
2. What is your present sense of ministry as it relates to the rest of your life?
3. Chart the changes in your ministries from your first efforts to now, noting especially what has changed and what has stayed the same.
4. What kind of ministry tends to be "busy work" and what kind of ministry tends to keep you growing up in Christ?
5. To what extent is there a settled core of ministry that does not change with the task at hand?
6. How would you describe the "call of God" on your life to undertake your ministry?
7. If you could write the script, what would you like to be doing in ministry in five years? What would you like to be happening inside you as you ministered?

A "final" set of three questions were asked around the developmental agenda of sequence. Because of the random nature in which

the links were handled, nowhere in the process of research was there opportunity to address this issue directly. In earlier meetings of the CRG, time lines of spiritual experience were shared. However, as there was minimal understanding of the above model at that time, there was no way to interact critically with question of sequence.

The first question asked the respondent to identify the most attractive point. The assumption behind that question was that of developmental psychology, that the next immediate Link is most attractive. The other two gave opportunity to reflect on their own histories in light of the model. So that there would be no confusion, the Spiritual Life Cycle¹⁰ was placed on the margin of the questions.

At the point of this report, no opportunity has been made for group discussion of the questions. Instead, they have been individual input via a written instrument.

The three questions were:

1. Which Point in the Life Cycle is most attractive to you right now? Why?
2. Where would be your best guess as to where you are on this life cycle. Why?
3. How has your experience of growing in Christ been illumined, illustrated, confused, etc., by this model?

10. The assignment identified this Chain as a "Spiritual Life Cycle," reflecting the lateness of the change of nomenclature from "Stages" to "Spiritual Life Cycle" to "Transformation Chain."

In the closing days of writing the report, it became obvious that more concise information was needed. Thus a "Final Final" assignment was sent to the participants, asking for specific information arranged along a time line. Using conversion as "0" they were asked to place above the time line significant spiritual history benchmarks, and below the line Roman Numerals identifying the Links. It was also at this point that names were assigned to the random numbers already identifying the participants.

Conclusion

As each of the sets of questions was evaluated, with their genesis elaborated, it became clear that "next time" some changes would need to be made. Sometimes a heavier dependence on the biblical agendas should be fostered. Lordship issues (19-28) were not adequately investigated. Other times, the human dimensions as explicated by Erikson are minimal. We are both human and spiritual: both interpenetrate each other, both facilitate health or weakness.

Keeping in mind the limitations and strengths of the above instrument, we need to go next to the administration of the research. Chapter Seven will sketch how the research was carried out in actuality, along with suggested changes in the administration of the instrument. Chapters Eight and Nine will look at the findings of that

research. Chapter Ten will present the conclusions of the author, along with suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Administration of The Research

Between the beginning design of a research project and its final design, adjustments often must be made. The research pool is sometimes changed. The research instrument reflects more current thinking. Sometimes the information needed or the principal focus of the research changes. For example, early in the process of making decisions, consideration was given to designing a tool that would be the foundation for a longitudinal study. When that was no longer a consideration, then more freedom could be given to other directions.

This chapter will sketch the history of how the research project itself was conducted, along with ongoing critique that occurred. When the initial instrument was first designed, the projected scope was much larger. At first, the majority of the adult worshippers at Perinton Community Church were to be the pool out of which information elicited. The small group network was going to be the means through which the research was carried out.

However, as it became clear that a large questionnaire creating a massive data base was not the way to proceed, the method of implementation also changed. As was indicated briefly in the previous chapter, two separate groups were set up to be parallel places from which information was to be gathered. The smaller group, the CG, was

made up of ministers and Christian counselors. The larger group, the CRG, was comprised of lay people from Perinton Community Church, chosen to reflect the age and experience diversity of the congregation.

Throughout the process, for various reasons, the makeup of each group changed. A total of twenty different people were involved, six in the CG and fourteen in the CRG. Of the six in the CG, four had verbal input into all the research, a fifth person came in on the second session, and the sixth moved to another city before any of the data was gathered. Of the fourteen in the CRG, three had to drop out before the data gathering stage. Two others left the group early in the research, with a third person leaving late in the research. Two were added after the third data gathering session to replenish the group. Thus, of the twenty different people, eleven had input throughout the entire process, five had partial input, and the other four had none. In terms of written input, four responded in writing to all seven assignments, five to five or six assignments, four to three or four assignments, and three only responded in writing one or two times.

In order to have as complete an information base as possible, a series of separate yet interrelated directions were set. First, each member of both groups was given the list of questions prior to their meetings. They were to reflect on the questions and write their answers from their remembered experiences. Second, the major amount of the group time would be to talk together about those experiences, to

see if the commonality of those would spark memories. Third, the sessions of the CRG would be taped, and transcripts typed from each of them, in order to insure completeness of recall. The CG was not taped, as these sessions were breakfast meetings in a restaurant and the background noise prohibited taping. Four, the two groups would not be brought together, even though they were working on the same material. This made possible an additional level of interaction, with two separate groups working through the same material. Part of the task of the next chapter will be to discern the differences, if any, between the two control groups. Fifth, a master compilation of the written answers would be made and given to both groups. In order to help confidentiality, numbers were assigned randomly to the sixteen people who participated in the research. Finally, each group would interact with the combined data in order to find common threads.

Throughout the process of researching, a problem recurred. Even though steps had been taken early to make the participants aware of the model being presented, that was not sufficient. Especially after starting to answer the questions, other questions continued to be raised as to where they fit into the model. Because there was the need to keep the answers from being prejudiced by the model, no further information was given until the meetings themselves. For example, when dealing with identity, the dual data from Matthew and Erikson was not presented again until the start of the meetings. That gave context for the group's discussion, yet did not alter each individual's

information.

Administration

Since the Links were not taken in sequence, the following will deal with them as they were assigned. However, in Chapter Nine, they will again be put in the order of the model, so that the information can be considered sequentially.

The first assignment was with **Link Three: God Working Through Me**. The CG met first, on July 14, with the CRG meeting on the 21st. Coloring the discussion at both meetings was the fallout from a major fire at the church building on Sunday, July 3. By the time of the CRG, it was obvious that the responses of the author and others in leadership had been inadequate in the eyes of some. Ultimately, within a week of this meeting, two of the members of the CRG, along with a number of other people, felt led to leave the fellowship and start a house church. Obviously, those pressures affected both meetings, even as they attempted to deal with the assignments.

The CG met for approximately two hours with four members present. Instead of going through the questions one at a time, a more general time of sharing of insights was held around the theme of God working through them. In direct contrast, the eight members of the CRG dealt

with the questions in sequence, each person being given opportunity to respond to each question. The second method gave much more hard information, allowing the quiet ones to participate more fully. In the three-hour meeting of the CRG, the number of responses ranged from sixty (by the author) down to seven.¹ Four people were responsible for fifty-five percent of the dialogue, with the author participating twenty-six per cent of the interchanges.² Most of the interaction occurred between the author and various respondents. Three extended exchanges occurred between three different pairs. Much use of laughter was evident, with clarifying responses and leading questions being employed.

The second assignment covered **Link One: God Working In Me**. The CRG met first on August 11 and the CG on September 8. The first portion of the meeting of the CRG devoted itself to critique of the questions. The words "most/more important" would have been preferred over "dominant" in questions one and two. "Initial" was too precise for question three, while "early" would give a better sense. In question four, "dissonance" should have been replaced words like "tension" or "conflict." Question six was difficult to answer for people who had

1. The responses in decreasing order of frequency are sixty, thirty-nine, thirty-three, twenty-nine, twenty-eight, twenty, ten, nine and seven.

2. These figures were computed on frequency of responses, not their extent. To provide another measure, lines could have been counted for each interchange.

been Christians since early childhood. Finally, each set of questions should have instructions which allow for not answering. As it reads presently, respondents may feel pressure to put something down, and thus "invent" answers.

Proportionately less time was spent on the assigned questions, as two members of the CRG got into an extended discussion on dependency issues, what it meant to be mature and the nature of lordship. Much less need was sensed for questions and clarifying responses. Neither was there as much laughter. Instead, the focus was the seventh question, the sense of what God was doing in them presently. Again, the range of responses was great, with the author responding sixty-five times, all the way down to a single response.³

The tack of the CG differed. Each person discussed their responses to the entire list of questions, before the next person responded. That gave a better sense of each person, but less clear sense of how each question was answered. At the end, a new question was asked: "What is the one statement you would want to make to a brand-new Christian?" It was decided that that same questions should be asked of the CRG.

The third assignment turned the groups toward the **Sixth Link: Fulfilling My Ministry**. Six members of the CRG met September 14 and

3. The responses, in decreasing order of frequency were sixty-five, thirty-six, twenty-seven, eighteen, seventeen, fifteen, nine and one.

five members of the CG on September 29. The CRG spent the first hour discussing the question stated above by the CG. The format differed, as each person responded to all of their answers. This was particularly fruitful as it gave the less assertive or introverted people an equal time to share. The discussion, charted only for the time spent discussing the seven questions of this Link, exhibited more balance than previously. Ranging from twenty-nine to five responses,⁴ three people participated equally in seventy percent of the conversation. Two questions were suggested as additional ones to be considered for this Link. First, "What was your pilgrimage to the discovery of your ministry?" Second, "How were you first made aware of the fact that you should have a ministry?"

Most of the discussion of the CG centered around the nature of ministry itself, as the answers of the group had all been recorded on their assignment sheets. Is there a being/doing dichotomy? How early can the core of ministry be identified? Is ministry synonymous with witness and service? Which words might be preferred in this context? This session exhibited a shift of emphasis, as they became a group to also reflect on and respond to the work of the CRG.

The fourth assignment asked questions of the fourth Link, **Forging An Identity**. Seven members of the CRG met on October 12 and all five

4. The responses, in decreasing order of frequency, were twenty-nine, twenty-seven, twenty-six, fifteen, nine, nine and five.

members of the CG met October 20. The decision was made to start the discussion at the CRG with question three, allowing the discussion to go on from there. This was the first session with two new people. Of the three hundred and thirteen exchanges,⁵ approximately a third of the exchanges were by the author. Uncharacteristically, the two who had forty-five and forty-four responses had not been that dominant in any of the other, or subsequent meetings.

The CG again used the questions more as springboards, as the answers had been written. Much discussion revolved around the biblical basis for this Link in Jesus' understanding of the yoke he was offering. The other major focus of discussion moved into the area of how to develop identity, character formation, legalism and demanding love.

The fifth assignment went back to the second Link, **God Working Around Me**. The CRG met on November 9 with the CG meeting the next morning. Again, seven and five members, respectively, were part of the discussions. The transcript of the CRG session showed two hundred and eighteen exchanges.⁶ Structuring the discussion a bit more tightly,

5. The responses, in decreasing order of frequency, were ninety-nine, sixty-eight, forty-five, forty-four, twenty-eight, seventeen, seven and five.

6. The responses, in decreasing order of frequency, were fifty-six, forty-four, forty-two, twenty-five, twenty-three, sixteen, twelve and none. This was the first time that a person made no responses throughout the three hour discussion.

the questions were taken in sequence. Question five was not verbally worked over, due to lack of time. The first half of the session reflected larger answers by people, instead of quicker dialogical repartee. One concern of process was that there seemed to be too much laughter, it being used as a foil to keep from serious grappling with some issues or people. Another concern was that clarifying responses have given way, in some cases, to correcting responses. That shut off some of the discussion that involved more openness.

The CG's discussion did not center directly on the questions, but on a larger issue of being able to recognize the hand of God in the world. People need to develop the spiritual capacity to recognize God's hand at work, while not needing it to bolster faith. They recognized the normal possibility that sometimes one gets so used to seeing God at work that it is virtually unrecognized.

The sixth assignment questioned the facets of **Link Five: Faithful Love**. Four members of the CG met on December 8, a week later than the meeting of seven members of the CRG. Two hundred and ninety-two interchanges were recorded in the meeting of the CRG.⁷ Four people accounted for eighty-five percent of the conversation. Many of the members of the CRG had difficulty dealing with these questions, as reflected by the many blanks to the questions. Most difficult were

7. These responses, in order of decreasing frequency, were eighty-three, eighty-two, forty-five, forty, twenty-one, sixteen, four and one. The person with one response came late to the meeting.

questions five and six. Even after a lengthy description of this Link, in both its biblical and psychological bases, difficulty was still encountered. The discussion started with the final question, moving back to the first question and worked sequentially. In the absence of the chairman, another member assumed the role of communication facilitator.

Except for handing in the completed answer sheets, the CG did not deal directly with this set of questions. Instead, they dealt with the larger issue of the model and its biblical moorings.

A seventh assignment was mailed to all members, with no intention of making group discussion part of the input process. Instead, they were to be filled in personally, and mailed back. This allowed time for private reflection on personal issues of sequence. Answers were both phoned into the office, and sent back by mail. One respondent accompanied his answer with a more detailed essay on his spiritual life history.

The final assignment was also mailed to all the members. On it, the participants were given opportunity to arrange their spiritual life histories along a time line, with zero point being their conversion. Answers were received in writing.

Conclusion

A concerted effort was made to provide a relaxed atmosphere in which trust could develop and in-depth sharing occur. In order to provide that, the meetings were held in homes or at restaurants. Structure was kept to a minimum, in order not to intrude on the flow of the conversation.

At times, the atmosphere and/or structure did not allow for deeper probing. Opportunity should have been structured for individual follow-up of some of the questions. However, adequate information was gleaned through the process, as the following chapter shows.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Findings of Research: Case Histories

The purpose of this study has been to "understand ways in which the Holy Spirit has led sixteen adult Christians toward various points of maturity in Christ as seen through a speculative model of Christian growth" (p. 2). Toward that end, the first five chapters laid the theoretical foundation. The next two chapters covered designing and administering an instrument. The purpose was not to design a research instrument that would be validated in such a way that it could be replicated in other contexts, but to design questions which would enable the respondents to get in touch with how the Holy Spirit has led them over against the model proposed.

These next two chapters will focus directly on understanding the ways the Holy Spirit has led. This chapter will use the format of case histories, using randomly assigned numbers and names assigned according to their sex, to condense the spiritual histories of the sixteen people. Throughout, their reporting of their spiritual benchmarks will be held against the Transformation Chain, with congruences and anomalies being noted. Chapter Eight will take the information, collate it according to the individual Links, and assess the information. After looking at the information from two perspectives, the issues of development and growth can be evaluated. However, one

cannot generalize from a sampling of sixteen to the Christian population at large. That task remains for a future time.

In order to assist in the understanding of this chapter, the following nomenclature will be used:

Link I	God Working In You
Link II	God Working Around You
Link III	God Working Through You
Link IV	Forging An Identity
Link V	Faithful Love
Link VI	Fulfilling My Ministry

"Alan" - [1]

Alan is a pastor in his late thirties, married with two children. Raised in a Methodist Church, he became a Christian at a camp as a teenager. For four years he was director of the Teen Challenge ministry in Rochester, before accepting the call to pastor a Conservative Baptist Church in a suburb south of Rochester. After relocating once during the ten years he has been pastor of that church, which is made up of both those from a baptist background, and those wanting more "charismatic" expression. He has served five years as President of the Greater Rochester Association of Evangelicals. Presently, he is working on a masters degree in counseling.

Prior to his actual conversion, Alan perceived a call to ministry. He experienced the first three Links almost immediately

after conversion, being aware of what God wanted of him and seeing other teens being led to Christ through his testimony. Within three years of conversion, he experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, accompanied with the visible sign of speaking in tongues. Within six years, he was directing the work of Teen Challenge. During this time of very effective youth work, the issues of Link Four surfaced. Approximately ten years after conversion, he left Teen Challenge to accept a pastorate. At the same time, the Love Commandment came alive and was to be the focus of his ministry. Thus Link Five became a reality, eleven or twelve years after conversion.

At approximately the same time, questions of the inner validity of his own ministry surfaced. The Love Commandment still rang true, but had lost its vitality. The cornerstones on which the ministry had been based were being questioned. People with whom he had ministered still did not understand. Thus, for some four years, there had been a struggle to renew his commitment to his particular ministry: discipling and small group work within the context of a worshipping congregation. Only now has that inner sense become full again. That ministry that began when he had been in Christ only six years, has been sharpened, challenged, and reaffirmed as his.

In summary, Alan's spiritual life history, when charted against the model presented above, has this pattern.

Conversion: Late Teens
Link One: Immediately

Link Two: Immediately
Link Three: Immediately
Link Four: Seven to Eight Years after Conversion
Link Five: Eleven Years after Conversion
Link Six: Fifteen Years after Conversion

"Barry" - [2]

Barry is in his mid-thirties, married with two children. Employed by Kodak, he is also active in church leadership positions, Scouting and Little League Baseball. Raised in a Methodist church, he became a Christian in fourth grade. In that context, he was raised with low expectations of what God wanted to do in him, i.e., basically to be a good citizen and live cleanly.

Within a couple years of conversion, he saw God working around him, through church related people such as his pastor, youth leaders and camp leaders. In college, contact with Campus Crusade sharpened both first links, but it was not until after moving to the Rochester area eleven years ago that he experienced the stronger sense of what God was doing in people around him. Therefore, the consistent input of seeing God working around him did not occur until fourteen years after conversion. Consequently, even though there was church contact throughout that time, low expectations of what God wanted to do, coupled with low visibility of what God could do, led to marginal but real Christian reality.

Even though he accepted tasks within PCC that he fulfilled with competence, Link Three did not become a reality until he felt "called" to teach children in the Sunday School. That was twenty years after conversion and six years after becoming a real part of the church. In his case, he identified the critical place of feedback to reinforce this sense of God working through him, as the acceptance of the task had come as an instinctive response to a request to pray for teachers. The other strong input during this time was to see God working through him in teaching his children about God, Jesus, and prayer.

Within the last year or two, Barry has been struggling with the issue of Link Four. It has become much more important to be the same person when he returns home, as he is at work, as he is in church. There is gradual but certain intergrating of the sacred and secular segments of his life, alongside a growing ability to be loyal to Jesus Christ in more situations.

Barry also articulates clearly that none of these Links has disappeared, but that they remain, growing stronger. As his perception grows of what God wants to do in him, his sense of identity changes.

In summary, Barry's spiritual life history, when charted against the model, has this pattern.

Conversion: Ten years old
Link One: Immediate, but weak
Link Two: Two years after conversion, but weak, spasmodic
strengthening in college

Link Three: Twenty years after conversion
Link Four: Twenty three years after conversion

"Carl" - [3]

Carl is also employed at Kodak, in his early fifties, married with two children. He became a Christian at thirty one, being baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church at that time. Until recently, he remained an Episcopalian, except for a brief time when he was transferred to Dallas.

Even though he identifies Link One as starting immediately after conversion, we have no more information, as Carl was not part of the CRG until after the assignment on this Link. Link Two began early, as he thought he saw God at work in the civil rights movement of the sixties. Recently, he has been questioning whether God was really working in that movement, but while it was happening, he saw much of the hand of God. He also reported that he saw God more clearly at work in individuals than in big groups. The other experiences of God working around him occurred in the late seventies, seventeen years after conversion, when he attended an evening school of the Bible and when a couple brought his father-in-law to the Lord before his death.

Carl is another example of a person who was involved in many activities, but whose sense that God was working through his actions

has been quite recent. Within five years of conversion, he was a Lay Reader and Chalice Bearer in an Episcopal Church. He has been active in leadership positions throughout his Christian experience. However, it has been only since he has been involved in a ministry with the Gideons, nineteen years after conversion, that he has begun to sense that God is actually working through him. Even though the sense is growing stronger, there is still not a strong confidence that in his actions, God is or can work. He "vacillates" between thinking he is an underachiever, and resenting God himself for being an underachiever.

The lack of direction and power continues to confuse and disappoint. Because of a sense of being stuck here, there is little or no movement to Link Four. Many explanations can be given to this apparent inability to know God's work through. Much may be centered around being a "minority" in an Episcopal setting, therefore getting little or no positive feedback, when in fact, God may have been working through him.

In summary, Carl's thirty-one year spiritual life history, when charted against the model, has this pattern.

Conversion: Thirty years old
Link One: Immediately
Link Two: Seventeen years after conversion
Link Three: Nineteen years after conversion
Link Four: Pending

"Dan" - [4]

Dan is an associate pastor in his early thirties, married with three preschool children. Raised in a non-church home, he became a Christian in college when he was twenty-two. It was his awareness of what God was doing in individual people around him that led him to discover the Gospel. Within a year, he sensed a call to ministry, and within two years of conversion, he was enrolled in seminary. Two years later, at twenty-six, the ministry to which he was called was sharpened to be with youth and Christian education.

Dan's experience was that the first five links did not happen in a linear fashion. Instead, they were all happening at the same time, then and now. His early context for growth gave him the strong expectation that God was going to change him, but didn't give specific directions. Instead, the assumption was that the Holy Spirit would make plain what needed changing. He was led into the kingdom and continued to be surrounded with examples of what God was doing around him. He also had early experiences of helping people out with difficulties, watching them turn in trust to the Lord.

