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1977

The Cult of Liberation: The Berkeley Free Church and The Radical Church Movement 1967-1972 volume 2

Harlan Stelmach

Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Dominican University of California,
harlan.stelmach@dominican.edu

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Recommended Citation

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CHAPTER V

THE RADICAL CHURCHES

1970-Early 1971

I

"The submarine church is surfacing" was the slogan used by the national coalition of radical Christians at the National Council of Churches convention in Detroit in December of 1969. Their newsletter, edited by Nugent from Berkeley, had a new name, The Submarine Church Press. By the end of 1969, the growing national network associated with the newsletter was rapidly becoming a point of friction within the Free Church. The Jonathan's Wake effort was to be the last cooperative work of Nugent, York and Brown. A confidential letter by York to the Personnel Committee of the Free Church Board upon his return from Detroit illustrates the irreconcilable nature of the relationship between York and Nugent. After outlining fifteen wide-ranging grievances against Nugent, York concludes with two summary paragraphs:

I have covered for Tony [Nugent] and mothered him for too long, only to be repeatedly knifed in the back. I no longer have any confidence in him at all to work constructively in this program. I cannot trust him. I cannot think of any one aspect of the program I can trust him to do, or to do competently...

I am therefore, recommending to the Personnel Committee, that it recommend to the Board a request for Tony's resignation. And if this is not forthcoming, it terminates his employment by the South Campus Ministry. I am afraid that Tony is currently out of control in terms of fast becoming an urban casualty. I hope that we can find some way of ministering to him during this crisis. Both Jock and I have, perhaps four months ago, spoken with Tony Morley of the Episcopal Executive Council about this problem. I have

seen my boss John Gallagher about it. Jock [Brown] has expressed to me his willingness to meet with the Personnel Committee if it wishes to explore his opinion on this problem.¹

Why did a seemingly creative and close working relationship come to an end? What did it mean for the large national network of radical Christians? In order to answer these questions a brief exploration of the reasons Nugent came to the Free Church, his family background and his role in the Free Church is necessary.

By Nugent's own admission, York was the "front man" while he stayed behind the scenes. "[York] had the charisma and I had certain organizing skills."² Certainly these differences in "gifts" were significant ingredients in the background story to the Nugent-York split. However, reflecting in 1976 on his involvement in the Free Church and the split, Nugent was also inclined to play down individual differences and talk about the "dialectic of history" or, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, "the movement of the Holy Spirit."

We were swept into it [the phenomena of the Free Church, and the split]. It occurred in spite of us. It happened because it had to happen...Any other approach will trivialize the thing, and will get bogged down in irrelevant questions of personalities. When the Free Church...fell apart it wasn't because of personalities or personal decisions any more than it was when the Free Church...[was] launched. [It] fell apart because [it] needed to fall apart, because that was what needed to happen. Call it the dialectic of history or the movement of the Holy Spirit, it doesn't matter.³

Nugent explained, from his perspective of a larger dynamic, why he began working with the Free Church and York in 1968, and prior to that with York at CDSP. It was in 1967, when Nugent and York were taking the class in community organizing from Bill Grace at San Francisco Theological Seminary, that the "dialectic" begins. Grace, as mentioned earlier, was the head of the United Presbyterian Church's Department of Urban Ministries for the Synod of the Golden Gate. This was the year

that Jock Brown was fired from CDSP. According to Nugent, the conservatives in the Churches were beginning to move against the radicals in the churches. James A. Pike, now anti the Viet Nam war, was "forced out" as the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of California. Theodore Gill, a countercultural sympathizer and homosexual, was "ousted" from the Presidency of SFTS, and Brown was "fired" from CDSP. Also, as mentioned earlier, it was in Grace's class that Nugent helped York organize the opposition to Brown's firing. Nugent said he was encouraged to do this by Grace, because Grace realized that Gill and Brown were the "sacrificial lambs" for people like Grace himself. According to Nugent, "Grace knew that it was important to embarrass the opposition as much as possible on the Brown issue in order to slow them down."⁴

Nugent went on to explain the "larger dynamic" within main-line liberal Protestantism that dictated his presence at the Free Church:

...in 1968 I was working for the Board of National Missions and the Synod of the Golden Gate of the UPUSA, in San Francisco, and I was assigned to Howard Presbyterian Church. I didn't "decide" to go to the Free Church, and York didn't "decide" to invite me. I was sent there, and I don't mean by the Holy Spirit, though who knows by whom or what events are ultimately determined. I was sent there by my superiors. And their orders were based upon a carefully considered strategy, and ultimately it was a strategy to foment revolution, but in a controlled way, like the difference between a controlled and uncontrolled nuclear reaction.⁵

Nugent felt that Grace saw the radical potential of the Free Church, even though in 1968 it was still a "'groovey hippy service ministry that was politically naive." In order to radicalize it Grace