Throughout his eleven years as a Christian, lordship issues have been highlighted and made important. Thus there has been a consistent focusing on the issue of identity. Dan does distinguish between two movements in this fourth Link: the initial sense of being a redeemed,

forgiven, remade child of a loving Father; and a second sense that came six years after conversion, a broadening perception of who the Body of Christ is. Now, eleven years after conversion, there are still some identity issues being faced, as Dan contemplates the direction of specific ministry for himself. Being pulled in different directions by the needs for ministry, he is actively defining strengths and weaknesses, limits, and potential.

Since he is in active, full-time ministry, it would seem that de facto he is in Link Six. His ordination a year ago acted as a catalyst to confirm his calling to minister. However, because of the inner agendas, the best guess of this researcher would be that Dan is in Link Five. He has always been surrounded by and sought out community. Therefore that element of his growth has always been there. He has always had a strong sense of personal relationship with the Lord. Thus, there has been from the first a sense of intimacy with the Lord built on loyalty.

Dan presents a constellation of experiences that do not fit the model presented. Whether that is due to deficiencies in the model, the author's ability to discern, the speed at which he learns, or other factors, the fact remains that his experiences as reported do not support the linear direction of the model.

"Earl" - [5]

Earl is in his late forties, married with three children all of them post high school, a pastor of an American Baptist Church. Both he and his wife grew up in the Salvation Army, and his first years of ministry were pastoring within the Army. In his early thirties, he left the Army, and for the next few years, worked in a Christian Book Store. When he was thirty-eight, he was ordained and accepted his present pastorate. He has been active in many community and ministerial capacities, including the local Ministerium, the Greater Rochester Association of Evangelicals, the Lay-Clergy Council, Chaplain of the Fire Department and the Perinton Food Shelf.

Earl cannot date his conversion. The significant event for his spiritual formation was his call to ministry when he was eighteen. Immediately following that, he knew what God wanted to do in him. Especially dominant was perfectionistic teaching. He entered the ministry within three years of his call, and experienced God working around him at that time. Within three years of being in ministry, Earl knew the reality of the third Link.

He dates the fourth Link with struggles in his late twenties over the Lordship of Christ in his individual life. That issue became clear through his ministry, and as he observed what God was doing through him. Those struggles climaxed with a real step of faith, and he and his family left the Army, moved to the States, and began working in the

Christian Book Store. Those years of ministering to ministers as he visited them for business, being interim pastor in several situations, being part of a small group, developing a clearer sense of faithfulness to the Lord and closeness with Christian friends; he identifies as Link Five.

Ordination and return to the pastoral ministry signaled to Earl his decision to accept and move into Link Six. He is now doing what he enjoys doing, ministering in a pastoral setting to the needs of people and neighborhood.

In summary, Earl's spiritual life history follows closely the pattern presented by the model, if we may use his call to ministry as the benchmark from which to date the Links. He is not able to date experiences prior to that call. For purposes of dating the following information, conversion will be set at age eight.

- Conversion: Early Childhood, eight years old
- Call to Ministry at eighteen
- Link One: Ten years later
- Link Two: Twelve years later
- Link Three: Sixteen years later
- Link Four: Twenty years later
- Link Five: Twenty two years later
- Link Six: Thirty years later

"Felix" - [6]

Felix was part of the CRG for the first half of its history, but resigned from participation after one assignment. Therefore, there is no information available, except that his church context supported and authenticated the fact that God was working through him, even in early childhood.

"Gary" - [7]

Gary is an independent businessman in his early forties, married with two girls. He participated extensively in the process of gathering the data, but asked that his name not be associated with the findings.¹ He continues to struggle with the place of humanistic psychology in a spiritual growth process.

1. This is a serious omission, as Gary was very dominant in the three sessions to which he came. In those three sessions, 20%, 28% and 52% of the responses were his.

"Helen" - [8]

Helen is a former music educator who is now a Christian counselor and single. She has graduate degrees in music, educational administration, and social work. Brought up in a Christian home, having a father who was a pastor of a Baptist church, Helen doesn't ever remember not being a Christian. As best she can remember, her conversion occurred when she was eight.

She also reflects the pattern of knowing God working around her before conversion, and five years elapsing before experiencing God working in her. Growing up in a context where she knew that members of her immediate and extended family were different because they were Christians made Link Two clear from earliest memories. However, it was in Junior High before she herself began to know what God was doing in her.

Links Three thru Six are tightly grouped in her mind. When she was nineteen, eleven years after conversion, she experienced God working through her as she prayed for a woman dying of cancer, who subsequently was healed. She also interceded for a woman having troubles, and again her prayers were answered. A year later, the death of her father triggered identity issues. Two years later, entering into her first career, that of music teacher, opened intimacy issues to her. In her mind, there was a lot of overlap in the fourth and fifth

Links, with both going on at the same time. Within a very short time, she had a strong sense that her teaching was her ministry.

Even though Helen saw her teaching as a ministry that was slowly growing in effectiveness, her spiritual strength came more from inner resources than from a Body of Christ with whom she was regularly worshipping and sharing. It is in more recent spiritual history that she has found the strength that comes from other Christians.

At forty-five, thirty-seven years after conversion, Helen received "direct orders" from the Lord to change careers from teaching to counseling. That change would have been impossible had it not been for the strong sense of community that stood behind her, supporting the change and the two years of full-time study that was necessary. If Link Six is dependent on the sense of community expressed in Link Five, then it could be argued that she did not really enter into Link Six until she was forty-five. It was there that, with all the preparation complete, she was ready to enter into that ministry for which she had been re-created. Today that settled core of ministry as service to hurting people continues to stir the creative juices and prove in practice that this yoke fits well.

In summary, Helen's spiritual life history, when charted against the model, has this pattern.

Conversion: Age Eight
Link One: Five years later
Link Two: Prior to conversion

Link Three: Eleven years after conversion
Link Four: Twelve years after conversion
Link Five: Fourteen years after conversion
Link Six: Fifteen years after, with a major change
thirty-seven years after

"Ian" - [9]

Ian, in his mid-fifties, married with three children, all of them college graduates, is pastor of a large independent church. Brought up in the Brethren Church in Canada, he has been a businessman, pastor and Bible College President, with graduate degrees in administration and ministry.

Ian dates his conversion at the age of twenty-two. Brought up in a Christian home, he was early turned away from serious consideration of Christianity because of the forced style of sanctimoniousness that lasted two weeks after a revival service. He characterizes his childhood and teen years as rebellious. As with Dan and Helen, Ian's first exposure was to God working around him before he faced what God was doing in him. Thus Link Two occurred prior to and immediately after conversion, while Link One became the focus seven years after conversion. Prior to that, he received a call to ministry when he was twenty-five, three years after conversion. He returned to college when he was twenty-eight, graduating and being ordained at thirty-two.

Link Three began to be significant for Ian three or four years after ordination, and especially through a long pastorate in Pennsylvania, during which time he received both M.S. and D. Min. degrees. The work on the latter degree highlighted the issues of the fourth Link. Those issues of identity focused primarily on the pastoral attempts to integrate theology and the humanities, a process that continued through his four year presidency of a Bible College.

It was the move to his present pastorate at fifty-four that brought both Link Five and Six to the surface. He was moving from denominational categories, to a deeper sense of Christian community; from institutional to a personal, people orientation. His experience would be fruitful for deeper probing, as he obviously was involved in ministry for over twenty years. To others, he has been effective. In what sense is he only now, thirty-four years after conversion, beginning to "Fulfill His Ministry?" Does Ian's experience underline the observation that ministry after community is stronger?

Ian's spiritual life history has the following pattern, when charted by the model.

Conversion: Twenty-two years of age
 Link One: Seven years after conversion
 Link Two: Prior to, and immediately after conversion
 Link Three: Thirteen years after conversion
 Link Four: Twenty-two years after conversion
 Link Five: Thirty years after conversion
 Link Six: Thirty years after conversion

"Jackie"- [10]

Jackie is married and a mother of two children. In her mid-forties, she is the wife of "Carl" and presently teaching in a Christian school. Brought up in the Episcopal Church, she has been increasingly disenchanting with their positions and spirituality. She earned a M. Th. at a seminary, and became involved with PCC first through its evening school.

Jackie was twenty-four when she was converted. For the next eleven years, the concentration was on Link One, climaxing with the settling for her of the lordship issue: Jesus is both Lord and Savior. Evidently, that released her to move into both Link Two and Three in the next four years, as she was exposed to people who wanted to study Scripture and a number of miraculous healings. Also emerging twelve years after conversion was the sense that God was doing more outside her church tradition.

Jackie understands herself to be presently in Link Four, a movement started for her four years ago. Part of that struggle climaxed in leaving the church of her past, making the decisions to become an "evangelical" Christian. She sees Jesus to be the integrating center, especially in the structuring of her time. The question of whether she will really obey this Lord is the present arena of

struggle, especially as it involves speaking up in certain situations where it would be easier to remain quiet. She is looking for ways to be loyal to Christ, challenged by biblical examples of genuine suffering for His sake.

Jackie's spiritual life, when summarized according to the model, would have this profile.

Conversion: Twenty-four years of age
Link One: Immediately after conversion
Link Two: Twelve years after conversion
Link Three: Twelve years after conversion
Link Four: Sixteen years after conversion

"Karen"- [11]

Karen is a single person in her late twenties. A teacher in a day care center in Rochester, she is actively involved as a small group leader, active in discipling other Christians. Raised in a strong Christian home, she has been exposed to biblical Christianity all her life.

Karen's original commitment to Jesus came when she was eight, and its total focus had to do with "fire insurance": heaven and hell. Her Christian life was fairly stagnant until mid-teens, when she recommitted herself to Jesus. At that time she still did not see Him as

very involved in her daily life, but as One who would provide for her and of whom she should get to know on a personal level. Link One, then, did not really become real until eight years after conversion.

Link Two was added two years later, as college experiences made her aware of what God was doing in other people. For the first time, she became aware of the potential of fellowship strengthening individual convictions. Her surprises came as she noticed God working in places and ways that were unexpected.

Link Three came after college as she made a conscious effort to make herself available, in her case, through Young Life ministry. Even though she was not aware of God working through her immediately, feedback from the kids during ministry and retrospective reflection hours or days later, reinforced the sense of God's activity through her.

Link Four's real emphasis in her life is relatively recent, climaxing two years ago. During her later college years, she struggled with the sacred and secular elements of her life. Now, she is seeing the importance of integrating them, not keeping them separate. Along with that has come the growing realization of the importance of unconditional loyalty to the Lord.

Karen sees herself presently, twenty years after conversion and twelve years after recommitment, moving out of Link Four into Link Five. Awareness that Jesus is more and more the integrating center has

drawn her to develop a faithfulness and deeper loyalty than she had before. In addition to that, she is beginning to sort out her strengths and gifts, sensing that long-term shepherding or discipling ministry may be the direction in which she is headed.

Karen's spiritual life history, when charted against the model, would be summarized as follows. In her history, her point of recommitment has more significance than her original commitment, as far as spiritual growth is concerned. Thus, if eight years would be subtracted from the following, her real spiritual growth would stretch over twelve years instead of twenty.

Conversion: At age eight
Link One: Eight years later, at recommitment
Link Two: Ten years after conversion
Link Three: Fourteen years after conversion
Link Four: Eighteen years after conversion

"Lee" - [12]

Lee is an Associate Professor at the University of Rochester, married with two young children. He grew up in a Lutheran Church, where he was baptized and confirmed. Because of his parent's conversion when he was seven, he grew up in a home with much spiritual activity, but, on his part at least, little spiritual understanding. Not understanding salvation and envying people who testified to their

peace and joy left Lee outside. His senior year of high school and his college years relieved him, as they taught him not to take the Bible literally, as science had proven it wrong about creation. God became a "vague center of niceness." After marriage, Lee and his wife were involved in activities in a church, and became close friends with the pastor.

Lee's conversion at thirty-six was preceded by a year of intense exploration. He and his wife were confronted with the importance of bringing their children to Christ. Easter as a historical fact and the meaning of the Lordship of Christ opened up new possibilities and threats. Was Christianity intellectually defensible? Finally, he grasped the meaning of salvation, sensing the relief and joy of knowing he was saved. The puzzle had been solved.

Thus for Lee, Links One and Two were both present before conversion and immediately after. It was understanding both what God could do in him and what he saw God doing around him that led him ultimately to the Lord. This sense was highlighted even more after conversion. In addition, he began to know God working through him, Link Three, within a few months of conversion. As Lay Leader for worship, he experienced both the awesome responsibility and support by the Holy Spirit.

A year after conversion, Link One was reinforced through a retreat which renewed and deepened his commitment to God and gave him a new

vision of how God was supporting him. He also began ministering in the Brigade program and witnessing at work, both activities in which he saw God working through him. Link Three became a consistent reality.

Link Four is an interesting thread in Lee's life. Issues of identity had been consistently faced. One could argue that his conversion was a combination of resolving his identity: how to be a Christian and be intellectually honest; and wanting the joy and peace that had always eluded him and he now saw in others. After conversion, both issues were resolved. Those two issues were settled. In their place, the integrating of the separate segments in his life took center stage. No longer are insights enough. Now those insights must be translated into practical life. He continues to struggle with who he is, especially the issue of what is left over from thirty five years without Christ.

Link Five is his present experience, five years after conversion. According to his witness, that growth in intimacy, especially seen as a growing realization of His presence and support, has been occurring since the fall of 1981, two years after conversion.

Two factors stand out in Lee's spiritual history. First, within two months of conversion, he attended classes in the evening school that presented this model to him. Thus, from the beginning of his Christian life, there has been a "valid hypothesis" by which he has understood the working of God in his life. Second, the age at which he

came to the Lord, plus the intensity with which he has searched and explored the Christian life, may be some of the factors which allowed him to compress many Links into a short span.

In summary, his spiritual life history, although encompassing less than five years, would show the following pattern.

Conversion: At thirty-six years of age
Link One: Immediately
Link Two: Prior to, and immediately following
Link Three: Four months after conversion
Link Four: Prior to, and three months after conversion
Link Five: Two years after conversion

"Mabel" - [13]

Mabel, the wife of "Felix," was also part of the CRG for the first half of its history, but resigned from participation after one assignment. She also validated the experience of knowing God working through her at an early age, because of the commitment of her church family to support and encourage the ministry of the youth of the church.

"Nancy" - [14]

Nancy is a housewife in her mid-forties, with three children, two who are teenagers and one who is in early grade school. A teacher by training, she became a Christian ten years ago.

Nancy, because of her convictions that the direction of the present task was incurably wrong, since secular psychology was being used to illumine spiritual reality, resigned from the CRG and the research before the final questions of the research could be asked. However, since she did complete all of the Links prior to her resignation, the author will attempt to deduce her movement through the Links from the information available.

For Nancy, the first three Links were present within months after conversion. Immediately there was a sense of belonging, an anchored peace. She had clear expectations of what God was going to do in her and for her, all of them related to issues of living life now. She noted differences in her family as Jesus came into their lives. She was a part of a small group, where encouragement was regularly given as to what God was doing around her. Within two months of conversion, God miraculously communicated to her the answer to a mathematical problem that had stalemated her husband. Alongside that, she and her friends regularly prayed for the problems of people and the world, expecting God to answer their prayer.

It is the wide sense of knowing that God was at work in the world, and that through Christ, she has some powerful love to offer the world, that characterized her spiritual history from the start. Both her biggest encouragements and disappointments have clustered around issues of who and how much God is doing. The first two or three years of her life in Christ were dominated with the certainty that divine healing was available for all, and that her entire neighborhood would become Christians because Christ was in her.

The author does not have enough information to put a time frame around Link Four. There has been a consistent effort to see home as sacred, a place where God dwells. That integration had large implications, both on language and upkeep. She changed from a church goer to a Christ centered person.

This researcher concludes that Nancy is struggling with issues of both Links Four and Five. She is in the midst of deciding which "yoke" to take upon herself. She is also struggling with which community of faith best expresses her sense of who she is in Christ. The level of conflict between competing visions of the Christian life is intense for her.

Even though hard numerical information is not available, for reasons sketched above, the author's summary of her spiritual history is as follows.

Conversion: Mid-Thirties
Link One: Immediately
Link Two: Immediately
Link Three: Two months after conversion
Link Four: Not sure, but pending

"Oliver" - [15]

Oliver is an educator in his early forties, married with three children. He is the brother of "Earl," active in many church and community leadership positions.

At the beginning of the CRG, Oliver was serving as Chairman. However, he soon entered into his own doctoral program. Thus, even though he was able to attend some of the meetings and provide some verbal input, he was not able to complete the written assignments. Thus, we will not be able to use information from his spiritual life history to inform the model.

"Paula" - [16]

Paula is a single person in her early forties, a former nun. She is presently working on a graduate degree in human services, is employed by a counseling center, and is an officer of the church.

She dates her conversion to her late teens, when the struggle with lordship issues culminated in her being led into the convent. Having broken off an engagement to follow the Lord's call, Paula felt as though she had given up everything to follow Christ.

The first Link that was important to her was Link Two. Immediately on entering the convent, she saw God working in others. Prior to this, her mother was the one person in whom she saw God being real. Now she was surrounded with people who demonstrated the reality of God in their lives. She began to have tempered her earlier ideas of what God could do in the world, understanding the place of obedient discipleship.

It would be about seven years after conversion that Paula began to sense the effects of Link One: God changing her values and attitudes. Central to much of that inner work of God was the expectation of being an instrument in the hand of God for some mission, if she would remain flexible in His hands. Peace of mind was developed, even though the struggle to break old habits and move beyond old dreams took time.

Within another year or so, she moved into the issues of Link Three. For the eighth thru thirteenth years after conversion, Paula was aware of God using her for His work. She found herself involved in the changes brought about by Vatican II, leading other sisters in the move from rigid rules to more individual, personal response to the work of God within.

During the latter part of the above time frame, identity issues

came to the surface. Instead of the convent or the Catholic Church being the center, she was increasingly being weaned to place Jesus as the guide and measure, the integrating center. That inner agenda led her to leave the convent. Not only was that a radical change from a life-style commitment entered into fourteen years earlier, it was also separation from a family standard. She was moving into waters uncharted by family expectations.

For five years Paula would wrestle with those issues, until Link Five would blossom. Nineteen years after her conversion, Paula was able to move in two dimensions: one to commit herself to PCC, and two, to recommit herself to Christ on a far deeper level. Her joining PCC was a clear expression of her need of other Christians, and the fact of being again part of a body of believers.

Through her most recent course work, she senses that she is at the verge of entering Link Six: Fulfilling her Ministry. There is a renewed sense of buoyancy, expectation, and certainty, as she looks to the immediate future. If there is a settled core of ministry, it seems to be both an enjoyment of working behind the scenes and a strong desire to include people who are otherwise overlooked.

Paula's spiritual history, if charted against the model, would be as follows.

Conversion: At nineteen
Link One: Seven years after conversion
Link Two: Two years after conversion

Link Three: Eight years after conversion
Link Four: Fourteen years after conversion
Link Five: Nineteen years after conversion
Link Six: Pending

Conclusion

We are now ready to turn to the next chapter, looking at the same body of research from the point of view of the individual Links. However, before leaving this chapter, attention must be drawn to some of the findings of the case histories.

Of the sixteen people who were part of the research pool, information can be taken from twelve of the case histories. Some clear information emerges. What will be said cannot be generalized for the entire Christian population, even though, it will provide some potentially fruitful areas for further discussion and research.

There is a strong tendency toward a linear growth in Christ along this continuum, as can be seen in Figure 10. However, on closer inspection, conversion may not be the best place to begin to chronicle Christian growth. One of the findings from the CCI² was that the indicator with the most linearity in the development of spirituality was not how long people had been Christians or how long they had

2. See above p. 59, notes 35 and 36.

GROWTH PATTERNS SINCE CONVERSION

	Age of Conversion	Years Since Conversion						
		LINKS	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1 Alan	Late Teen		0	0	0	7	11	15
2 Barry	10		0	2	20	23		
3 Carl	30		0	17	19	22		
4 Dan	22		0	-1	0	0	0	
5 Earl	8		10	12	16	20	22	40
6 Felix	..							
7 Gary								
8 Helen	8		5	-1	11	12	14	15
9 Ian	22		7	-1	13	22	30	30
10 Jackie	24		0	12	12	16		
11 Karen	8		8	10	14	18		
12 Lee	36		0	-1	0	0	2	
13 Mabel								
14 Nancy	Mid-30's		0	0	0			
15 Oliver								
16 Paula	19		7	2	8	14	19	
	Number Responding		12	12	12	11	7	5
	Average years since Conversion		3.08	4.25	9.42	14	14	25
	Median score		0	0/2	8/11	16	14	15/30
	High/low Score		10/0	17/0	20/0	23/0	30/0	40/15

Notes: "0" used when Link experienced within first year.
 "-1" used when Link experienced prior to conversion.

Figure 10

seriously worked at living as Christians. Instead, the single most linear category was the length of time since the "doctrines of Christ first came alive." That finding is borne out here, also. Recommitment, call to ministry, becoming part of a faith community in which growth was encouraged, these were major factors in making Christ come alive and growth to be real.

In that growth, it is unusual for the Links to flow smoothly. Four of the twelve people experienced at least ten years between two Links. For Earl, it was ten years between Conversion and Link I and eighteen between V and VI. For Carl and Jackie, seventeen and twelve years transpired between Links I and II. Barry's dry period came in the eighteen years between Links II and III. Even more common were periods of five to ten years between neighboring Links. Nine times, with five of the people, that length of time span occurred. Whether these are dry spells, the classic "dark night of the soul," or periods of latency cannot be gleaned from the available information. Only three people have had less than five years between Links throughout their Christian experience. It would be interesting to research further this difference in the length of time between growth points, especially with the insight of Kohlberg that some growth stages are harder to negotiate.

Also emerging from the information is an apparent difference between those who were converted as children, prior to ten years of age, and those with late teen, adult conversions. As the following

chart shows, the average for the former is longer than for the latter.

LINKS	AVERAGE YEARS SINCE CONVERSION					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
For Everyone	3.08	4.25	9.42	14	14	25
Childhood Conversions	5.75	5.75	15.25	18.25	18	27.5
Late Teen+ Conversions	1.75	3.5	6.5	15.6	12.4	22.5

Figure 11

In seven of the twelve, Link I appeared immediately after conversion. Even though Link II appeared in only two people immediately after conversion, in another four of the twelve, it was experienced prior to conversion. Thus six of the twelve knew the reality of these two Links in the days prior to and soon after conversion.

Link III was included in the experiences of three people immediately after conversion. However, when the average time is seen as 9.42 years, and when the difference between the average for childhood and adult conversions are calculated to have the widest range (15.25 years vs. 6.5 years); it is clear that the experience of God working through them was a critical Link for growth.

Link IV and V showed an interesting anomaly: the average time for V was less than the time for IV! Part of that can be ascribed to the fact that only seven could respond to V, while eleven responded to IV.

Link VI has only four responders, even though two others felt themselves on the verge of this Link. The length of time before they experienced this Link gives strong support for the need for development to occur over a long period of time.

Christians do not grow up into Christ overnight. However, their confidence is "that he who began a good work in (them) . . . will carry it on to completion"³ as they "continue to work out" their "salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in" them.⁴

3. Phil 1:6.

4. Phil. 2:12-13.

CHAPTER NINE

The Findings of the Research: The Links

Having developed the model of the transformation of a person from the beginning of being a new creation in Christ to the place where Christ is fully formed within that person, this author will continue to address to the findings of the research. Two major divisions of this reportage will follow. First, the data of each Link will be examined in detail as collated from the assignments and group sessions. The question of whether each Link is an identifiable Link within a chain will be addressed. Are the comparisons and differences more imagined than real? What threads were common in each of those Links? What anomalies appear? Second, the questions of development will be examined, with special attention given to the final assignment. Can eqigenetic sequencing be substantiated? Does clustering occur? Do some Links appear more important than others?

As has been the format in previous chapters, each Link will be studied in isolation before taking into consideration the context of the other Links. Such an approach will allow for sharper definition.

In the previous chapter, people were identified with both pseudonym and number. In this chapter, the numbers will be utilized to identify the respondents when necessary. Numbers enclosed in square brackets [] will indicate people from the research, in order to

distinguish them from Scripture quotations used throughout in rounded brackets (). The following were members of the CG: [1], [4], [5], [8], and [9]. All others were members of the CRG. The following experienced definite adult or late teen conversion experiences: [1], [3], [4], [7], [9], [10], [12], [14] and [16]. The rest either do not remember their conversion or because of their home environment, "grew up" as Christians.¹

Research into Six Transforming Links

Link One: God Working In Me

A single factor stood out as exceptionally important at this place in the Christians' experience; the sense of the range of what God can actually do.² Habits, goals, friends, priorities, protection, salvation, mission, fire insurance, guidance, heaven, help in daily living, change agent, become Christ-like, keep calm, healing, riches, peace of mind, better at the stuff of living; these gave a sense of the range within the research group. What the above listing highlighted,

1. This statement is not intended to be a theological affirmation, but a practical statement. They are reporting on their experience of knowing of Jesus Christ and accepting the personal relevance of his teachings from an early age.

2. Six members of the CRG and five members of the CG responded in writing.

and what was reflected throughout this level, was the predominant focus on the self. Of the twenty-four responses to question three, "What were your initial expectations of what God was going to do in and for you," twenty-one dealt with self-focused issues: salvation, changing, guidance and personal well-being in daily living. Only three noted an outward focus: mission or use as an instrument. This led to the conclusion that the early range of what God can do clustered primarily on individual agendas. The value judgment as to its propriety was not addressed.

The dominant factors in the respondents' first few months as Christians were a subjective sense of a new relationship with God, Scripture and small groups. This sense of God was indicated in many ways: utter dependence and belief, relief mingled with joy and awe at knowing salvation, prayer that covered especially the small things of life, sense of closeness to God, tentative yet sure trust, and a sense of grace with forgiveness. Hunger for the Word was the normal experience for three of the respondents, with two others knowing they should have that hunger but didn't. Three people also mentioned small groups within the church as significant factors. However, only two people specifically mentioned church as dominant. Whether it was not mentioned as too obvious, or whether Church as an institution did not have that much effect, still needs to be answered. Those data were not in the present research.

Individual people were more dominant than groups of people in

their early experiences. Nine times Christian role models were mentioned as significant, with four mentioning group or church role models, and only one mentioning family. The first two factors may indicate that early the need was more for the one-on-one than the group. The relative lack of influence by family at this early stage was surprising.

The thirty-one different responses to the experience of dissonance between the former and the new clustered around four centers. Clustered around God would be the perception that God expected effort on their part, that "God and I" were not enough since the Body was part of God's plan, and the need to protect God's reputation. Goals and friends provided two more centers. The largest cluster involved habits which needed changing. One person had no sense of difference and another a low expectation of differences.

Most of the sense of "new" had to do with relationships. Covering the gamut from God, through people, to nature--the special sense of newness in relationships brightened those early days. With God there was peace, hope, a changed center, and security. Whether with family or friends, a sense of newness prevailed. Also new were the values, even though one respondent remembered a sense of sadness at leaving behind the old patterns and goals.

Very common was the sense that something good had been left behind. "Normal" experiences such as the beauty of closeness, no

longer sharing the details of life in communication, daily zeal, excitement and awe of being saved, and intimacy with God which involved all of life; these were looked back on with longing. This author wondered if there was what could be called a "nostalgia effect" when looking back to the good old days. Five others spoke of things they were glad to leave behind: formulae for living, sense of unbelonging which had given way to anchored peace, fear, defensiveness, immaturity, and false guilt,

While the category "left behind" brought to mind good things that they wished they could recapture, the words "gone beyond" did the opposite. All the responses mentioned false or immature beliefs and habits out of which they have grown. Since it was important to have had a clear sense of what they perceived as things to grow from instead of toward, a listing would be in order: the sense of being forsaken by God after sinning, smugness at rightness, doubting, doubt as to the amount of faith possessed, the expectations of others, the need for hierarchy to support decisions instead of knowing inner certainty by the Holy Spirit, the need for only minimal effort or understanding, doing things only in own strength, over concern for what people say, old doctrine of perfection, and incomplete doctrine of prayer. Again, the striking fact lay in the breadth of these categories. New Christians do not wrestle merely with "spiritual" issues.

The present sense of what God was doing within the respondents engendered the largest response, giving great variety. Forty-two

different answers were given to this question by twelve people. If the accepted division of our Christian life into relationships to God, world, and self were used, most of the answers dealt with relationship with God. Twenty eight responses dealt with the vertical relationship, six for the world, six for self, and two encompassed the three dimensions. Since this was asking for the "present" sense of God working within, it was even more striking. Even when allowance was made for the form of the question leading a person to concentrate on the vertical, still the relative absence of the other two dimensions raised serious questions. Why was there not a stronger sense of God empowering for service?

As will be found in virtually every other Link, the responses of the two separate groups were indistinguishable. Evidently the Lord worked the same in lay and clergy! That was good news for some. Of special note was the fact that two of the clergy and one of the lay, a former nun, traced the knowledge of the working of God within to their call to ministry.

Link Two: God Working Around Me

As the respondents³ worked through this set of questions, the

3. Seven members of the CRG and three members of the CG responded in writing.

recurring problem was that of theodicy: how and why does God allow bad things to happen. Of the fourteen answers under question six, where people assumed that "pleasant" surprises were meant, four responses were not pleasant. Why isn't the present all that much different since Christ is within? Why didn't people get what they prayed for? Why do missionaries get murdered? Why does God have to be so permissive? All sixteen responses to question seven on disappointments kept the question of theodicy in the fore. God seemed slow, not living up to their expectations, people starve, the number of Christians is small, Christian commitment shallow. God's activity in the world did not guarantee that the world would become better, or that people become Christians. That was a difficult lesson for new Christians, and the clarity with which they could be remembered shed light on their present power.

The other side of the picture was considerably brighter. Individuals and family were the arena in which they watched God working. Only three people mentioned church activities as where they became aware of God's working. While three experienced an unmistakable miracle occurring to a friend, most of the activity took on more normal overtones. God was there and he was gracious. His miracles were not to impress the crowds, but to meet in compassion the individual with their needs. God's choices of people were not our choices. Yet he was healing and making whole. Most of the evidence came from close friends or family. The effect of watching God working in others was

overwhelmingly positive. Only two people didn't join the chorus of praise. One envied what God was doing in others, and the second was so inner directed, that external affairs had little to no influence. For the others, while watching God working around them, they trusted God more fully, had new insights into Jesus, evaluated their willingness to be used by God, and felt filled with gratitude to God for the people through whom he was working.

Also encouraging was the balancing of positive and negative effects springing from having seen God working outside their own traditions. One person was jealous, another was led to distrust his own tradition, a third was shaken as she struggled with how much of her tradition had to be reevaluated, a fourth allowed that God could work outside but not as well, and a fifth person experienced both surprise and disorientation "to discover that Roman Catholics might actually be true believers" [4]. For five others, the experience gave a new freedom, excitement, and encouragement. In two situations, finding authentic faith outside their tradition led them on a long journey out of the church of their past into their present church commitments.

Early expectations of what God could do in the world varied. Two had very little expectation. Two encompassed the world: one with visions of Utopia, the other with the sense that "God would solve the large issues of peace and prosperity because I and my group of Christians were now praying" [14]. Especially enigmatic was the could/would polarity as it concerned God. Six different people

struggled with the limits of God's working. Four saw the primary arena of activity to be individuals. One person discovered that healing was not dependent on using a correct formula. Another expected Christianity to be more miraculous and awesome than it turned out to be.

Question two with its emphasis on "when" elicited mixed information from which to draw conclusions as to its sequence within a developmental schema. One person came to the Lord as an adult because he saw God unmistakably at work in a church. Four people saw this work early. For one, it was many years after conversion. What was important to note in her situation was that it came on the heels of her recommitment.

Important problems were raised by the above discussion. Is it important to recognize God's hand at work? Is that not to walk by sight? Is it a matter of inability or lack of training? Do people spiritualize matters so that they can prove that God is working? Do they need to "keep track of" what God is doing? Why? Evidently, there was a greater need to see God at work in the early years of our experience of being a Christian. Later, evidences were not all that important. One of the indicators of maturity may be the ability to see God at work in an amazing number of small things, yet not be dependent on seeing for trust.

The respondents found it difficult to identify with precision the

hand of God in the world, or individuals. Hard to sort out were the human and the supernatural dimensions. When hindsight showed mistaken perception from the past, the present attempts to distinguish were stalked with sense of futility. When most "seems explainable on strictly human effort basis" [4], the difficulty was compounded.

This Link was distinct from the previous one. An important, perhaps indispensable, encouragement to experiencing God within was to see him working in other people.⁴ Both dimensions filled real needs. Both complemented the other.

Link Three: God Working Through Me

For seven of the nine who came to the Lord early in life, many years transpired between conversion and the experience of God working through them.⁵ The key was not if allowed to minister, but the actual knowledge that God did help someone else through them. Each needed authentic feedback from those receiving ministry. For all but two of those who accepted Christ early in life, this Link was missing for many

4. Further research is needed here. It is the author's conclusion from experience and observation, that when either dimension is missing in healthy dosage, spiritual pathology surfaces. That pathology may not be severe, yet serious shriveling of spiritual effectiveness is evidenced.

5. Seven members of the CRG and one members of the CG responded in writing.

years. Ten and fifteen years was not uncommon. Physical and mental maturity do affect spiritual maturity.

Not as many years transpired between conversion and initial affirmation of ministry for those who came to the Lord as adults. For one person, the first attempts immediately after conversion were frustrated, yet a little later other attempts produced fruit. Two people saw their children accept Christ very soon after their own conversion, through their own words. One teen immediately was used to bring another teen to the Lord. Three people experienced this through teaching Sunday School, another through interactions in small groups.

Three insights surfaced. In three cases, the experience of God working through them came immediately after their call to ministry. That, in each case, occurred years after their conversion. It was intriguing to note that success in ministry was not the foundation of their calling to ministry. Another respondent knew the action of God through her immediately after recommitment.

The second insight has been alluded to already: the necessity of feedback. Throughout, the sense that God was working through depended on authentic, accurate, believable affirmation. A large portion of the CRG meeting focused on this issue, and its importance if people were to know and exercise their gifts within the Body. Some churches were able to provide this even for their children. People who could be more objective were singled out as people who could provide that feedback.

The third insight will be dealt with at length in Link Six. Let it be enough to mention here that it was important to identify the core of ministry in each person. Clear teaching of the gifts, assumptions that God works through each and every Christian, pointing to the diversity and creativity of God in working through people, and devotional classics are among the means that could be applied to enable each Christian to know and exercise that particular constellation of gifts that are unique to him or her. Here, the research showed a wide scope of experiences by which individuals attempted to understand how God actually could work through them.

The developmental question was not clarified. The facts were: the people who came to Christ as adults experienced God working through them almost immediately, those who accepted Christ early in life demonstrated a different track. Two knew God working through them early, while seven waited years. For the seven, after recommitment, call to ministry, or becoming part of a living Body, the living sense of God working through occurred.⁶ It must be stressed, that for the seven, the intervening years were not devoid of church activities.

6. Compare the remarks on p. 206 on the findings of the CCI.

Link Four: Forging an Identity

The first question sparked the first clear distinction between the two groups.⁷ One of the CG was "always aware of one foot on each side" [8], but that was the furthest anyone in that group would go in distinguishing sacred from secular. They insisted that everything was sacred, everything to be seen under the lordship of Jesus. On the other hand, the CRG all struggled with two orbs of life, the sacred and secular. One limited exposure to the secular because of the fear that it would dilute her commitment to the sacred. She saw it as very important to "make an objective evaluation" [16] so that she could make the proper choices. Two witnessed to a gradual integrating. One admitted to having no framework and saw the difference most acutely. The value of work for him was to feed the family. A housewife gave witness as to how much improved her habits at home were once she had perceived that her house was sacred. The struggle to understand the two dimensions and to integrate work into an over-arching lordship issue was an issue with six of the seven people present.

Very little hard information came out of the second question. Seven people had faith commitments that differed at significant points from their natural parents. Only one person's difference was with his

7. Seven members of the CRG and four members of the CG responded in writing.

spiritual parent, and that move was from a more rigid, legalistic stance to the stance of grace.

To be integrating center, Jesus must be Lord. That is both what he is, and what needs to be worked on by disciples as they make actual what is real. Total integration was seen as a goal, not a reality. For that goal to intersect life, time must be taken for reflection. Centering, as the Quakers knew, took energy and effort. Jesus was the "automatic reference point" [8] who gave purpose and guidance. As Lord, he demanded loyalty, not merely acceptance as Savior. To arrive at this understanding was a long struggle for two, a shorter struggle for two others. For one man, loyalty was the price for being saved. For another, those demands were unattainable, therefore Jesus was rejected for years. Loyalty was sustained by many factors: a slowly growing sense of the ability to hold on, knowing there was no choice but to be loyal, assessing contradictions as trivial, making loyalty more important, knowing that sometimes one wanted to throw in the towel, and a history of practicing. A firing squad would be easier to face than the myriad little nibbles to loyalty.

Five respondents saw themselves as well-fitted to the demands of Jesus. One never seriously identified whether that was true or not in his life. Four knew weakness, but also knew of God's ability to work through that weakness or to provide another person with complementing strength. Only one noted a "continual sense of being poorly fitted" [9]. An ancillary question raised in the discussion was, "Who knows our

limits? God or us?"

There were no clear developmental anchors in the research here. Perhaps a major reason for that was because none of the questions asked for perceptions of when did those identity issues become paramount. The questions, instead, asked for present impressions. Only the first question asked of the person's "journey". One person gave a time indication of late college, with recommitment coming in late teens. That would give a framework of three to five years. It is probable that the present instrument was not designed well enough to adequately measure this Link developmentally.

Link Five: Faithful Love

Most of the discussion⁸ went the direction of horizontal intimacy within the Body, instead of vertical intimacy with the Lord. That would naturally follow, as all of the questions were designed to uncover the depth of fellowship and intimacy within the Body here on earth.

All respondents were unanimous in reasserting a strong need for inter-dependence with other Christians. Our needs for caring, support, sharing of struggles and joys, prayer, encouragement, role models,

8. Six members of the CRG and four members of the CG responded in writing.

strengths of others, open and trusting relationships were all mentioned. All agreed that it would be "very difficult to be a believer in a vacuum" [10].

Stereotypical relationships occurred in two places: with strangers and where roles were important. The clergy felt more clearly the pressure of role expectations to stereotype actions. With friends, growth groups, peer groups, and when doing activities that they do well, people could be natural. Sunday morning tended to be somewhat stereotyped, especially with those that were new. Also the attempt to do Christian activities for which one was not suited produced stereotyped relationships.

Most often, the sense of value was threatened through failure. In addition, some styles of worship services caused that same loss, along with not living up to the expectations of others and living in a "them/us" atmosphere.

The range of feelings when not living up to spiritual expectations showed that Christians were not immune to almost every feeling known. Sadness, discouragement, defensiveness, fear of doing permanent damage to others, disappointment, movement to despair, shame, fatigue, self-pity, consciousness of weakness, hopelessness, self-doubt, inadequacy, depression, fear, desire to give up, anger, hard to forgive self, guilt, regret and remorse shadow failures. A note needs to be made that only one of the above was mentioned more than once:

disappointment. These feelings far outweighed the few positive statements: hoping God will do his good, know God still is working, hope that the inner person is being renewed since the outer one just failed, hope through the acceptance of others, ability to forgive self, and the fact that God still loves even though failing.

Reluctance characterized four responses to the question of journeying to reach out to someone hurting. Self-doubt, doubt as to reception, and fear of rejection added to the reluctance. Only one noted her natural response to be a quick "yes." Two responded out of obedience to the Lord, and another person's natural tendency was to be of help. One was confident that he could reach out and be effective.

Nobody identified a large need to fortify his territory. With believers, it was not a problem. If there were problems, one was not in touch with them.

All ten people were able to identify the group of Christians with whom they shared a deep, intimate commitment. Especially for the women, the groups tended to be women's Bible study groups in which a great deal of sharing, prayer, and study takes place. Evidently, a measure of homogeneity was needed for a sense of intimacy to develop. The smaller group held the primary loyalty of all but three. Those three could identify PCC as the group to whom they felt a deep level of commitment.

To love others as Christ loved him was a strong personal

injunction for one person, a more conscious commitment for another, and an impossible demand for two others. For the one for whom it was a conscious commitment, this command was becoming more well-rounded and complete.

If the elements of intimacy/faithful love are loyalty, shared lives, inter-dependence and an integrating center, then these questions showed a relatively high level of that occurring. Missing were specific time references that would give a sense of when these had begun. Not clear were the subtle shades between individual responsibility and the community.

Link Six: Fulfilling My Ministry

The final Matthean Link in the Transformation Chain emerged from the church. Clear within the answers⁹ to the first question was the fact that the varied ministries of the church gave a natural setting for most ministry. Not only were the formal programs and informal meetings places of ministry, but they also provided support for ministry. In a "constant, flowing cycle" of ministry and being ministered unto, life in Christ grew.

9. Seven members of the CRG and five members of the CG responded in writing.

When asked for ministry in the rest of life, only one saw all of life as the place of ministry. Very little of what was being done outside the walls of the church gave a sense of ministry. That coincided with the difficulty in integrating all of life under the lordship issue.

It was while working through the third question that a clear message emerged: the core of ministry stays the same throughout life. The external forms of that ministry could change. The inner core remained the same: leadership in large group settings even while one-on-one ministry was desired, reaching out to those who hurt, direct involvement with people, showing agape love, the sense of being an ambassador, wanting to be family to those who are alone, automatically reaching out to the overlooked person, encouraging others, prayer. Each of those showed a definite tendency to remain stable throughout their experience to the present. "The key seems to be to find the central core, not the ministry specific, but the inner gift and the inner core" [2].