...had to get the Free Church out of the hands of the Division of Evangelism and its local man, [Donald] Buteyn, and get it transferred over to the Division of Church Strategy and Development, whose local man was himself. He had to take over the Free Church and he did. I was sent over there to accomplish that, since I was already

working for him and the Division of Church Strategy. The take-over was accomplished by a bureaucratic maneuver whereby the Free Church was switched from being an evangelism project to being a "new church development." Grace was trained by Alinsky and he knew what he was doing.⁶

Whether it was ultimately the Holy Spirit or just penultimately careful bureaucratic strategy (or maybe just a past and close friendship), York did "invite" Nugent to share the directorship of the Free Church with him. In a letter written in March of 1968, York explained that his ministry had "mushroomed beyond expectations" and he was at the point where he could not handle it alone. Also, York was aware that the Free Church could not afford another person on its own, and with Nugent's bureaucratic backing perhaps they could combine their ministries. York explained the new developments and the need for Nugent's specific talents:

What has developed is so exciting: not just a street ministry, but a growing ecumenical hip church in both the serving and worshipping sense.

...we are at a point where we need some additional political thinking in terms of community organization to raise additional local support and mobilize behind community issues...You seem to be the perfect man: experienced in the hip and experimental ministry, experienced in community organization and urban work.⁷

Grace wanted a radical congregation in the Synod and Berkeley was a logical place. York wanted some help, and a friend with funding was ideal. Nugent, to use his more than half serious remark, was guided by the Holy Spirit and the Spirit guided him to Berkeley.

The Holy Spirit that guided Nugent was the same spirit that guided a million or so young people in the 1960's. As their world changed so did they. For example, Nugent grew up on Mercer Island, a small wooded island near Seattle. Near neighbors included the John Erlichmans. As Nugent tells it:

My family on both sides was pioneer American stock, WASP through and through. My mother's family, the Coffins, were the original whalers of Nantucket Island that Melville wrote about. My father's family on his mother's side were the Chases, among whom was Samuel Chase, the Maryland signer of the "Declaration of Independence."⁸

The road for Nugent from pioneer stock, and upwardly mobile, though not elite, Seattle surroundings, to Berkeley was a classic story of talented youth in the 1960's. Eagle Scout and high school student body president, he dated an Olympic medalist in swimming. He was the moderator of the local Presbyterian Youth Fellowship and the Youth Presbytery, and planned to go into the ministry. But he went to Yale University and "lost" his Christian faith.

At Yale he studied "existentialism, Marxism and Russian," and felt he was becoming a socialist "or at least a liberal Democrat." He met William Sloane Coffin, the Yale Chaplain, who was influential in his decision to take a "trial year" with a Rockefeller Fellowship at seminary. He did; and moved to San Anselmo to study at SFTS. According to Nugent this is where "my life really began to change."⁹ It changed sufficiently so that at the tenth reunion of his Yale graduating class in 1972, eight years after his arrival at SFTS, the spirit had indeed guided him a long way.

I remember at the Saturday night cocktail hour a Wall Street banker who had been telling us about how he had only made 50 thou that past year turned to me and asked me what I did, and, with a few free drinks beginning to have their effect, I looked straight at him and said, "I bomb banks."¹⁰

Nugent didn't bomb banks in his work with the Free Church, but his presence was as explosive on occasion, especially with York. The reasons for this are not easy to ascertain. Nugent had his reasons and York had his; in fact, fifteen cogently argued reasons to the personnel

committee. They all added up to Nugent's use of drugs and the fact that he wasn't doing his job, or at least not the job York wanted him to do. What did Nugent do at the Free Church?

Nugent was most concerned with "church politics." Even though his job description put him in charge of part of the service ministry, the Coffee House, the Community Center, his main presence was felt as a church agitator, not theater-wise like York but a behind-the-scenes organizer. Nugent knew the bureaucratic structure well by then and had contacts. Grace was a good teacher. These interests began to bear fruit in the summer of 1969. While York had his hands full with People's Park, Nugent was arranging, with Presbyterian liberal bureaucrats, for a national network of "liberated churches." Nugent arranged for a \$2,000 grant to begin publishing the "Liberated Church Press," which later evolved into the "Submarine Church Press." This publication was to be the organizing vehicle for this national network. This money and these contacts were to solidify the Free Church's role, at least in the bureaucrats' eyes, as a vanguard "youth" ministry, "the cutting edge of Christianity." It was a power base for Nugent and a concern that took him more and more away from local duties.

II

It is difficult even with hindsight to understand the nature of the split that occurred between York and Nugent. Perhaps it, in and of itself, is not worth understanding. However, it is an important illustration of the larger story of which the Free Church and Free Church personalities were characters playing significant but still

small roles. The larger story was the division occurring nationwide--- and the churches were part of this dynamic. A closer look at the established church structures operating in the 1960's, with which the Free Church had to contend, may help illustrate this larger story, and also shed some light on the split between York and Nugent.

The covert irreconcilable situation in December of 1969 became overt in January of 1970. The submarine church network, a carryover from Jonathan's Wake, submitted a proposal, with Nugent's guidance, for \$27,000 to coordinate the network and continue publishing the Submarine Church Press. York interpreted this as a direct challenge to his leadership and the development of a competitive radical church.