A sharp difference appeared in the question over "busy work."¹⁰ To deal with things was for many busy work, while dealing with people tended to cause growth. Even though the attitude toward all the work of ministry must be good, some was more inherently geared for growth.

10. It is interesting to speculate that this reflects another side of the secular/sacred differential noted above.

One man insisted that if people felt it was just busy work, then they had "missed the point of the ministry that God has called you to" [7]. One admitted that since he had lost the vision of where he was going, everything for a while seemed to be busy work. The reality seemed to be that some work "pays the rent" [8] for direct ministry to be possible.

The call of God to ministry showed a range from sensing God's call because of natural abilities, through a persistent inner urging, acceding to a request for teachers, needing to fill time with good things, and openings; to strong signs and a direct revelation. There seemed to be no direct relationship between the way the call was perceived and the health of the present spiritual experience in Christ. Neither did it seem to affect the strength of the hoped for direction in five years.

Of the ten respondents, three would be in what could be identified as adult ministry, i.e., that ministry that will occupy the bulk of their adult lives. Two others would be on the verge of entering their ministry. The others would not be entering that identified adult ministry yet. Especially when the settled core as identified by the respondents was placed parallel to their hopes five years into the future, the uncertainty of the direction of adult ministry was clear.

Three final comments. People needed to continue to ask the question, "Whom am I serving?" At the start, that needed to be a

deliberate, conscious habit. Second, the tendency was to start ministry with a high view of self-importance. Only later was there less of a need to be center stage. Finally, at the beginning point of ministry, roles were important. As the person became more secure in Christ, roles became less important and ministry became more natural.

The Question of Sequence

Lurking behind much of the discussion has been the question, "Is Christian growth developmental?" While definitive answers cannot be substantiated by the present research, probable directions can be clarified. In order to do that, the information from the final assignment must be presented.¹¹

This researcher anticipated more precision from the answers to the first two questions than was provided. Seven respondents identified the same Link for both questions, even though two of those answers would indicate that movement was occurring forward to the "most attractive" Link. Those two, plus two others, bore out the contention that the most attractive Link was the one toward which one was growing. Two others reversed the expected direction, identifying

11. Seven members of the CRG and five members of the CG responded in writing.

former Links as most attractive. In one case, the present struggle with identity is hard because of a minimal sense of God's working through him. It could be argued that he is at the God Working Through Link, attracted to Identity. If the above is accurate, then five of the twelve were able to verify their placement in the model by self-identification and attractiveness, another five by seeing no difference between the two questions.

No respondent identified their Link as being one of the first two. One can be said to be at the point of Link Three: God Working Through. Four placed themselves at Link Four: Forging an Identity, two at Link Five: Faithful Love, and four at Link Six: Fulfilling My Ministry. The fact that nobody placed themselves at the seventh Link supports the design decision to limit the research to the first six.

Of the four at the identity phase, an interesting mix of issues emerged. New ministry, failure to exhibit the fruit of a joy-filled son of God, identification with a new church fellowship, and limited changes within indicated that each was struggling with a different agenda. Of the two at Link Five, both were certain of their growth, as both had struggled with Identity issues, and were now "on the other side." Most disturbing, the four at Link Six were all "professional" Christians, that is, Christians in an identifiable ministry from which they receive their livelihood.

The question must be raised: are self-designations of placement on

a epigenetic model such as this accurate? Just because the external work may be in ministry, does that mean that the deeper issues are in Link Six? Even though the present research cannot answer that conclusively, it would seem apparent that self-designations would be weaker than reasoned assessments by a third party. When more skill is garnered and instruments constructed, then more precision would be possible.

Of the twelve respondents, one described the model as having no affect on his Christian life. Also, he was not able to distinguish any point in the Transformation Chain as particularly attractive or as describing his present position.

The strong statement that the first five Links did not occur sequentially but simultaneously was given by one respondent. "The first 5 stages did not occur in sequence 'linearly'; rather they all were happening at the same time--& still are!" [4] He offered two different attempts to diagram his experience. In both of them, strong interdependence was indicated between the first five, feeding a present sense of fulfilling ministry. In the second, Phil. 2:12-13 was depicted as the core around which the other five orbited. As a description of present experience, his witness is strong for the need of each Link to be built on and to receive present strength from prior Links.

Three of the twelve respondents made direct statements that the model fit their experience, with an additional six supporting the model

as organizing or validating their spiritual histories. Because of the importance of the answers, a verbatim listing follows:

Used as a model, not a standard, it is good. It has made sense of the past two years' struggle [1].

I have learned that many of my experiences are similar to others. It's helped me appreciate and feel OK about my growing and struggles associated with growing [2].

The . . . model seems to fit my experience in the Christian walk and my perception of other people I see in their walks [3].

Illustrates what already gone through in my own experience [5].

It's kind of neat to look back and have some idea that things make sense - or to think others might have been through some of the same things [8].

It has helped me see where I have been and where I am going and what I might expect. It seems to keep me in touch with reality . . . we don't just "arrive" at some place at some time, but really are on a pilgrimage which will not end till eternity [10].

It's made me look at where I'm at and where I've come and shown me ways and places I have grown that before I had not seen. It has been encouraging . . . to look back and see that where I've been has been valid [11].

My experience fits very well into the model as I have said many times. I am convinced of its validity. Learning it in the first few months of my Christian walk was an exciting experience of insight and understanding of my new life. For a person like me who needs a hypothesis for things, it provides a systematic context in which to view and appreciate the work of Christ in my life [12].

This model helped me "organize" my life's history and since I have a natural tendency to appreciate order, it pleases me to be able to understand the evolution that is possible in growing through Christian maturity . . . pointed out how God's plan is orderly, makes sense; it revealed to me that God's plan for growth is very evident, not only in plants and animals, but in his creatures . . .

in me! To Him be the glory [16]!

The twelfth person didn't answer in the direction of sequence. Instead, his responses indicated a general helpfulness on the level of new information and insights.

Conclusion

The above responses clearly indicate the sense of hope, validation and settledness which comes with the idea that things make sense. Difficult though it might be to dovetail every experience of life in Christ within the model, in eight out of the twelve instances, it provided both framework and context for understanding what God was doing. The research has uncovered strong probabilities that understanding Christian growth as developmental is both congruent with experience and gives directional hope for the future.

The developmental Links, as charted above, are distinct from, yet dependent on each other. The presence or absence of the first three Links becomes especially apparent when working through Links Four, Five and Six. Far from blending into a homogenous mass, the distinctness of each provides understanding of a process of growing in Christ or a process leading to spiritual stagnation.

The final chapter will summarize the theoretical conclusions, the

conclusions of the research and offer suggestions for further research. All this in the hope that individuals and churches might find some possible directions as they assist the Holy Spirit in the tasks of forming Christ within people today.

CHAPTER TEN

Until Christ Is Formed Within

The purpose of this study has been to understand how the Holy Spirit has led sixteen adult Christians toward various points of maturity in Christ. The understanding of what the Holy Spirit has done would be measured by a new model, now called a Transformation Chain, created by the melding of Matthew and Erikson. This chapter summarizes those understandings.

Theoretical Conclusions

Jesus expects Christians to grow up into what they are: children of the living God. The ontological reality of the new creation is to be allowed and encouraged to grow to ripeness, until Christ is fully formed within. The ordering of that growth depends on God's agenda planted within each seed. The flourishing of the seed depends on the active cooperation of the disciple in the direction of the transformation. Described by the Beatitudes, held up as a perfective imperative, based on a redemptive indicative, the disciple can trust the seed of the Kingdom to grow to full ripeness, transforming from the inside out.

In order for growth to have concrete content, Matthew's Jesus alternates between life and the classroom, molding within while modeling for the disciples this new life. The Gospel of Matthew can be seen from at least three perspectives. At its most obvious level, Matthew gives us the good news of Jesus' ministry. From a second perspective, Matthew presents a catechism for new converts, arranging all the commands of the Master in a way that can be readily taught and learned. From yet a third perspective, that of developmental psychology, certain agendas suggest themselves as stages of growth which are more than hearing and doing. In the hearing and doing, other changes occur. If prayer, reading the Word, and worship can be considered analogous to eating, sleeping, and exercising; then growing in grace may be analogous to growing from being an infant to a mature adult. Not watertight compartments, the three perspectives continue to inform and infuse each other as a living reality. No less than that can be expected, for what is being described is Jesus and the changes he effects while people walk with him!

Since there is an order to all of God's ways and purposes, it should not be surprising to find order in the ways of the new creation. Both temptations and growth are common to the disciple. Within the process of changing disciples from what they were into what they will become, a Transformation Chain can be described, forged from seven Links and an Anchor Bolt. Never are the disciples free of what has been forged. The first Links must be strong if the latter Links

are to have full potency. Each of the Links delineate a definite facet of wholeness. Each, if forged properly, produce a unique strength, providing security for the next Link to be molded.

Matthew and Erikson do have something to say to each other. Matthew addresses the spiritual dimension. Centering new creations on a life of following Jesus, Matthew provides agendas that keep the disciples doing the will of the Father even as he transforms them. Erikson addresses the human side, identifying some of the ways that the seed can be choked. Being creatures of both worlds,¹ both interact with the other, bringing the whole person into being transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

Research Conclusions

It is helpful to have a road map--not in order to usurp dependence on Holy Spirit for guidance, but to make sense of the past and look with hope to the future. The struggles Christians bear and encouragements they receive are so diverse that a road map can assist

1. Piediscalzi notes, with Erikson, that the unique power that both Luther and Gandhi brought to bear on their worlds was precisely because they were "able to face the central truth of human nothingness and gain power from it." When a person "puts into his theology all that he is and has and has been, for the sake of becoming the one he is destined to be, by his own health and pathology," that person is a religious genius (p. 14, quoting Pruyser).

in finding a comforting commonness in our histories. To be able to put the minutiae of Christians' lives in the perspective of the larger plan of God in transforming them, gives hope. Jesus becomes even more real.

One of the most important questions, both practically and theologically, remains the question of theodicy. What can God do? What will he do? Why does he continue to allow wrong to occur in the world, in the lives of these new creations and in the old creation? The fact that these questions rise early in the individual's life in Christ, underlines the urgent need for realistic biblical teaching and modeling of this doctrine.

Individuals are of prime importance in the early days of being a Christian. Even though larger gatherings are important, what was remembered with the most clarity was the one-on-one. The close friends in whom Christ was seen, family members in whom change was evident, people who reflected the blessing of being ministered to--these all enhanced the reality of God's work.

The meshing of the sacred and the secular constitute a difficulty of high proportions. Yet until that could be accomplished, issues of lordship remained unsettled, and the sense of having a ministry outside the walls of a church remained dormant. One of the tasks of high priority must be to identify ways to enable the average person in Christ to find his calling, and to pursue it. This should not be an

insurmountable problem, as the core of gifted ministering remains somewhat constant.

In microcosm, sequential development was difficult to establish; in macrocosm, much clearer. As people stepped back from specific questions to look at the broad picture, they were able to see an ordering of their lives that paralleled the Transformation Chain. That in itself engendered assurance, excitement, relief, praise, perspective, appreciation, validation, and hope.

Further Research

Many are the suggestions that have come to mind for further research. Primary in the mind of this author is the need for a longitudinal study, over at least twenty years, of thirty to fifty Christians. Only then would one have definitive information on how Christian growth actually did occur. Also possible from such a study, would be help in diagnosis and treatment of certain spiritual pathologies.

The latter is next in order of importance. The average pastor or Christian worker does not have available to him diagnostic tools that are true both to Scripture and the human predicament. Many spiritual "doctors" don't even have the equivalent of a stethoscope. More

research, testing, and development of such tools is needed. What does Fulfilling My Ministry look like when there is not a settled sense of identity, or basic unsettledness as to what God can actually do? Even where tools of diagnosis are present, biblical means of correcting the pathologies are often lacking. For example, if a teen is struggling with doubt, what should one do? What does Matthew say in the section on Link Four? Does that give any suggestions for corrective instruction?

Third, the Transformation Chain needs to be completed in at least two ways. First, its insights and directions must be examined against the remainder of the New Testament. In addition to a "Matthew Track" of Christian growth, one should be able to chart a Pauline Track, and possibly, a Johanine Track. Second, a matrix of the seven stages should be set up, and completed. For example, if faith is epigenetic and present in all of the Links, then what will it look like at each Link. Can Aden's eight forms of faith be charted across the bottom row of the matrix? If faith is assent at Link Three, what is power at that Link? What tends to be the items for letting go/holding on at Link Five or Three? The matrix would need to be set up as follows, with 0 being conversion, and numbers their representative Links:

MATRIX OF TRANSFORMATION

							7
						6	6
					5	5	5
				4	4	4	4
			3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 12

Fourth, this model needs testing against other conceptualizations of Christian maturity. The need is not so great to compare it with "generic" studies of faith or maturity, as it is to compare and contrast it with those studies purporting to deal specifically with the maturing of Christ in the believer. Much more specifically Christian work needs to be done alongside the more general work.

Finally, we need much more research and writing on the shape of the Christian life in the present. Certainly in the two thousand years of life in Christ, much has been written and explored. However, who will dig through the riches of the past, explicate more clearly the biblical hope for today, and sketch in living color the intent of the Father for his children as they live in the days of the down-payment of

the Holy Spirit, with Christ being formed in each of them?

FINAL WORDS

The penultimate word comes from Erikson. "When a private foundation proposed to extend the informal Wellfleet meetings to a formal program of 'disseminating' psychohistory as a new field, he (Erikson) thought the idea absurd. 'What is there to disseminate?' he asked. 'There is no grand theory, no ideology to spread - only questions that require new work.'"²

The ultimate word comes from Jesus through Matthew.

Come, follow me
 and I will make you . . .
 Blessed are you . . . (for)
 You are the salt of the earth.
 You are the light of the world.
 Be Perfect
 as your heavenly Father is perfect.
 Make disciples of all nations . . .
 And surely I will be with you always.³

2. Kenneth Keniston, "Remembering Erikson at Harvard," Psychology Today 17, no. 6 (June 1983): 29.

3. 4:19, 5:11,13,14,48, and 28:19-20.

APPENDIX A

LINK 1 - GOD WORKING IN ME

CRG - 8/11/83, CG - 9/8/83

1. WHAT WERE THE DOMINANT FACTORS IN YOUR FIRST FEW MONTHS AS A CHRISTIAN?

1 Relationship to pastor and his wife. Concern for the salvation of other young people and church members.¹

2 Early life in church.

4 Group of college students, accepted me, didn't criticize or try to change my messed up life style. Strong Biblical teaching, exposition of the Word with relevant application. Fast pace of change, great sense of grace/forgiveness of God.

5 Christian home, much moving, doctrine of perfectionism, and the Salvation Army Band as a small group, peer support group.

7 Hours of reading Scripture. Intense prayer, believing God meant exactly what he said, leading to a closeness to God. He cared about even the smallest items in my life. He wanted me to depend on him even for the unimportant.

8 Family culture as Christian. Because of it, I can't remember ever not being a Christian in some sense of the word.

11 Age 8 [original commitment] - none. age 15,16 [recommitment] - knowledge that I should be reading Scripture on my own and praying, taking a more personal everyday approach to

1. The answers given by each person are recorded as written in Appendices A-G. There will be no attempt to fashion full sentences, correct grammar, or avoid colloquialisms.

that.

9 Coming of age (21), responsibility, Lois, relationship.

12 Relief, joy, awe at knowing that I was saved. The authority of Jesus. The rightness and authority of the Bible. Study of Job for growth groups: the sovereignty of God, His understanding beyond mine. Prayer, closeness to God. Matthew class--consistent with my experience--I am part of the Kingdom. A new way of seeing others. Lay leader for worship--amazing support of the Holy Spirit. Struggle with "mine" vs. "His."

16 A sense of "Dear God, I've thrown my whole lot in with yours; please don't let go of me now!" [I'd broken off an engagement to follow the Lord's call to the convent. I felt as though I had truly given up everything to follow Him]

2. WHO WERE THE DOMINANT PEOPLE IN YOUR FIRST FEW MONTHS AS A CHRISTIAN?

1 Pastor and his wife.

2 Pastor

4 Seminary student and director of college age ministry at church, and who had greatest influence on me becoming a Christian. Two other friends.

7 Terry and Joyce Goff, Elaine and Elmer Martz.

8 Parents and maternal grandfather.

9 Lois, my parents, her parents, people at the church.

11 At 8 - none; at 15-16 - Young Life leaders, speakers.

12 Bob Barr, Growth groups, family, sharing of faith.

14 Ada - had been missionary in India and shared the facts of theology in this sharing group. The sharing group itself.

16 Role models of people in the convent and priesthood. I had to look to people who had already committed themselves to following the Lord more closely; I had to move away from married people, lest my resolve be weakened.

3. WHAT WERE YOUR INITIAL EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT GOD WAS GOING TO DO IN AND FOR YOU?

1 After striving for a couple years to try to act like a Christian, I was just taken up with the realization that now I was one without having to earn it. Now it was grace.

2 Protection from harm due to accidents.

4 That he was going to change me.

7 Believed that God was going to do in me anything that His Word said he would do and that he would do for me anything I would allow him to do by turning that area of my life over to him.

8 He was going to guide and protect me [from others and from my own mistakes] and also expect me to try to be Christlike.

9 Resignation to pastoral/Christian service role.

11 At 8 - it was all to do with heaven and hell: fire insurance. At 15-16, change things around me, provide for me. Still didn't really see Him as very personal, desiring to be involved in nitty gritty of daily grind. What He would do would be much later down the line.

12 Save me, sanctify me, change me, make me Christ-like.

14 Keep me calm, healing, casting out demons, better at living, make me rich.

16 1 - peace of mind, after struggling between what God wanted for me and what I wanted from me [marriage, etc.]; 2 - that He would be better able to use me as His instrument; 3 - that I would be able to carry out some mission which could only be accomplished if I were absolutely flexible in God's hands; 4 - salvation for myself and others [as though I could accomplish this!]

4. IN WHAT AREAS DID YOU EXPERIENCE DISSONANCE BETWEEN WHAT YOU THOUGHT WAS EXPECTED OF YOU AND YOUR FORMER PATTERNS OF LIFE?

1 Very frustrated and guilt-ridden over adolescent sexual fantasies that continued. Things did not immediately change, and not able to talk to anybody about it.

2 [prefers word tension to dissonance] Very little tension at first due to my low expectations of what God wanted of me, i.e., a good citizen/clean living vision. Dissonance grew with deepening understanding of what God really wanted of me as revealed through individuals, the church (PCC) and Bible study.

Before, swearing, drinking. Giving money to the church.

4 None. Nobody laid any expectations on me. They seemed to have enough faith in the Lord for Him to work it out in his life. This still seems good in retrospect.

7 When I thought that I wouldn't sin at all now that I was a Christian. I felt that I had let the Lord down and hadn't quite learned how not to sin at all.

8 My life has been sort of a steady evolution, so there wasn't a "former pattern." The worst I've had is to go thru the long periods during which God gave me things to struggle against, where hanging on day after day to the belief that He knew what He was doing, and He had a good purpose in mind, that is what kept me going.

9 Change in friends, goals, habits.

11 God expected me to be involved with other Christians [study/sharing groups, church, Christian friendships] not be the "Lone Ranger Christian". I thought it could be me and God against the world. God expected efforts on my part--it wasn't going to be time to sit back and let life roll, but there would be challenges, trials and work involved.

12 Drinking, partying, dirty jokes, skepticism, know it all attitudes, flippant, impatient with my kids and wife.

14 Using God's name in vain, working at the marriage, I needed to protect God's reputation by not confessing how I was "blowing it."

16 1 - I had to break my dating habits, conclude that relationship, read more spiritually-oriented material; 2 - I had to "work on" my still very strong desire to marry, knowing that the Lord wanted something else for/from me; 3 - I had to begin trimming away at indulging in certain pleasures (clothes, socializing, fine dining) to prepare myself for my new lifestyle.

5. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE "NEW" IN YOUR FIRST FEW MONTHS AS A CHRISTIAN?

1 I was happy about having discovered and in sense solved the mystery of what it meant to be a Christian.

2 Too long ago to remember.

4 New me, friends, desires to get my life together, hope.

7 My desires had changed from trying to please myself in any way to choosing to completely trying to please God.

8 The best I can say is that when I was 20 I prayed for a woman whom the experts said had terminal, inoperable cancer and she recovered completely. I also decided, when Dad had his first stroke, that I'd live by the faith that God would not give me more to bear than I could take. He didn't.

9 Relationships.

11 Changes so gradual I don't recall the factor of newness as a sharp contrast. In retrospect now I see how things are new. But I don't recall being struck by that earlier.

12 New relationships with family: wife, kids and parents. New set of values. New source of strengths and security.

14 Newness of relationships with Jesus, nature, friends, excitement, expecting good.

16 1 - peace, no longer fighting off God's will for me; 2 - sadness, leaving my old patterns/goals behind; 3 - fear, will I really be OK? will the Lord really be enough for me? 4 - self-consciousness, relative to being "different" in other people's eyes; some co-workers looked for me to act differently.

6A. AS YOU LOOK BACK ON THOSE EARLY DAYS AS A CHRISTIAN, WHAT HAVE YOU LEFT BEHIND?

1 False guilt. Peace that everything is OK. There is not the "innocence" that the struggle is on and I'm still OK. Early there was a real sense: God likes me.

2 Don't know how to answer.

4 Early, strong sense of God's personal involvement in my life, strengthening, disciplining. In middle, lost this. Am now regaining that emphasis.

7 Some of the beauty of the closeness because I have allowed the pressures of the day to creep in and let concerns take over rather than to share all the details with God and leave them with him.

8 Nothing but some level of immaturity.

- 9 Friends, habits, relationships.
- 11 My idea of Christianity for God's idea.
- 12 Daily zeal, excitement and awe at being saved. The strictures, formula.
- 14 Sense of unbelonging to an anchored peace - immediately on accepting Christ I knew I "belonged."
- 16 1 - fear, the Lord really is enough for me! [I still have some of the sadness because there are some things I still want--I still have the peace]; 2 - defensiveness re. my new posture; I wanted others to understand and/or agree with my view/decisions.

6B. AS YOU LOOK BACK ON THOSE EARLY DAYS AS A CHRISTIAN, WHAT HAVE YOU GONE BEYOND?

- 2 Don't know how to answer.
- 4 Nothing, more or less adding to. Great blessing of this was in fact that early teaching was solid, biblical basic principles of the spiritual life. Only exception, incomplete doctrine of prayer, too little emphasis on hearing from God as well as talking to God.
- 5 Old doctrine of perfectionism.
- 7 Have learned that even though I do sin God does not forsake me. He doesn't think any less of me. I also learned that because of this Grace he shows it is not license to proceed in a sinful manner. But rather as a motivation to draw closer to God and seek his help to correct those areas of my life that grieve the Lord.
- 8 Doing things only in my own strength, or simply to say I've achieved this or that. I accept feedback with serious interest, but I don't care as much what people say or think [although they do hurt my feelings], because I know where I'm coming from and I know I'm doing the best I can. The rest is forgiven, so I keep going.
- 9 From being a business man to pastor. The eradication of the sinful bent - and hope that not just an "accord" with that. The grace of God is sufficient to see us through, not remove us from.
- 11 The bare minimum of effort, involvement, understanding.

12 Smugness at my rightness, doubting.

14 Be scared the minute I hear about challenging the amount of faith that I have theology.

16 1 - I'm far less concerned about what others expect of me. I check things out with God, and let my decisions rest there [but I'm not totally free of wanting approval from certain others!]; 2 - Need for decision-making by church structure or hierarchy; I have a clearer sense of the Spirit in me.

7. DESCRIBE YOUR PRESENT SENSE OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN YOU.

1 . Transition into what parts of ministry are enjoyable and fruitful. Sense that trying to recapture the early days.

2 Struggle with priorities, what's OK with me and God: family, money, church work, time, witness, personal habits.

4 God is seeking to cultivate in me a desire to know Him, to worship Him and to serve Him more effectively--and to really dig to do this: to struggle to walk with Him and to listen to Him, to hear His Word and His voice in particular ways. Leading me to question the way I'm serving Him now is what I'm really suited for.

5 Threw out baby with the dishpan. Need to reassess what was thrown out, and what needs to be kept.

7 I believe that God is currently showing and confirming in me that I must draw closer to him, depend on him more, not to lean on my own understanding, but to have that awesome anticipation of a child that God is at work and can and will solve all problems that I bring to and leave with him.

8 He selected me specifically to do a job. The job is too hard for me. It is clear He steps in and works on me. [I think of things on-the-spot which help, and He has let me learn to love the people I work with no matter how obnoxious or troublesome they are to me.] In doing these questions I saw that my career now is the main arena for expression of my Christian life. I also saw that always sense that different, unique, but was still OK.

9 Forgiving, guiding, inspiring, empowering, accepting. I am accepted and loved at this very moment. This is a

very emotional statement [when 7, lost mother with stroke which left left side paralyzed, and left strong need for acceptance]

11 He is showing me how He desires all of my heart, soul, mind and strength. The only way to truly living life to its fullest is to make sure the foundation is dependence--openness, willingness to follow Him, trust him, abandonment of self to Him. God is making His home in more and more of my heart and life. He's not just there for the big events but for all the routine and little things. Anything I do, anywhere I am I can bring glory to God, serve and obey Him. God and His precepts are taking deeper and more expansive roots in my life and thinking. He is creating a hunger and thirst for Himself.

12 Making me more patient and accepting of the faults and imperfections of others and myself. Letting people be different from me without hostility. Showing me the gap between my expectations and reality and teaching me to trust Him for the difference.

14 Jesus = Word, faith not fear, trusting God, praise, prayer goes in steps of learning, expect the good, new idea of wisdom.

16 Purifying me "as gold is tried by fire." Weaning me from attachments which keep me from drawing closer to Him.

APPENDIX B

LINK 2 - GOD WORKING AROUND ME

CRG - 10/9/83, CG - 10/10/83

1. DESCRIBE YOUR EARLY AWARENESS OF GOD ACTUALLY MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE AROUND YOU.

2 God has consistently placed individuals around me to draw me closer to him by their teaching and example. These would be: grade school - pastor; youth - youth and camp leaders; college - Campus Crusade leaders; early marriage - insurance man; first job - Church of Christ co-worker.

3 I became a Christian 21 years ago--at 31--and much of what I gave credit to God for may not have been seen that way if I has seen it last year. E.g., civil rights movement of the 60's. I really trusted my perceptions 2 or 3 years ago. I felt a power in some strong Scriptural teachers, some testimonies from FGBMI. These were supernaturally oriented, rather than socially oriented.

4 Phyllis, a girl in college days, seemed "together," happy no matter what the circumstances were--inner beauty that was very attractive. Also had convictions. Demonstrated real caring for me. Plus, few others of her friends.

8 As a child I realized without being told that members of my extended family and nuclear family lived differently from others because they were Christians.

9 1 - An OK mother [??]. 2 - revival meetings and a forced kind of sanctimoniousness, usually lasting 2 weeks max. 3 - Lois and her genuine life of commitment with joy.

10 [Making a difference--the term is too vague; then "early" is a little unclear in light of my own experiences]. I think of people wanting to study Scripture, but this is something I continue to be aware of--to me the study of Scripture is central and I think the Holy Spirit must motivate this too. Also, the area of healing was something that came into my

awareness--early--right after my conversion--it seems that many were healed in these early times, lately there have not been many at all.

11 It was probably in college and I saw people around me motivated to study and pray and learn what God's plan for them was. I was impressed by others' discipline and order. Up to that point, I had no steady, solid relationships with Christians and my faith was pretty much my own thing.

12 My parents were "converted" when I was 7 years old. My father quit smoking and we attended church, Bible study and evangelistic meetings with traveling evangelists.

14 Emily's personality calmed immediately upon asking Jesus into her life. Len became increasingly willing to look at things he had bottled up inside.

16 1 - first my mother--always humming religious songs and telling me how/that God was taking care of every single concern in her life. 2 - in the convent--sick, infirm, dying, handicapped sisters--singing God's praises, thankful that He had chosen them to carry a special cross. 3 - Isabel at Chili office; told of how God called her to Christian counseling; faith in action--open to His direction in setting up private practice; 4 - PCC worship services; praises and concerns time [blew my mind].

2. AFTER YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN, WHEN DID YOU NOTICE WHAT GOD WAS DOING IN OTHER PEOPLE, AND WHAT AFFECT DID IT HAVE ON YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE?

2 Became more aware during Praises and concerns time during worship and growth group. In general, it has had a positive effect on my spiritual life. However, sometimes I have felt something must be missing in me to not be experiencing some things in my own life.

3 See above for time. When I decided God was working in people around me I judged those were people strong in Scriptures. I began to restrict my non-Scriptural church work, and I began to distrust the non-Scriptural elements. I began to trust God for much more in my total life. I wanted to be more like the mature Christians I saw, but I quit worrying about my failure to produce signs [e.g. tongues] and quit worrying about my mid-life crisis.

4 What God doing in Duke and others in N.T. Bible Study--challenging them to live by faith as they pursued their studies with uncertainty of career choices, money, who marry, etc.

When--right after became Christian. What effect--Encouraged me to want to do the same.

8 I have 2 troubles with questions like this. 1 - I don't remember enough to answer the "whens," and 2 - I've always been such a tough-minded, individualist when it came to my own inner being that changes I've made have come about from inner rather than outer influence much of the time. However, after Dad died I saw Mom turn to prayer--She'd wander thru the library, and her hand would go to books she really benefited from reading. [She found out about Glenn Clark]. She'd talk about her insights which combined to make me realize there were zillions of possibilities for the way things could be.

9 As I observed what I considered sincerity, my faith/commitment was sharpened.

10 I believe I noticed right away--I think God does things partly as lessons in our Christian walk--circumstances, people you meet, people you become friendly with, situations that arise, problems that you go through--I have been blessed--many of these others have in some ways taught me lessons or shown me examples of faith or courage under adversity or a new insight in knowing Jesus or prayer--wisdom or discernment in prayer.

11 It was in college that I really noticed that, many years after becoming a Christian. The effect it had on my spiritual life was to draw me closer to God in my own walk and also drew me into some solid fellowship. I began to see that we are a body together, able to learn and grow from each other. And that experience of fellowship strengthened those convictions.

12 When I first attended PCC, I perceived a living faith, a power and love that I had not seen before. I saw a dedication to God which had to come from Him. People did what they did [piano playing, Sunday School teaching, Brigade leading] with a special zeal, power, love and peace that spoke to me of the reality of God in their lives.

14 Others were careful not to use God's name in vain, not for social acceptability but for real personal worship and respect.

16 1 - # 2-4 above came after I became a Christian; effects on my life: 2 - prompted me to evaluate my own willingness to carry the crosses which came my own way; how open was I really to be used, to be an instrument, to accept God's will for me in its totality. 3 - again, prompted self-evaluation in [1] being open to Spirit's leading, [2] readiness to take risks, [3] freedom to go with God despite

family or outside pressures. 4 - profound gratitude to find people who were so willing to share their personal lives [spiritual and other] and relationship with God openly & publicly.

3. WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR INNER FEELINGS AND IMPRESSIONS WHEN YOU BEGAN TO SEE THAT AUTHENTIC FAITH WAS PRESENT IN PEOPLE WHO DID NOT BELONG TO YOUR CHURCH OR RELIGIOUS TRADITION?

2 My impression was recognizing God works through many different people without needing them to all be "grown" the same way, i.e., via my church. I feel that God must have a separate purpose for each church and that while Jesus can be "all things to all people" we as an individual church can not.

3 1 - Distrust my church and tradition [Episcopalian]. 2 - Find some "authentic" faith in the Episcopal church for which I was very grateful, e.g., C.S.Lewis. 3 - Warm, accepting love from some people I recognized as faithful Christians, people I had not liked before. 4 - I never really thought my tradition had it.

4 I had no previous church or religious tradition before becoming a Christian. So I wasn't surprised that someone else might have authentic faith. Surprise in disorientation to discover that Roman Catholics might actually be true believers.

8 I felt comfortable and relaxed -- less fearful somehow.

9 Confusion --> frustration --> desire to identify more closely with those others "outside."

10 This question could be turned around for me - I began to see that authentic faith was not present in people who belonged to my church or religious tradition. The presence of authentic faith in others of other backgrounds is not something that I have doubted.

11 It was exciting. It made me realize how big God is, that He's not limited, that he's in touch with more than my life and the immediate circle around me.

12 As a child, my regular Christian education [Sunday School and confirmation class] emphasized Bible stories, catechisms, Bible verse memory: "head knowledge." Occasional evangelistic meetings emphasized "being saved" and excitement about letting Jesus into your heart and resisted turning my life over to Him. PCC cleared up the confusion by teaching and

example and demonstrated the attractiveness of the Lordship of Christ.

14 I was jealous; I wanted a corner on truth.

16 1 - I was shaken--I wondered how many of my long-cherished beliefs needed to be studied, re-evaluated, discarded perhaps--modified or whatever. I felt less secure in holding on to old views and teachings; however, I also felt a kind of freedom; a sense that in doing all the above [studying, re-evaluating, etc.] I would come into a new spiritual realm -- and I wanted to do that. 2 - So, I was encouraged by seeing deep faith in "non-Catholics" and it spurred me on to do what I needed to do.

4. CLARIFY YOUR EARLY EXPECTATIONS AS TO WHAT GOD COULD DO IN THE WORLD.

2 Early expectations were more toward what I was supposed to do or not do to be a good Christian. Later my view changed to expecting God to change me and others around me.

3 I had very little expectation for God's work in the world, still don't. I expected God to work in individuals, and I saw Him doing that a lot. I see God much more in individual that I do in big revivals, renewals, etc., or even history. Perhaps, I'm too young still.

4 He could bring any unsaved person to Himself. He could change people from the inside out.

8 I thought He could do anything but that probably He didn't need to intervene all that much. [Now, I believe God wants us to do whatever we can for ourselves, and that when this runs out, He'll come in and help finish.]

9 I looked for Utopia in our time - needed to separate between what God could so and what He would do, or how He would do it.

10 "Could" seems to be the key word. He could cure all illness, solve all problems, etc. He could turn the world upside down. He could completely change me. He could bring joy and hope and peace.

11 My early expectations were limited. I don't recall in any detail what kinds of things I thought He was capable of, but I do recall a feeling of having to be "in control." I'm aware now of the great ways God does desire to work, I'm opening up more doors to Him.

12 I thought that God perfected people, make them perfect in love and in seeking and doing His will.

14 God would solve the large issues of peace and prosperity because I and my group of Christians were now praying. I began to pray as I watched the news, feeling that I had some powerful love through Christ to offer to the world.

16 1 - by early, I will refer to my pre-Christian days [before age nineteen]. I believed God could do anything at all in the world. He could eliminate famine, end wars, decrease poverty and sickness, etc. I believed His omnipotence was based solely in his own power; I discounted the very real part that people play in furthering or frustrating His designs. I "decided" that the evils present in the world were God's punishment to us for our sins. I laid everything that happened in His hands. 2 - after I became a Christian, I came to understand better that much of the evil around us is simply a result of our own selfishness, greed for power, etc. I therefore say my personal responsibility to live my Christian life in more serious terms. "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me," as the song puts it.

5. SKETCH ONE OR TWO SPECIFIC INSTANCES WHERE YOU PERCEIVED THAT GOD WAS UNMISTAKABLY AT WORK IN OTHER PEOPLE.

2 1 - Smythe's, Bob's trust during and after Jackie's death. 2 - Joan Peck's gentle spirit.

3 A couple in Newark, NY brought my father-in-law back to God before he died. God autographed that one for me, there is no question about it. Gideon testimony: Bill Bove was drunk and suicidal. He picked up a Bible instead of a gun and is now a Christian family man, member of Evangel congregation.

4 1 - Jan--girl I'd been involved with--I became a Christian and then told her about it--then she trusted Christ and began to grow. 2 - Susie--older girl, just went through a divorce. I shared with her and helped her with some difficulties and then she trusted Christ and began to lead some of her family to the Lord.

8 Friend we'd prayed for had a complete remission of cancer, altho declared terminally ill by MD's. Teacher we prayed for got over migraines and took up the Christian life as a result of our telling her about prayers. [She had been very cynical.]

9 Lois' mother, her faith during her death days.

Grandma - in quiet faith as she fought cancer.

10 The husband of a couple who were friends of ours in Marriage Encounter was diagnosed with a testicular tumor. After much prayer and surgery, he was discovered to have a very benign tumor.

11 The easiest to recall are recent. I've seen it in my roommate, Leesa. Because I know her so well I can say there have been many instances where I've been able to say unmistakably it is God. There have been many times that I've seen her put aside her rights and defensiveness to meet my needs, seeing her open and thankful acceptance of loving criticism.

12 God's work in others is mainly visible as He works through them. A number of ministries at PCC, from piano playing to friendliness at Coffee and Conversations showed me God at work. My son showing special friendship and concern for a classmate with special needs is a very valuable instance of God at work.

14 Marge and Bill Kerr told us they'd pray about our decision to leave Asbury and come to PCC.

16 1 - My father was not easy to live with [putting it mildly]--many of us in my family, I've learned, were on edge in his presence. My mother included. And I believe beyond any doubt that it was God at work in her that helped her stay with my father for over fifty years of marriage. 2 - I worked with/for a sister who headed the congregation of 700+ members. She had extraordinary strength and energy to deal with problems [people and situations] day and night--and kept it up for 8 years, because God was her strength.

6. WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR EARLY SURPRISES AS YOU WATCHED GOD'S ACTION IN THE WORLD?

2 [assume mean pleasant] None stand out from early stages.

3 1 - That God did it [then]. E.g., healings spiritual and physical. 2 - That they were all important to individuals and their immediate circles, but not to a larger segment of society. E.g., a healing doesn't impress unbelievers.

4 Can't think of any. Perhaps that He is so gracious.

8 That He'd let missionaries be murdered. That so

many pastors [some were relatives] treated [?] what should have been a spiritual leadership role like a political appointment.

9 His permissiveness--what He let other people get away with.

10 That so much of the past was still present; that my old questions about the problem of evil seemed not so compelling because Jesus had settled this by his death on the cross. That the people I would have "picked" were not the ones God "picked."

11 That he would work in ways and places I'd least expect. He had no biases or favorites.

12 I was surprised at some of the changes in my own attitudes and feelings and those of my family.

14 I saw Moms at PCC keeping kids quiet by using loving winks instead of threatening stares.

16 1 - God did not give people what they prayed for, even when their requests were very plausible; e.g. someone "deserved" to find a job. 2 - Sometimes God changed people--"fragmented" people became whole when approached by a loving person; healing took place between hurting parties when prayer was offered for them.

7. WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR EARLY DISAPPOINTMENTS AS YOU WATCHED GOD'S ACTION IN THE WORLD?

2 1 - Not saving someone who was terminally ill. 2 - Allowing a friend to become a Mormon. 3 - Realizing that God would let people starve.

3 The world doesn't seem to be getting any better, socially or spiritually. Paul's churches failed [is this really true?]. Several people who had remissions died of the disease a year or so later, or did not become better Christians.

4 That my immediate family--especially my mother--didn't become Christians.

8 That there were so few Christians, to begin with, and that many who said they were didn't live like one. [I didn't understand that He'd let you find your own way of growth]. [This is related to what you said about growing up in a parsonage and hearing all the inside junk].

9 The shallowness of Christian commitment,

committed to the wrong things.

10 That I was not more changed and more different. That I still had to struggle with knowing. That some answers to prayer did not come out as I had hoped or expected.

11 It didn't always coincide with my perceptions. He didn't work as fast as I'd like.

12 God works within the framework of our strengths and weaknesses resulting from our upbringing and experiences rather than a total supernatural remodeling. His grace covers our blind spots and weaknesses, rather than His Power changing them immediately and miraculously. I must accept imperfections even in those whom I perceived as perfect and in myself, and my family.

14 The people for whom I prayed for healing weren't healed. It wasn't as easy as I'd thought.

16 He wasn't living up to my expectations [see answer #4]. He wasn't visibly rewarding the just or punishing the wicked--[and at my immature level, I seemed to "need" that evidence to prove His omnipresence and omnipotence; without it, I questioned His being a real God]. Also, I couldn't understand why God didn't "shape up" permissive trends in society, wipe out social evils, etc.

8. IN WHAT WAYS HAS IT BEEN INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT OR CLEAR TO IDENTIFY GOD'S HAND IN THE WORLD?

2 I have gone through a cycle of believing that everything that happens was God's will for me to realizing that some things just happen due to the imperfections of this world. I would like to think that the "big" events are all God's plan but realize God does not always intervene. It's hard for me to sort out God's answers to prayer vs events that would just happen anyway.

3 1 - In the world, politics, etc. Very hard to see God's hand. Praise the Lord Scripture does not tell us we should expect to see mankind getting better and better. 2 - In individuals. It is getting harder--must be a stage of mine. There doesn't seem to be much growth in me. Am I resisting God and refusing to see Him?

4 Difficult: Don't see much happening here. Most of what I see seems explainable on strictly human effort basis--especially on local basis. World basis easier to see in light of prophecy.

8 Difficult: conflicting reports in the press--you get one full story, then a few weeks later its almost completely reversed as more "facts" are piled on. My sense is, I haven't the foggiest notions as to what's actually happening, really, out in the world. I guess that's why I concentrate on nearby things. For me it is less and less necessary to identify God's hand in the world. I am comfortable knowing that it is at work . . . that's enough now. [Increasingly clear to me personally].

9 As I see God's modus operandi in the Word I have less difficulty seeing Him at work in the world.

10 Lately, have had increasing awareness of sin and possibility of deception--feel that I am to act in certain cases--even though I don't feel that clear about where God is in the situation. My basic instinct is to retreat or withdraw, but feel I must trust even though my course of action as led by God is not clear. Have been aware of my "sympathy with sin." Psalm 106 and Golden Rule.

11 I'm more trusting of God now and expect more and my eyes are open more now to what He's doing--"practice makes perfect."

12 God works through imperfect people, tragedy, upheaval, discontinuity, difficulty in order to change us and allow us to grow. My 15 minutes of "quiet time" with Him gives perspective to see his mighty work in the laboratory of everyday life. My struggle is with how and where I am resisting Him. Am I complacent or over tired? Dedicated or overly compulsive? Trusting Him or just lazy? Responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit or disorganized? Patient and kind or just avoiding conflict?

14 Increasingly clear: family issues [mine and others]; learning to love and help others. Increasingly difficult: healing.

16 I don't find it easy to differentiate between "God's" hand and a "person's" hand--are people's needs and motives the cause behind what we see or is it God's hand?? Does being a Christian account for the difference?

APPENDIX C

LINK 3 - GOD WORKING THROUGH ME

CRG - 7/21/83, CG - 7/28/83

1. WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCES SENSING GOD WORKING THROUGH YOU?

2 Teaching Sunday School. Teaching our children about God, Jesus and prayer.

6 At very young age, making people happy, wanting to please. At 17, already in college, serving Lord helping at church suppers and teaching Sunday School. Counseling at a roller skating party.

11 Young Life: getting feedback from kids, directly and indirectly re. time I spent with them and the effect it had on them. Not aware at the time God was working thru me, but saw it in retrospect--hours or days later. The first times were in a ministry setting, I had been prepared to be open to God, to seeing the effects. It was a conscious effort to make myself available.

12 Explaining the Gospel to my children, seeing them accept Christ. Parenting, especially devotions and bedtime discussions. Discussing and defending my faith with friends at work. Lay leadership of worship service. Boys' Brigade. Sunday School teaching. "Counseling" students and employees at work. Growth groups.

13 Loved older people and sensed that I brought joy to them, even at an early age. As teenagers [youth group] we visited shut-ins, played and sang for them. People told me that they were blessed by my playing--from 9 on. Speaking at young peoples' meetings. "Preached" my first sermon in Gardiner, Maine--age 18--and some people accepted the Lord. A few years later, I saw one of the men, who told me that he was still walking with the Lord.

14 About 2 months after I had accepted Christ, Len

was studying for architectural license exams about midnight. He was agitated because he couldn't understand. I said a prayer, "Jesus, you can do this because you are the author of it. Will you let me explain it to Len?" I then taught Len how to do mathematical maneuverings to find an imaginary point on an imaginary line. I have never studied physics and need a calculator to do my check book. Explaining and understanding were so richly clear that we were in bed by one o'clock. Christ was unquestionably present.

16 Started praying St. Francis's Peace Prayer when in senior year of high school. Began to sense the Lord doing so when in convent, about 22. Felt need to express thoughts and feelings and needs of convent classmates (about 30). Became spokesperson for our group when interfacing with "superiors." Post Vatican II. Changes needed to be made in religious life, updating relative to life style, ministries, evaluation of traditions and discarding ways no longer appropriate. I was instigator behind establishment of small oratory at the Motherhouse. Did same thing getting another small chapel established at convent in Miami Beach. Paved the way for sisters from outlying convents to conduct themselves in same way at the Motherhouse as they did in their convent . . . no "double standard" because of fears of creating waves.

2. WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SENSE OF THE EXTENT GOD IS WORKING THROUGH YOU?

2 Growth group varies from strong to weak. Assisting as Worship service leader--strong sense. Recruiting within the congregation for church jobs: strong. Continuing to work with children. Witnessing outside the church circle--weak. Still more comfortable talking about my faith with church people. Feelings of guilt and hypocrisy--what others think.

6 How do you measure it? We know at times when we have said and helped, sometimes that told later. At times that falls on deaf ears. Working one-on-one, many opportunities. It is not necessary to know. Learn to be sensitive to the promptings of God.

11 God works thru me when I realize my dependence on Him, when I acknowledge my inadequacy alone. I see that He works thru the person He made me, not just what I say but by who I am as the Holy Spirit works to sanctify me. I don't have to have prepared "speeches" or memorized scripture but just being myself in situations has been used by God. God working thru me is in His way at His time, not something I control. I see God working thru me with my gifts and talents.

12 Continuing experiences as in #1. God is especially real in my dealing with other people as He shows love, patience and understanding through a person who was pretty deficient in these qualities before I gave my life to Christ.

13 Praying for and encouraging new children's Christian growth. Preparing for and teaching my weekly Bible study of teachers. Ministering to some people who are having difficult family problems. Speaking at Christian Women's Clubs and seeing people come to know the Lord. Exhorting and encouraging younger parents. Helping bear some family burdens: Uncle Ernie and Maine. Encouraging friends.

14 When I open myself to the Holy Spirit, God uses me to clarify problems, confront others and help restore relationships. I seldom have the intensity of insight as I had in the mathematical experience.

3. WHAT EXPERIENCES AND/OR TEACHINGS HELP YOU UNDERSTAND GOD'S WORKING THROUGH YOU?

2 Feedback I get from teaching and working with kids has been favorable. I sense God helps me teach by answering prayers for the right words and expressions to communicate both the facts and true feeling of God's love through me. I believe my teaching ability is a gift (Rom 12:6).

6 Being parent and counselor. Teaching, both the experiences from the past and Christian heritage.

11 What has helped me most clearly see that God has worked thru me is always feedback from people who are in a more objective position, who have seen or experienced what God has done thru me. Grasping that God's timing is not always mine, therefore I may not see immediate results of my efforts and openness to God. Paul's teaching in I Cor. 2--each person plays a part of the whole picture, helps me not get discouraged when I don't see results. Knowing that God does desire to work thru me. Being prepared to be used and know what to look for.

12 1 - Matthew class, God at work in, around and through me. 2 - Seeing Him at work through others, the specific, individualized ministry of the Holy Spirit touching my personal needs through coordination and orchestration of individual ministries and events in a way that could not be coincidence. 3 - Praises and concerns, witness to His work in people's lives. 4 - Encouraging comments on or results from my ministries, e.g., getting an enlightened answer to a question about last week's Sunday School lesson, seeing my children or S.S. students show Christ-like love in their interactions with others, someone

saying sincerely that I did a good job. 5 - Doing things I couldn't do alone, unexpected or unlikely extent or timing of success in a ministry task. 6 - God can be trusted: "God is not Lucy." 7 - God works through imperfect humans: Peter, Paul, David, etc. 8 - Give what you do to God and He will use it. 9 - Personal regular devotional Bible reading and prayer.

13 Experiences listed above. Scripture: deepening knowledge, understanding and application of all I am studying. At present, Philippians and several OT passages. Devotional life.

14 I have been disappointed and hard on myself because I haven't had God work through me to produce "big miracles." Two things I thought about the first 2 or 3 years were healing and my neighborhood becoming Christian. I'm still wondering why I began the Christian life expecting so much in the way of "changed lives" because of my walk.

4. WHAT EXPERIENCES AND/OR TEACHINGS DO YOU THINK WOULD HAVE BEEN HELPFUL?

2 God has not made many points through me outside the church and home, because it hasn't "cost" me anything to take a stand for Christ yet. I either need to recognize God does not want to work through me that way and/or concentrate on the "identified" gifts (I Cor 12:21ff).

6 Never felt a lack.

11 A clearer understanding, earlier in my walk, of the gospel. Hearing the experiences of others. That God is diverse and creative and does not set a pattern or mold that we must fit into in order to be used, understand what it means to have God work thru me.

13 I realize that I've been blessed with many practical experiences, role models, and fine teaching.

14 A teaching that explains.

GENERAL ANSWERS--NOT SPECIFICALLY TAGGED TO A SINGLE QUESTION.

4 Immediately after conversion, attempted to be an instrument, and not work. Conversation with mother, not persuade. Led to question: "Is He real?" Teaching that know God working through if people evangelized through: not work after 7-8 months effort. Maybe another way God wants to work--through personal changes that happening within. Therefore, God worked through when befriended person. More teaching than evangelising.

5 Sense of Lord's use through after call to ministry. As grown, less definite experiences, more one of the many who influence. Certainty--"thus saith the Lord" only in retrospect. Assumption is that Lord working through, not need to see it all the time. Not sense, "this is what God wants me to do and therefore go," but assume God there and will lead. That a base line: God is there and will lead.

APPENDIX D

LINK 4 - IDENTITY

CRG - 10/12/83, CG - 10/20/83

1. DESCRIBE YOUR JOURNEY AS YOU HAVE BEEN FASHIONING A FRAMEWORK WHICH INCLUDES BOTH THE SECULAR AND SACRED SEGMENTS OF YOUR LIFE.

1 [no written answer] Loving both the brethren and others is what integrated. All life is potentially sacred. This keeps us from thinking that not need as high a standard if something secular.

2 Journey filled with tension between the two, with a gradual (but certain) integrating.

3 I have not been fashioning a framework, except in the sense that I have been cutting away anti-Christian, and even some non-Christian values--except for my own sins. I'm not at that stage yet. I'm in a new job, reacting still, not building or reshaping.

4 I don't like to make a distinction here . . . probably sounds pious, I know. What I have been trying to do is bring more and more areas under Christ's lordship . . . such as finances, being a good example in the neighborhood, reaching out to my biological extended family: three major issues for me now. All of life is sacred, we may not see it as such.

5 Everything is sacred, even though others see sacred/secular split.

8 Always aware of one foot on each side. Decisions made early to trust the sacred over secular wisdom in cases of terror/impasse/difficult/harassment. [I've noticed I don't divide things into good--bad . . . such as drinking/cards/dancing etc., and I think that means the boundary is blurry for me between sacred and secular . . . I see most things as sacred.] It is a sign of maturity to walk with both feet and be the same person.

9 Time line:

1-5	obedience
5-10	struggling
10-22	rebellious
22-28	in business, partial commitment
28-38	pastoral situation; theology
38-45	pastoral studies in humanities
45-54	pastoral attempts at integration of theology and humanities

10 This year I don't feel as much tension between the secular and sacred because I am teaching for a Christian school instead of primarily for public schools. Praying at the start of class and using the Bible to teach history are unique experiences for me and ones I am glad to have.

11 In high school and college the secular and sacred were very separate. I began to integrate them more late college and first years post college. Thus it seemed that most of my life outside the job revolved around the secular issues. Now I'm seeing importance of truly integrating both--to be in the secular but not of it.

12 Comfort, joy in knowing God is there in my secular life. Struggle with my loyalty, faithfulness in my secular life. Am I the same person in all situations? Conflict in budgeting of time and energy between ministries and secular job.

14 Consistently over the past ten years I have been more and more interested in making our "house" into a home. '73 stopped using God's name in vain. '75 marriage and communication. Prayer. Bible study, prayer before classes.

16 I am too aware of certain specific weaknesses and lacks in my character. Therefore, since the age of 19 or 20, I have had to guard against letting very much of the "secular" into my lifestyle. I have chosen a career in human services as opposed to a profit-making environment because I need to surround myself with people who serve others directly; "indirect service" does not strengthen and develop me as it might others. Relative to my "leisure time" [did I say leisure??], I carefully block off certain hours and times for volunteer work [Amer. Cancer Society] or ministry [PCC] and balance these with purely recreational activities. I've very careful about the types of people with whom I spend my discretionary time--mostly Christians.

2. IN WHAT WAY [AND HOW DID IT HAPPEN] IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIFE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF YOUR PARENTS?

1 Until I became a Christian they did not know what

a born-again Christian was. They are not involved in a church.

2 Happened after college and marriage when I realized that I was an evangelical Christian, not just "Methodist" or "Baptist." Accepting all true Christians as Christians, not just as "name plate" Christians.

3 I don't know what understanding my parents had. Neither was a church-going, professed Christian. I do not believe either one had a deep--but concealed faith. [Leaving the Episcopal church could be a break with my spiritual parents. This is a present problem for me.]

4 Mother--Christian Science background, not practicing didn't give us any training at all. Just about everything I've committed to spiritually is different from her. The approval through close friends, in college days, their example made me want to know about Christianity.

8 My parents had all the principles down pat but I don't think they've ever understood my taking action based on faith. I have no idea whatever as to how I've been able to integrate my beliefs with my personal life situations and they, to large extent, remained subject to the results of anxiety. [I suddenly realized this week that my family concentrated on grow/improve/make restitution if you goof/do what you can to be better, but expect things to therefore work out OK.]

9 Parents were rigid, legalistic [loving]. I tend to see life a lot more wholistically [I think]. I moved to grace: forgiven and accepted.

10 My parents were, more or less, cultural Christians. They never prayed or read the Bible to my knowledge. I believe Christian faith is founded on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I don't believe they would have understood that type of talk or had any sympathy with it if they did.

11 I don't know that it is--we seem to have arrived at the same place on unique paths. When those paths started I don't know.

12 I believe Christ calls us to love and acceptance of others and lack of judgement of others based on externals. I learned this from people at PCC. My parents tend to judge whether people are Christians by external, non-doctrinal characteristics.

14 From church goer to Christ centered.

16 My parents would be in their mid-80's if they were alive. They were raised and trained in a church which demanded obedience without questioning; as long as one did what one was told, salvation and holiness were assured. Indeed, there was no other church but the Catholic Church. I, too, was brought up in that church and in much the same fashion. But by the time I entered the convent [1964], Vatican II had started creating changes in the way Catholics practiced their faith and in the content of what they believed. Changes in manner of worshipping came along. My years in the convent taught me to question/read/expose myself to other ways of living and viewing the Christian faith and life. The convent experience "freed me up" to re-evaluate my background and choose a Christian life that was right for me.

3. COMMENT ON THE STATEMENT; "JESUS CHRIST IS THE INTEGRATING CENTER OF MY LIFE."

1 This has been much truer since I have come to see what God has saved us for rather than just what he saved us from. It is not so much 2/3 people as 2/3 different directions, from where ought to be. Sometimes this rebellion. More struggle to be the "me" supposed to be.

2 Must work at it. Christ's example is a good reference for determining the rightness or wrongness of my own actions.

3 He is. Jesus is the standard against which all values should be weighed, the center around which my activities should be planned, the reason for living and trying to improve my life. I would have a terrible identity problem, at 51 years of age, if I didn't have Christ to center on.

4 This is the goal . . . right now far from reality. "I" am the center right now. For while Campus Crusade's circle with throne illustration helpful, but no sense of process. This a fancy word for Lordship. More helpful to use Lordship instead of integrating center.

5 No written answer. What of the work of the HS? Is not He the one who integrates? It happened when threw out the external and went inner. With Paul, became "all things to all people."

8 I have no idea what to say to that. [One week later] Well, I can say now the answer was too obvious. Many times a day I think, "What would Jesus do now? What does He think of this? Is this from Him. Hey, Lord, help!" Biblical term

for this is single minded vs double minded. Automatic reference point.

9 In Him I find the perfect bringing together of psychology or humanistic thoughts and Divine revelation. Patterns, as well as Savior and Lord.

10 This a true statement. Jesus Christ is the focus of much of the way I use time and through prayer, Bible reading, listening to WWG and talking with and being with other Christians, I realize how true the statement is.

11 All things can be used and work together in my life because of Jesus. Things, events, struggles, hardships that outside of Jesus would make no sense with Him the center they serve a purpose, produce fruit, growth. They can all be used to draw me closer to him.

12 His lordship is the major benchmark against which I measure myself in all situations. When I fail, His forgiveness encourages me to go on, to continue to seek the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit.

16 Jesus is the One to whom I turn when making choices and decisions. I try hard, through daily reflection and staying attuned to the Holy Spirit, to use Jesus' life/words/promises/example, etc. as the "ruler" for what I will do in any given situation. Choices regarding lifestyle, work decisions, relationships, commitments--all of these are "bounced off" Jesus as a guide and measure. When I choose differently, I always run into problems: when I stay in His will, I sometimes have momentary regrets [in having to say "no" to someone or to something] but those regrets are short-lived. Jesus holds all the fragments of my life together. He is the "still point of my turning world."

4. JESUS CHRIST IS OUR SAVIOR. WHEN, AND WHAT EFFECT DID IT HAVE ON YOU WHEN YOU STRUGGLED WITH THE FACT THAT HE DEMANDED OBEDIENCE AND LOYALTY?

1 I assumed right at the start that that would be the case. I think it has been a normal struggle--defeats--victories and some experiences of dedication helped. Seeing what He really wants has also helped. "His commandments are not burdensome."

2 At age 24, when I came to PCC I began to internalize the need for obedience [to change more] and be more loyal. Began to see God working around me and the need for God to work through me.

3 I've been struggling for 22 years, ever since I found out. I haven't achieved either obedience or loyalty yet. The struggle has brought a sense of guilt, but not much tension that I recognize.

4 When: end of second, through third year of seminary. Effect: led me to serious commitment to lifelong ministry vocation.

8 Early on I said, in a pinch, "Well, we'll test this now and see whether loyalty brings protection." [It does]. I have trouble with the word demanded because I feel we're in a cooperative arrangement. I have a part, and He has a part. I can choose to monkey-wrench the whole thing. [Maybe this explains the how of question #2]

9 From my earliest recollection--I turned Him off, seeing His demands as unattainable. I have moved toward understanding his love, acceptance and commands. No conception of Savior without Lordship. Grew up with idea of God always erasing his name and writting it back in.

10 I think I still struggle with this. It is so easy in the modern world just to keep quiet and not say anything. I think it makes me realize that the Lord is very patient with me. It also makes me hope to be a bolder Christian--"instant in season and out."

11 Just in the past few months I dealt with the issue of obedience face to face in a real way. I saw that obedience meant action now. It was extremely hard but inside I knew there was no other way. To be obedient I really had to look at who Jesus was in my life and what he really meant. I feel stronger now for being obedient.

12 In "temptations" class, adult SS (spring '79) I realized that there was a price to being saved. That helped me to understand the "lordship" of Christ. Five months later, Oct. 1979, I realized that no price was too great for what He offered.

14 Biggest struggle has been consistently applying Christ to my marriage.

16 I asked Jesus to "back off" and "ask someone else" for about two years . . . when I sensed He was calling me to the convent. I tried to fashion His will to conform to my own. I was sad, angry, selfish; I wanted to carve my own happiness and life direction. Once I came to grips, however, with Who it was who was calling me, I did a complete

about-face. I was finally able to pray, "Thy will be done on earth . . . in me . . . as it is in heaven." Result: peace, at last, and an ability to view the things He was asking me to do with a positive outlook.

5. HOW WELL-FITTED TO YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE THE DEMANDS OF JESUS ON YOU?

1 I have a great natural receptivity to the love emphasis I feel called to. This is a strength. The weakness is that I have a difficulty at times sharing openly on a feeling level which is so vital to communicate this message. Yoke and burden are two different things. Not sure that Jesus had in mind, "get under this yoke with me."

2 Well-fitted to strength of compassion/understanding of others.

3 I have never seriously identified Jesus' demand, but . . . I am not strong in either the spirit or the flesh. I am slack in prayer and wandering in attention.

4 Strengths: well fitted. Weaknesses: depends on who you talk to.

5 Maturity is knowing your weaknesses and finding others to complement them.

8 All my adult life I've been finding that He knows my strengths better than I do [I never imagined doing many of the rather major things I've done!]. I think He covers the weaknesses so they don't cripple me . . . my yoke fits. [always had]. A yoke [like a shoulder yoke for carrying maple sap] is designed to keep the center of gravity of the burden over the strongest portion. It is much harder to carry two full buckets by hand than by the yoke. Sense: "are you kidding?"

9 Not well-fitted at all, at times. Sometimes He seems to require just what I want to do. Continual sense of being poorly fitted. Because of keen sense of fallen nature. The is/ought tension.

10 It seems at this point in my life that the demands of Jesus are well-fitted to my strengths and weaknesses.

11 Whatever Jesus demands, he provides the strength to do it. It may require stepping beyond what I perceive as weakness.

12 Meekness is made easy by low self-esteem,

recognizing weaknesses.

14 Strengths: marriage, Mom, Katie.

16 I sometimes think Jesus forgets about my weaknesses--sometimes He seems to ask too much. There was a time when I was very aware of my strengths; now, I'm becoming much more aware of my weaknesses. As a result, if I think of answering Jesus' call based on my own abilities, I'm inclined to find excuses to say "no." At such times, I have to remind myself that "I can do all things in Him Who strengthens me." On a natural level, I know that some of my talents and experiences render me a "useful instrument" in His hands, but I find myself more and more relying only on His power. If I knew ahead of time [any given morning] what He would ask, I'd probably stay in bed with the blanket over my head . . . but in His wisdom, He reveals His will slowly.

6. REFLECT ON YOUR ABILITY AND DESIRE TO SUSTAIN A LOYALTY TO JESUS CHRIST NO MATTER WHAT THE CONTRADICTIONS, CONFUSION OR CONFRONTATION ENCOUNTERED.

1 Over the long haul it is very strong, on the short term basis I sometimes "throw in the towel" for limited periods of time.

2 Strong desire, less but growing ability to remain loyal.

3 The confrontations do not appear too imminent. The contradictions are trivial; but the confusion is probably a sign of my long-standing immaturity. The loyalty I have, shallow as it is, is not threatened. But it isn't growing. The desire is there, but I see myself as the threat.

4 Haven't really been all that challenged . . . nothing but encouragement toward Christ so far.

8 I've done it before, and I expect to continue making that choice.

9 Not good at all. Were it not for His love, acceptance and forgiveness.

10 I wonder about this question myself. It says in Hebrews someplace that we have not yet resisted sin to the point of shedding our blood (12:4). It is very easy to be a Christian and yet I think of people who really undergo genuine suffering for their faith. I think I pray not to be so tested, but also to remember that God's will is what is paramount. Also I thank our

Lord for freedom of worship in this country.

11 My realization of the importance of that kind of loyalty has increased greatly. I desire to be loyal at all costs but in reality know that there are still areas of fear where the immediate plays a stronger role than the eternal reward and I'd be tempted. I've seen my loyalty to Jesus win out more often lately. Thru Christ I always have the ability--it's whether or not I take the responsibility to accept [claim] the victory.

12 I don't feel that I have a choice. My conviction of the truth of Christ is firm. Therefore it would be foolish to face the consequences of abandoning loyalty to Him. Recent study of Moses going back and back to Pharaoh with no obvious results except obedience is encouraging.

14 Desire remains constant. Ability seems to be respond-ability: the ability to respond.

16 I can answer this idea with more "firmness" now than I could have even two years ago, because I've accumulated some scars that have taught and strengthened me. The years 1974-1979 were rough ones for me and my biggest difficulties came in trying to discern what Jesus was asking of me. There was a general and persistent orientation toward "doing" His will, but I went through much confusion over figuring out what that was for me, at that time. The past two years have been less confusing relative to what He was asking of me, but I was "sorely tried" in holding fast to what He was asking, over and against what my natural inclinations were saying--in general, I can say . . . with deep gratitude . . . that my desire to sustain a loyalty to Jesus did not waver, but my ability was tested "as gold is tried by fire."

7. HOW DID YOU HANDLE YOUR DOUBTS AFTER YOU CAME TO FAITH?

1 In a variety of ways: prayer, counseling, ignored them until they went away, personal meditation and study I have worked them out.

2 Confidence that although I do not understand everything--God does--and I will too someday when I am with Him face to face.

3 I do not dwell on them. I resolved early to accept the Bible on faith, and not look for irrefutable logic to support it. This lack of wrestling has probably left me without much power in my religious witness.

4 Reading, in order to deal with specific doubts.

Talking with friends. Prayer.

8 Through deciding to act out the model to see if it worked, and then acting it out. [It worked, so I kept learning more about it] I have not had a lot of doubt periods in my life, for some reason. I get a strong over-all feeling that it is only within the last couple of years [months, maybe] that I've felt this settled. Maybe it has to do with age.

9 By reading again, again from the Bible. By learning of the doubts of others. By walking with Him, in the dark.

10 I think the Lord has given me a gift of faith in Jesus. I think most of my doubts revolve around my own shortcomings, failings, and inadequacies. For these I pray and sometimes read the Psalms - I find them very helpful.

11 Prayed and talked to other Christians. Doubting has not been a big issue with me. I've seen that with time I gain understanding. Looking back I can't recall many specific struggles with doubts. Maybe I don't recall struggles because I've not really dealt with my doubts. I guess I've sort of waited them out.

12 I had concern over doubts in the first 4-5 months after commitment. Studying Matthew, John, Luke in that order convinced me of the truth of Christ. That plus the working of God in my life--"coincidences," supernatural help in tasks--convinced me of the reality of my newly accepted beliefs and doubt disappeared.

14 Doubts about myself--reminding myself that God is working. Doubts about Him--talking and reading the Bible or living through the problem.

16 I could not answer all my doubts in a totally intellectual fashion. Some of them had to be simply handed over to Jesus to take care of. . . . He knew, and I knew, that if I continued to "struggle" with those doubts and give them my time, energy and attention, I would go under. [I'm really not that strong . . .] So, I just said, "Lord, I can't handle this. You've got to take care of it for me. I've got all I can do just to listen to You and follow Your will . . . I can't use up any more of myself on doubts/fears/questions. Please take them off my back and out of my thoughts . . . Thank you. I know You will answer my plea." Other than that, I can't remember any other way that I "handled my doubts."

[Faulty memory!!!] Oh, yes, on a few occasions I do recall

talking over some of my doubts with one or two others . . . sometimes for the sake of seeking clarity, sometimes for the sake of getting prayerful support. I was not disappointed when I did this.

One more thing . . . when I found myself especially burdened with doubts, I made special effort to stay close to strong Christians. I knew my "natural inclinations" and weaknesses would do me in if I tried to go it alone [in the human sense . . .] I don't recall spending any additional time in prayer. But I kept busy, active, involved in my daily routines of work and study. I also made sure that I was keeping myself physically in shape . . . [when I don't feel well, the whole world seems to fall in on me.]

APPENDIX E

LINK 5 - INTIMACY

CGR - 12/1/83, CG - 12/8/83

1. DESCRIBE YOUR SENSE OF INTER-DEPENDENCE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS.

1 I am more and more aware of how much we need each other, how important it is to have open and trusting relationships with a few people. I am very aware of the new covenant's horizontal implications.

3 I need live witness for my own growth, and even to keep from slipping. I need other Christians to help my son's growth. I know that, as part of a couple, I receive assurance I am helping others [in our growth group] appreciate Scripture and understand it. I could probably continue as a Christian without fellow Christians, but it would be hard. It would have been even harder 5 years ago.

4 I am dependent on others for encouragement, critique, "atta boys." I sense others dependent on me for similar things.

8 I've gotten to the place where I can't make it without "checking in" and just being among them, and where I believe I have the responsibility to contribute encouragingly to their lives.

10 I feel this is a very important part of maintaining Christian faith. It would be very difficult to be a believer in a vacuum. Fellowship, sharing . . .

11 I realize I'm not able to do all things and be all things and that in order to accomplish God's will I must work together with other Christians. I have seen how God has used me in the lives of those around me and vice versa. I know I need others to help me see what I can't.

12 I need the fellowship, caring and support of

other Christians. I am encouraged and strengthened by candid sharing of struggles and joys. I need to be prayed for.

14 Certainly for support, prayer, advice, encouragement. Question: how much is the Body held back by a problem or a hurt of one of its parts?

16 [This one's easy!] I truly feel like I'm one part of a body; I absolutely could not function as a Christian without the others doing their part; sometimes I feel as though I depend on others' strength when I am weak and need to be "carried along" a bit. I also sense the opposite happening--my carrying others along when they feel weak or dependent. I Cor 12:5.

2. WHERE DO YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST TEND TO BE STEREOTYPED, AND WHEN NATURALLY YOU?

1 Stereotyped with those who I sense have a certain role or certain expectations for me to fulfill. More natural with those who seem to accept me and have also been vulnerable with me.

3 I'd say I am natural at PCC--except when I try to sing. I am stereotyped--as a fundi--in my relationships with many Episcopalians.

4 I tend to be stereotyped as the "youth pastor" or "assistant pastor" with people I don't know very well . . . with those I know well, very natural "me."

5 I do not view any of my relationships as being stereotyped. I have for a long time resisted this type of relationship.

8 Stereotyped when trying evangelism; natural when I'm on construction, painting, teaching, doing music.

10 Stereotyped relations exist with Episcopalians; natural relationships tend to come with my peer group [married women about my age with children].

11 I think I fall into the stereotype or mold when dealing with people I don't know real well or am not yet comfortable with and sometimes when I'm in a leadership position. I'm more naturally myself in small groups or 1 on 1 with people I know well.

12 Sunday morning tends to produce the smiling "How are you?" "Just fine" stereotype. Growth Groups and other

non-formal meetings or social events leave me feeling more "natural." I am grateful for the many instances where "Christlike love" genuinely takes the form of a smiling, congenial greeting or sincere kindness and patience. I am concerned that it not be limited to that. We need "tough love" and "speaking the truth in love."

14 Stereotyped to me means quiet and smiling to show that God is in control. I don't always respect that stance, but I assume it in these situations: new people, blank looks when I try to explain something, and where expected always to be upbeat about the church.

16 When I'm conscious of peoples' titles, I tend to think and respond stereotypically. When I sense the relationship is adult-to-adult without regard for status or title, then I'm "naturally" myself. Categories of any kind tire me out in my relationships: marital status, religious background, titles, education, professions, etc., etc.

3. IN WHAT SITUATIONS WITHIN THE BODY DO I TEND TO FIND MY SENSE OF VALUE AS A PERSON IN CHRIST THREATENED?

1 In those situations where I feel pressure to please them by being something that I cannot be or do not want to be.

3 When I fail to do well in a task I accepted.

4 When I do the very best I can, and it still fails.

8 I don't know. I'm afraid I'd tell 'em to go jump in the lake if they tried to knock me off my perch with Christ.

10 I think in a liturgical worship service.

11 Times when I am confronted or my weaknesses/failures are evident. When I first realize that I'm not cut out for meeting certain needs in the lives of those around me - and I see others doing it and I can't.

12 My value as a person in Christ is a gift of His redemption and is not dependent upon situations.

14 There are very few people with whom I can discuss and question spiritual, biblically hard questions.

16 On those occasions when I feel a "them and us" mentality, I feel somewhat defensive and in need of proving my

worth. [This comes especially when the fact of my Catholic background is raised in a non-accepting tone: "now that you're not one of them any longer . . . "]

4. IN A RECENT EXPERIENCE OF FAILING TO LIVE UP TO YOUR SPIRITUAL EXPECTATIONS OF YOURSELF, WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FEELINGS, FEARS, HOPES, CERTAINTIES?

1 I was finding it very difficult to get back on course due to the fact that a few people close to me were insisting that I spend a period [or rather long period] of time "reaping what I had sown." I have always sensed real forgiveness from the Lord, and it was stressful to deal with their view of God. The help of close Christian friend made the difference and I finally was able to sort things out.

3 Shame, fatigue, self-pity, consciousness of weakness, hopelessness--yes I am a bit blown out. I do not remember saying, "God'll understand."

4 Feelings: guilt, remorse, regret. Fears: is it always going to be this way, i.e., failure? Hopes: No, maybe not always this way. Certainties: God loves me no matter what!

8 I've taken an attitude of "I'm doing the best I can--I blew it--I'll do it another way next time--there will be a next time - growing matters more than the growth point you've attained." I guess I've learned to give myself a break (Go and sin no more) which was first easier to do for others. Maybe it's self-forgiveness--not cop-out, not carelessness, not evasion of reality.

10 Intimacy needs time: energy into defenses; can't go into intimacy. Feelings: self-doubt, inadequacy, depression [despair?]. Fears: suppose I'm not really changed and a different person because of being a Christian. Hopes: that I really am a "new creation" in Christ, that the inner nature is being renewed tho' the outer is wasting away. Certainties: that I can seek and find the Lord thru Scripture and prayer.

11 First reaction--disappointment, desire to give up, why bother. Acceptance from others gives hope. Knowledge of who God is and who I am in relationships to Him and His Word is what brings certainty.

12 Lack of patience with kids leaves me feeling discouraged, sad, sometimes defensive, fearing that I have done some permanent damage (emotionally or spiritually, not physically), hoping I have not done damage and that the kid learned something, and certain that God will work His good

through the incident as I examine my actions and seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

14 Feelings: disappointment. Fears: that the disappointment would turn to despair. Hopes and certainties: that God was working in behalf of the situation.

16 Feelings: disappointment in myself; anger that I blew it! [I've been told by people I respect that I'm too hard on myself, that I expect too much of myself.] Fears: a sense of "can I really do this?" Even though the Lord is my strength, I still put a lot of stock in my doing my share. Hopes: Hope comes later on for me; I have to get over the negative reactions first and that takes me awhile. I find it surprisingly easy to forgive others because [1] the Lord has forgiven me so much, so often; also [2] I don't expect or demand as much from others as I do from myself. Therefore, I don't find it easy to forgive me. Certainty: my present negative feelings will go away; God has forgiven me and He wants me to forgive myself and get out of myself, and get on with life!

5. DESCRIBE YOUR JOURNEY AS YOU REACH OUT TO SOMEONE WHO IS HURTING. CENTER ESPECIALLY ON YOUR INNER MOTIVATIONS AS YOU LEFT COMFORTABLE SURROUNDINGS TO VENTURE OUT FOR SOMEONE ELSE.

1 I find it hard basically because I have a personal fear of being rejected. [Instead of just seeing the "help" being rejected, I personalize it.] But, generally those fears prove unfounded and I find it a joyful experience of giving to someone.

3 Can't describe it.

4 Inner motivations: to be of help . . . to feel good about being of help . . . to see God work . . . to put myself at their disposal.

5 A confidence in what I'm doing. That my reaction is motivated by my understanding of my relationship with Christ.

8 Sometimes I don't like to do it (I might upset the apple cart - what do I know anyway, maybe you're butting in, etc.). Yet it stems from "In order to be more Christlike this is what you should be practicing."

10 It is a struggle for me because reaching out can be viewed as meddling or prying. Reluctance is very strong to the point of preventing action. Also I remember Jesus and think of Him reaching out in love even tho He didn't have to. I hope and pray that I truly am able to help or at least bring some comfort

to the person.

11 Inner motivations--a trust in God's ways and commandments. God commands me to love even at cost to myself, it is obedience which gets me motivated. Putting myself in the other person's shoes and putting my comfort in proper perspective.

12 Its always easier and tempting to not get involved. I "venture out" because the Lord calls me to do that and I find it deeply satisfying to understand and minister to someone's hurts.

14 I can't answer this.

16 The "journey to someone who is hurting" is one I tend to cover quickly. As soon as I become aware of someone whose hurt might possibly be eased by some intervention on my part, I usually respond right away, as soon as time and opportunity allow. I know from experience what it's like to be hurting and I know how much I appreciate having someone reach out to me--and that's a big part of my motivation. Because I often pray to be a peace-maker, and because I associate peace with healing, I interpret these situations as an opportunity presented to me by God to be that peacemaker, that healer in whatever way I can. I don't think that I'm even aware of "leaving comfortable surroundings."

6. WHAT TENDENCIES ARE THERE IN YOU TO FORTIFY YOUR SPIRITUAL TERRITORY AGAINST ALL COMERS? E.G., OVER-MAGNIFYING SMALL DIFFERENCES?

3 I don't recognize this as one of my tendencies.

4 I'm sure there are tendencies to fortify/defend, but I'm not in touch with what they are. I am not open to other's critique, being over defensive in a spiritual area . . . where can they attack my views without feeling attacked?

5 I find myself not terribly concerned about the need to stake out my spiritual territory.

8 Recently I've been more able, when attacked, to say "What do they know, really? I'm comfortable where I stand, and confident that I'll know when God says, 'Now move.'" I say, "Too bad they're still striving so hard." I think most people are affected by one's example.

10 I think I'm a very private person but also have read a lot so perhaps I'm aware of things that others might not

be aware of. I've always liked John Wesley's saying about this - resolve to love if it really doesn't matter.

12 I don't think I have this tendency if you mean differences with other believers. I will defend my faith in Christ to non-believers if the opportunity arises.

14 I can't answer this.

16 If by "comers" you mean attackers, then my defenses do come into play . . . I think I've worked long and hard to settle various questions I've had to answer for myself, discarding some things I've been taught or valued in the past, etc. I didn't get to where I am now easily or painlessly. So anyone who "attacks" my territory or position finds me ready to defend myself--ready to explain my position with the hope that they will at least find it acceptable for me, if not for themselves. When I don't find that acceptance, I fall back, lick my wounds, and hope that either the attacker will leave me alone or that the Spirit will come to my defense and give me what I need to hold on.

7. WHAT IS THE GROUP OF CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE YOUR DEEPEST COMMITMENT AND HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR LEVEL OF COMMITMENT TO THEM?

3 Family? PCC! Not much commitment, outside of a loyalty that prevents me from easily doing anything that would hinder or embarrass the Body at PCC. [I am not really at this stage of intimacy, our growth group hasn't reached this stage, and we are not intimate with any other group. My marriage is most certainly more intimate, sharing and secure because of our Christian growth.]

4 My growth group, medium level. Be there for meetings and whenever is a real need. Regular prayer for them, open myself up to them.

5 My church family. I am committed to being with them through whatever situation they invite me or where I deem it necessary to be with them.

8 Probably PCC members. I feel a strong responsibility to keep track of the leaders, give them a hand, throw in ideas (but not try to perform a formal leadership role).

10 I guess Addison and I form a group so this would be a primary group, also Addison Jr. is a Christian but daughter Jeannie is not but as parent I have commitment to her. After this I guess I would feel a commitment to my neighborhood Bible

study even though because of work I haven't attended in several months. Also, most are R.C. and I have felt more "difference" from then since attending PCC. Also have felt sense of commitment to PCC since fire.

11 My close Christian friends. The commitment includes time, energy, prayer, sacrifice, enables me to confront and accept confrontation, desire to do what is necessary for their good and in their best interest, I don't back off or give up when going is tough, or I receive little feedback.

12 My family (immediate) has my deepest level of commitment. Growth groups would be next.

14 I get an opportunity to explore and get encouraged with God's power by you and Jim, but I don't have that freedom with PCC as a whole. One group: faith expectations, esp. healing and God's power. PCC group: practical love, casseroles, errands.

16 In the last issue of "The Last Word" I defined what I mean by commitment. I therefore define my commitment [or rather define it] by the extent to which I am willing to change in significant ways for someone else . . . it may mean changing my plans for an evening, writing a letter, making a call, whatever. But those changes can seem mighty significant on a full schedule, believe me! The group of Christians who have this deepest commitment is the PCC family, with my growth group and certain close friends being in the lead. I also work with a few Christians and although we don't actually depend on each other in the usual ways, we do know that the other is there when needed.

8. TALK ABOUT YOUR PAST AND CURRENT COMMITMENT TO LOVE OTHERS AS CHRIST HAS LOVED YOU.

3 It is presently much easier to pray for my enemies, and to love irritating Christians, than it used to be. But my commitment to emulate Christ's love is not there. I am committed to trying, but I'm still learning about His love. I know that my love is tainted with my sin, and I am sometimes [with Jeannie] destructive when I should be building her up as a person and as a Christian.

4 Present: love others as Christ loves me = accept unconditionally, forgive completely, confront when necessary, resolve conflicts quickly, be honest, be myself. Past: not as clearly defined, mostly in realm of acceptance, confrontation.

8 It's always been a strong personal injunction. I think I've learned to stand irritation from school kids, others

because I've given myself that word, "You're supposed to love 'em, now get busy and act loving." (Basically, I'm happiest where it's quiet and there aren't very many people . . . as in a forest, at the shore, in the garden, etc.!)

10 I think this is an ongoing demand of the Christian life - I find it difficult, in fact I find it impossible. He is Number One!

11 I think my current commitment is more well-rounded, more complete includes more aspects of God's love. My love looks down the line more than just the present or this life. Now it is becoming more of a conscious commitment, not a now and then spontaneous reaction as before.

12 I realize that I cannot love perfectly as He did. I believe that loving others as He calls us to do is highly satisfying and I have experienced that satisfaction. Loving others is the answer to "why am I here?"

14 Past commitment: to feel good about others.
Current commitment: to pray for others and myself using as a reality the fact that God cares more about putting his own Divine Principles in action than I do.

16 [You're hitting sensitive territory now . . .]
Christ loved [and loves] me completely, totally, uniquely. He held nothing back, and gave His life for me. And Christ asks that of me . . . and in a way that sometimes is very painful for me. Christ not only wants to be No. 1 in my life; I believe He also wants to be No. 2--that is, He wants that place in my life that most people fill with a spouse. According to the Spiritual Gifts Inventory, I did, I have the gift of celibacy. That wasn't anything new to me . . . and sometimes the gift of celibacy is a source of sheer joy and peace for me. But sometimes I "rebel" at having it . . . I know that the gift of celibacy frees me to love many people and serve them in ways that I couldn't if I were married. [Didn't St. Paul speak of staying single for the Lord as being preferable to being married?] Christ himself gave the example of the single adult life as a model for people like myself. And I sincerely thank Him for doing so . . . but as I said, there are times when I'm tempted to fill slot No. 2 with a spouse, but I believe deep down that Christ wants me to remain single for Him. And this is one of my recurring struggles. Especially when society regards single adulthood as lesser than marriage, or even being divorced. Some of us have been called by God to remain single for his purposes; but how many people really believe that [for themselves or for others??]

APPENDIX F

LINK 6 - MINISTRY

CRG - 9/14/83, CG - 9/29/83

1. WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SENSE OF MINISTRY AS IT RELATED TO YOUR CHURCH CONNECTED LIFE?

2 Teaching children and recruiting others to do church work.

7 None.

8 I couldn't have taken it on without certain programs, persons, Growth Groups, etc., encouraging me all the time. I'd be too scared of the work to keep doing it if I didn't keep coming back now to get my batteries charged on a regular basis. [This is not desperation - it just is.]

9 Pastoral: people oriented preaching and teaching; staff development; some special week-end ministries, conferences, seminars.

11 There isn't much related to church at least not in a formal sense. At present what I do is a little bit here and there or something connected with church people but not necessarily originated thru PCC--i.e., Precepts, Young Adult Group.

12 Teaching Sunday School, coordinating Boys' Brigade, Congregational Reflection Group, and Growth group.

14 Not much. Listening, discerning --> creative counseling.

15 Loves to minister one-on-one, but finds most of ministry in large group, leadership setting. Even though sees self as approachable, seen by others as unapproachable, and people don't seek him out. Public style is laid back.

16 Based on my thirteen years of living in a

religious community, I feel both a need and a desire to share some of those experiences with the PCC family. Presently, my ideas would be prayer and worship related. In time, I could see other facets as well, such as retreat/workshops things. I feel such strong support at PCC for any kind of sharing that it prompts me to want to do more.

2. WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SENSE OF MINISTRY AS IT RELATES TO THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?

2 Coaching Little League Baseball, and Cub Scout master.

7 At present, my ministry is to my children.

8 My life largely consists of going off to work or building myself up so I can go to work again. I'm aware that most family and "outside" friends have no idea what I'm up to--they're just proud of me because I'm making a living on my own.

9 See #1.

11 Presently a lull, looking for an change or new direction or confirmation of an old ministry. I am involved in a 2 times a month women's study with young or non-Christians.

12 Loving my family [at home and other relatives], witnessing at work and to the neighbors, using "witness" in broadest sense.

14 Helping others understand themselves, their situations, and how to act in obedience to God.

15 Very little. I am a very church related person. Steadiness in who I am.

16 My present studies are preparing me for a more responsible position in human services--and I see this entire field as one gigantic area of ministry: helping others improve the quality of their lives on a variety of levels. I am "fed" at PCC and my ministry there [limited though as it is my school constraints] shores me up to do my work better in school and on the job. It's a constant, flowing cycle, not an compartmentalized entity.

3. CHART THE CHANGES IN YOUR MINISTRIES FROM YOUR FIRST EFFORTS TO NOW, NOTING ESPECIALLY WHAT HAS CHANGED AND WHAT HAS STAYED THE SAME.

1 Change: how that sameness comes about, and what

that means; more than a ticket to heaven, but effect on every area of life. Same: call of, sense of being ambassador for Christ, bringing others into relation with Him.

2 Not sure what has changed. Same: relating to children.

5 Same: commitment to call to ministry. Changed: how that is fleshed out, what it means to be obedient, how that developed.

7 Changes: evangelism, Sunday School class, youth group. The arena has changed but my ministry was and continues to be to those within the particular group who are hurting or show needs. I have a hard time ministering to people who don't realize or show they have needs.

8 Early: show agape love to others; use your skills and talents to get group things done [motivation: God wants me to, I should build myself up by so doing]. Recent: Add to that, impulse to be more active in influencing others directly to get their lives more in order with scriptural principles.

9 I must do it all --> I must be a player/coach. Dependency of other's outlines --> a personal, research based study of the Word. Denominational --> a sense of Christian community. Institutional --> personal, people oriented.

11 Young Life, precepts, S.S., nursery, women's circle study, young adult group. What has changed is the ages of the people. What has stayed the same is I'm always teaching or in leadership; always directly involved with people.

12 First efforts: much concern, fear of doing the wrong thing as a residue of "old me"--now: more relaxed, instinctive, trusting God and myself; more accepting of what I am and God's ability to use me. First: more conscientious and diligent [compulsive?]-now: less compulsive. First: amazed and grateful that God works through me--now: same, a source of self-esteem. First: struggle with how to use time --now: same. First: satisfaction in working for Him--now: same. First: growth in faith and understanding of myself--now: faith is strong, continuing revelation of who I am, self-understanding.

14 Evangelism--changed. Community Life--changed. Greeting newcomers--same.

15 Leadership positions since 18.

16 Late High School: youth club work, religious

education to elementary grades. Post-High school: [until convent] religious education to boys at Industry School of Correction; youth club work; Big Sister to orphans at St. Joseph's Villa. Convent: involvement with college students [weekly prayer meetings and occasional weekend retreats], visiting hospital patients, activities in worship/liturgy/prayer groups, seeking out of those who were alone/rejected, etc. and trying to be "family" to them. Post-Convent: volunteer work with American Cancer Society, trying to be "family" to those who are alone for whatever reason; involvement in church worship, human service jobs. Constants: 1 - wanting to be "family" to those who are alone; 2 - concern for quality church worship; 3 - willingness to change form of ministry as needed; 4 - wanting to have prayer as a part of each activity. Changes: Form.

4. WHAT KIND OF MINISTRY TENDS TO BE "BUSY WORK" AND WHAT KIND OF MINISTRY TENDS TO KEEP YOU GROWING UP IN CHRIST?

1 Almost lost vision of where going, so everything looks like busy work. What still excites is dream of being part of community of people who practice the "new commandment."

2 Busy work: dealing with things. Growing: dealing with other people and with growing Christians.

7 No ministry is "busy work." If you feel it is just busy work you have missed the point of the ministry that God has called you to.

8 Busy work: phoning, letter writing, record keeping, "shepherding," has the effect of supporting people personally and just has to be done. Growing work: concentrating on the messages people are really giving me, and engaging in study and reading to help my hearing. In my teaching ministry, most of my work was busy work: scheduling, going to meetings, marking report cards, gathering data and explaining the program [drove me nutty].

9 Busy work: when I am responsible for the details of a Board/Committee meeting. Growing: reading, studying, relating to people pastorally.

11 "Busy work": organizing, phoning, short-term limited contacts with people. Growing: direct work with people, learning in order to teach.

12 Administrative and service aspects of Brigade tend towards "busy work" and tedium, but growth comes from the submission and obedience involved. Sunday School, CRG, and growth groups all promote growth at a theoretical, head-learning

level. Practical, integrated growth comes from my interaction with family and fellow-workers and neighbors--"where the rubber meets the road." Learning about Christ-like love is important, but until it is integrated into my everyday interactions it has not had its maximum effect on me.

14 Busy work: nursery. Growing: adults.

15 Kept growing in Christ through short term ministries. Long term commitments tend to get bogged down.

16 Baby-sitting or serving coffee could be just "busy work" but one's attitude can be the determining factor. Painting the inside of a cupboard at PCC can be just busy work--but I didn't let it be that. I kept my thoughts free for the Lord--prayer, sang hymns, thoughts of how Jesus spent years in carpentry work. So, no ministry need be busy work, if the correct attitude is in place. However, some forms may be inherently geared more toward "growth in Christ"--such as teaching Sunday School, but there too, the "good" pride could turn evil without the right attitude.

5. TO WHAT EXTENT IS THERE A SETTLED CORE OF MINISTRY THAT DOES NOT CHANGE WITH THE TASK AT HAND?

1 Love of the brethren; if it is not of love, it is not of God.

2 Willingness to understand others and to encourage them. Make everyone feel a part of the group. Peace maker. Not feel need to point out people's weaknesses.

5 God has called me to minister.

7 To the extent that God gives you gifts that are uniquely yours, which make you equipped to minister to a given situation or set of human circumstances regardless of what your present calling may be. God gives you gifts that are uniquely yours.

8 Service to hurting people is the overriding priority behind what I decide to do. [It motivates me to keep going and do what I ought to do when I feel like going home to the back yard swing].

9 Preaching, teaching - 3 times a week.

11 Becoming more developed, more aware that there is/could be such a core, common thread. It is not wholly settled yet, but many things are working to point to a strong

possibility, e.g. #7: long-term, one-on-one, small group, defined.

12 To have an impact on others for God: showing God's love or the attractiveness of His truth is my underlying motivation.

14 Commitment to prayer.

16 1 - willingness to do whatever God calls one to do, and change the form of ministry as He directs; 2 - a desire to include people who are otherwise overlooked or "not involved;" 3 - an enjoyment of working behind the scenes.

6. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE "CALL OF GOD" ON YOUR LIFE TO UNDERTAKE YOUR MINISTRY?

2 One day, someone asked for a Sunday School teacher, and I felt God calling me to teach.

7 An inner urging that is persistent, one that you know what you have to do.

8 A revelation, direct.

9 A sense of direction and affirmation as I walked in this direction.

11 Up to just recently, any ministry has been more to fill time in a "good way," because it helped me, kept me accountable, growing. Now I'm beginning to feel that it is a call, a responsibility, my purpose, function. I need to be involved because it is God's will and call, not because I benefit. It was done because it was expected or needed. Now, it is God's call, not my comfort. That call seems to be in area of "shepherding."

12 Ranges from a recruiting phone call to someone walking into my office with a problem and includes God's gift to me of a family.

15 Call of God is the natural abilities and gifts God has given me.

16 God nearly always gives me strong signs [maybe because I'm dense at times] leadings that leave little room for doubt, but much room for my response in generosity, faith and willingness. God's calling me to the convent, then out of the convent, and to particular ministries along the way was indicated by "openings" [positions to be filled, or whatever] or requests.

7. IF YOU COULD WRITE THE SCRIPT, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE DOING IN MINISTRY IN FIVE YEARS; WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE HAPPENING INSIDE YOU AS YOU MINISTERED?

2 5 years--evangelism. 10 years--maybe Church Board work again. Inside: know I'm doing what God has called me to do; and sense of inner peace. I'm needed as I am.

5 Balance, mix of personal commitment to Christ and loving the world; taking our ministry into the world, and effect institutions. [How do you set the vision out there again?]

7 To help people come to a personal knowledge of Christ and to be able to help people understand clearly their problems in relationship to the call of Christ in their lives. Want to be able to have people volunteer their needs, and be able to help "fill the hole."

8 More of the same, but I'd like to develop more insight, knowledge, wisdom. I'd like to be more capable of providing the service. [Suddenly, after writing this 2-3 weeks ago, I've been flooded with a whole lot of ideas, and memories which are being put together in new ways. Not ready to talk about it yet.]

9 Present, yet expanded. Deepening/broadening in understanding of the Word, of people. An ease in accepting personal and people shortcomings.

11 Because I haven't fully understood what God's purpose for ministry is, I've not seen need to look ahead or plan, set goals. I've taken it as it comes. But recently I've begun to sort out my strengths and gifts and feel like in-depth, long term one-on-one or small group discipling, shepherding would be my choice, helping Christians grow. I would like to see in me a growing sense of commitment to God's kingdom and God's goals. A genuine heart for others, a singlemindedness.

12 Teaching High School S.S. or working with youth groups and knowing inside that I am influencing young people to follow Christ. Show the attractiveness of His truth or His love to someone else.

15 Find a way to do ministry and get paid for it. Maybe in a Christian college setting. Way to be using the gifts within a church/college setting, within the Body of Christ.

16 I really don't have a strong "core" in any direction re: specific ministry years down the road. My concern

would be/is that I continue to be open, flexible, humble enough to do whatever needs to be done by me. It would be nice if the talents and skills I've developed could be utilized to the full, but if not, that's OK. Again, I stress attitude. As I minister, I hope I'll be emptying myself of "baggage" and conforming my actions to my values, thoughts and choices. To become more integrated.

APPENDIX G
CRG/CG FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Sent out Feb. 14, 1984

1. WHICH POINT IN THE LIFE CYCLE IS MOST ATTRACTIVE TO YOU RIGHT NOW? WHY?

1 Fulfilling my ministry: as catch glimpse of what that will be.

2 The one above intimacy--fulfilling the ministry. Because that appears to be a settled down state with less confusion of identity.

3 God working through you. I vacillate between thinking I am an underachiever and resenting God for being an underachiever. It seems to me it would be very attractive if I saw God working through me, because it would settle both complaints.

4 Fulfilling my ministry: I am in the process of defining my strengths, weaknesses, limits, within which I must serve God (for now), all of which I believe will contribute to more successfully fulfilling my ministry.

5 Fulfilling my ministry: doing what I enjoy doing, knowing that the struggles with identity, etc., are past.

7 They are all equally attractive to me. Why: because each area involves more growth in Christ.

8 Ministry--because I'm there, and comfortable with it.

9 God working through me--amazing to see His hand in my blindness.

10 I wonder if faithful love is possible for me--do I have what it takes to be faithful to the Lord through thick and thin (it is attractive but it is also fearsome too) or am I more

like Jonah--a book I have been studying lately--is what the Lord wants from me exactly the opposite of what I want to do! Another way I think about the questions in this: "can God trust me?"

11 Faithful love: because I see myself coming out of the identity stage and looking ahead.

12 God working through me is my most consistent source of joy, self-esteem, peace and satisfaction. Not sure the first three came in progression.

16 Faithful love . . . after leaving the convent, I had to forge a new identity for myself. That took several years. Now that I've moved through that, I seem to have naturally developed into the next stage . . . and I'm "high" on it! I delight in where I am

2. WHERE WOULD BE YOUR BEST GUESS AS TO WHERE YOU ARE ON THIS LIFE CYCLE? WHY?

1 Last few months, gone back into identity/intimacy issues. Beginning to see with increased clarity, what will mean to "fulfill" and it be more satisfying than ever.

2 Forging an identity--I know that I've been through the 3 stages prior to that; it's the point I'm wrestling with . Reflects unsettled state I'm in now while trying to reach a balance and converge on a solid identity.

3 Forging an Identity: I think I am "certain of my salvation" and that I want to submit to the Christ of Scripture, but I have difficulty separating my identity--I am God's child, ransomed by Christ's sacrifice--from my failures. Why fruits do not indicate that I am a powerful, joy-filled son of God.

4 The above sounds like "forging an identity" maybe, but it is Link 6 part of fulfilling ministry (transition into a part of this that God wills for me now?).

5 Fulfilling my ministry.

7 At several areas at the same time.

8 Ministry - Blueberries!

9 4-5; new ministry provides elements of #5.

10 Forging an identity: I really identify with this one because of past struggles in my denomination and current desire to publically identify myself with an evangelical,

community Bible church. This seems to be the direction the Lord has providentially led me (us) in over the past four years.

11 Stepping out of identity and into faithful love. I'm aware that Jesus is more and more the integrating center and feeling drawn to develop a faithfulness and deeper loyalty in my relationship.

12 Somewhere between Identity and Faithful Love. I am continuing to struggle with who I am, i.e., what is "left over" from 35 years without Christ that will be changed. I do feel an intimacy with God.

16 Above . . .

3. HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF GROWING IN CHRIST BEEN ILLUMINED, ILLUSTRATED, CONFUSED, ETC., BY THIS MODEL?

1 Illumined, yes. Used as a model, not a standard, it good. Has made sense of the past two years struggle, where regressing. Early ones most helpful, especially "God in me", and even though other two early ones may be present early, need this one first.

2 Illumined by sharing and discussing the model with group through which I have learned that many of my experiences are similar to others. It's helped me to appreciate and feel "OK" about my growing and struggles associated with growing. Confused me only to extent that I don't fully understand the stages beginning with "faithful love" stage on; hazy on those; wish I could experience.

3 I have been greatly helped by the MEB model. 1 - Some messages, usually on WWWG or Channel 31, say I should go from being saved to giving all my time and energy and money to a certain ministry, while waiting for (praying for?) the end. The MEB model seems to fit my experience in the Christian walk and my perception of other people I see in their walks. 2 - I am confused and disappointed by my failures, specifically by a lack of direction and power in my life. The MEB model offers the prospect of progress that will include the development of these qualities. 3 - The MEB model gives me a road map of events and qualities to look for, and a program of qualities to work for/at.

4 My problem: the first 5 steps did not occur in sequence "linearly;" rather they all were happening at the same time--and still are. Two diagrams offered: one with the five steps all contributing to growth toward fulfilling ministry; second with Christ working/me working (Phil 2:12-13) at the center, with first five in interacting orbit around center all

feeding the present sense of "fulfilling my ministry."

5 Illustrates what already gone through in own experience. Sequence of my life close to this: 1 & 2 may have been reversed. Especially true has been 3 & 4; as through me helped with identity issues.

7 My Christian growth has been unaffected by the model.

8 It's kind of neat to look back and have some idea that things make sense--or to think others might have been through some of the same things.

9 Scriptural insights; psychological insights; sharing with others in discussions always stimulating; see Matthew in a different/better light.

10 It has helped me see where I have been and where I am going and what I might expect. It seems to keep me in touch with reality--meaning the daily struggles of the believer to be God's person and the decision of the will to put God in first place. It has helped by holding out a promise of growth in the Lord--that we don't just "arrive" at some place at some time, but really are on a pilgrimage which will not end till eternity. "We shall see him as he is for we shall be like him."

11 It's made me look at where I'm at and where I've come and shown me ways and places I have grown that before I had not seen. It has been encouraging as an older Christian to look back and see that where I've been has been valid.

12 My experience fits very well into the model as I have said many times. I am convinced of its validity. Learning it in the first few months of my Christian walk was an exciting experience of insight and understanding of my new life. For a person like me who needs a hypothesis for things, it provides a systematic context in which to view and appreciate the work of Christ in my life. It has also helped me in my ministry to kids to understand better their spiritual needs.

16 This model helped me "organize" my life's history and since I have a natural tendency to appreciate order, it pleases me to be able to understand the evolution that is possible in growing through Christian maturity. Nothing about the study (of the model) has confused me, really. It just pointed out how God's plan is orderly, makes sense; it revealed to me that God's plan for growth is very evident, not only in plants and animals, but in his creatures . . . in me! To Him be the glory!!

Biblical Word	Πιστις	Δυναμις	Ελεω	Εξουσια	Συνημι	Πισω	Μαθητευ	Τελεω					
Transforming Link	Faith	Power	Mercy	Authority	Understanding	Faithfulness	Make Disciples	Complete					
Transformation Chain	Conversion	God Working <u>In</u> Me	God Working <u>Around</u> Me	God Working <u>Through</u> Me	Forging An Identity	Faithful Love	Fulfilling My Ministry	Finishing My Course					
Erikson's Favorable Result	Hope	Will Power	Purpose	Competence	Fidelity	Love	Care	Wisdom					
Erikson's Context	Maternal Person	Parental Person	Basic Family	"Neighborhood" School	Peer Groups Out Groups Models of Leadership	Partners in Friendship Sex, Compatibility Co-operation	Divided Labor and Shared Household	"Mankind" "My Kind"					
Erikson's Psycho-social Conflict	Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs. Shame/ Doubt	Initiative vs. Guilt	Industry vs. Inferiority	Identity vs. Identity Diffusion	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Generativity vs. Self-Absorption, Stagnation	Integrity vs. Despair					
Matthew's Task	Follow Me 1- - 4	Life-ways of a New Humanity 5- -7	Learn Compassion 8- -9	Freely Give 10	Expectations & Delusions 11- -12	The Nature of the Kingdom 13	Weaning Cont'd 14- -17	New Community : Church 18	The King Comes Home 19- -23	King is Coming Again 24- -25	Keystone, Cross & Resurr 26- -28	Great Commission 28:16-20

APPENDIX H

"UNTIL CHRIST IS FORMED IN YOU"

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ABSTRACT

A Speculative Model of Christian Growth:

A Melding of Matthew and Erik Erikson

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The steps between birth, growth and full maturity are clearer in the physical world than in the spiritual. Even though the New Testament is clear that Christians are to "grow up" in Christ until they "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), specific steps are not clear as to how to allow that transformation to happen.

Taking the Gospel of Matthew as the starting point, the agenda set forth in the gospel for "making disciples" is clarified. The goal is the same as Paul's, being mature (teleios), with the added definition that righteousness of the disciple be "deeper than" (Mt. 5:20) the righteousness of the superficially religious. Seen as the building of an arch, the narrative sections provide five building stones of non-formal education, and the five sermons of Jesus five building stones of formal education. These two piers of five stones each are held together with the keystone: the cross and resurrection.

To the normative word of Scripture will be added the descriptive words of Erik Erikson. The first explicates the spiritual, the second the human. As these two streams merge, a model of spiritual growth emerges which echoes Paul's prayer, "until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4:19). This model introduces a "Transformation Chain," Seven Links forged from the Anchor Bolt of Conversion. These links are epigenetic and developmental, descriptive of the process of growth in Christ from Faith through to Fulfilling My Ministry.

In addition to four chapters which sketch the theoretical foundations of the model, four chapters deal with research into the spiritual life histories of sixteen adult Christians, in two different groups. One was comprised of lay Christians attending Perinton Community Church of Fairport, New York; the other ministers and Christian counselors in the Rochester, New York area. Responding both by written assignment and small group discussion, the model was tested as to its congruence with their experiences in Christ.

Important barriers and assists to spiritual growth became clear. Even though sequential development was difficult to establish in microcosm, the Transformation Chain provided an important ordering of their spiritual lives in two-thirds of those responding, making sense of some of the specifics of the past, and holding hope for the future.