The period between January and March of 1970 is crucial to understanding the nature and significance of the York-Nugent split. The largest source of information on the period comes from the correspondence among York, the Free Church, Nugent's proposed Submarine Church Action Network (SCAN), and the church bureaucrats responsible for overseeing these "issue oriented churches" or "experimental ministries" as they were variously called. I will quote heavily from the correspondence, for it is both crucial to the historical record and tells the story best. The value of these documents is twofold. First, they give us a running account of how the split between York and Nugent was perceived by the various participants and interested onlookers. Second, they give us a firsthand look at the larger church dynamic that indirectly contributed to the factionalism in the Free Church. This dynamic was what Nugent pointed to earlier, the emergence of backlash against the "radicals" within the churches. While trying to counter this backlash, the radicals were increasingly caught by the "dialectic of history,"

thus playing into the hands of the conservative forces within the church. Numerous factors made this so. One factor well illustrated by the following exchange of letters is the role "radical" church funders played in the fostering of radical causes, to the point of bringing about their own downfall along with these causes. This is an underlying theme throughout this chapter. In order to make sense of the many agencies and names alluded to in this chapter, the following schema has been devised. An alphabetical list of the participants accompanies the schema. [See pp. 172-74.] The period between January and March is just the beginning of the story concerning church funders and their strategies in the next two years. This period manifested a continuation of the dynamic to which Grace, York and Nugent responded in their efforts to embarrass conservative forces over Jock Brown's dismissal.

On January 25, Nugent submitted a proposal on behalf of 16 other people to the Joint Strategy and Action Committee (JSAC) for the funding of SCAN. JSAC was the ecumenical bureaucratic clearing house for the funding of special projects by six major Protestant denominations and the National Council of Churches.¹¹ Nugent was still employed by the Free Church. Correspondence among church bureaucrats, the Submarine Church people, Nugent and York was frequent and poignant. A look at the flow of correspondence between January and March gives insight into the two radical churches.

January 25, 1970

TO: Norman E. Devine, Executive Director
 Joint Strategy and Action Committee
 New York, New York

FROM: Submarine Church Action Network (SCAN)
 John Backe, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.
 Bryan Becker, staff, Concerned Youth of Rochester,
 Rochester, N.Y.
 Baxton Bryant, Tennessee Council on Human Relations,
 Nashville, Tenn.

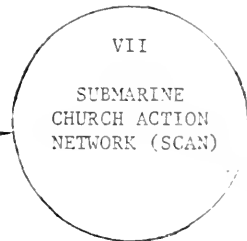
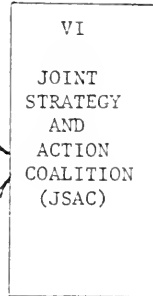
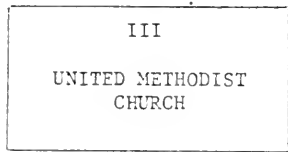
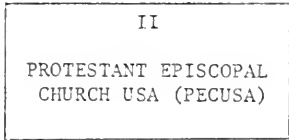
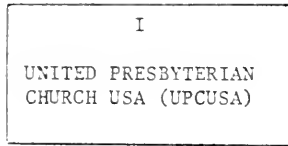
Diagram 1

LINES OF ECUMENICAL AND DENOMINATIONAL
CHURCH FUNDING IN RELATION TO
FREE CHURCH AND SCAN
1970 - 1971

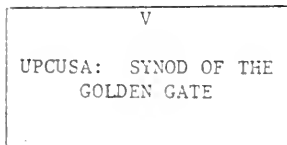
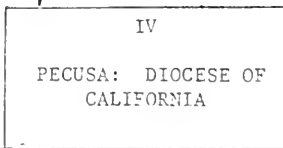
DENOMINATIONAL:

ECUMENICAL:

NATIONAL:



REGIONAL:



LOCAL:

Diagram 2

KEY CHURCH BUREAUCRATS AND CHURCH AGENCIES
REPRESENTED IN DIAGRAM 1

I. UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (UPCUSA)

<u>NAME/TITLE</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>
Richard Rautio Associate	Ministry with Young Adults Division of Evangelism
Eugene Huff Staff	Division of Church Strategy and Development Department of Mission Development
George Todd Staff	Division of Urban and Industrial Missions
Gordon Skadra Associate	Department of Church Development

II. PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH (PECUSA)

<u>NAME/TITLE</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>
Alan Thomas Chairman	Youth Ministries Team Experimental and Specialized Services
Anthony Morley Executive	Experimental and Development

III. UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (UMC)

<u>NAME/TITLE</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>
John Jordan	Young Adult Ministries Board of National Ministries

IV. PECUSA: DIOCESE OF CALIFORNIA

<u>NAME/TITLE</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>
John Gallagher Director	Department of Urban and New Ministries
John Weaver Director	Ad Hoc Metropolitan Planning Branch of Diocese of California
Thorn Corse Chairman	Department of Urban and New Ministries
C. Kilmer Myers Bishop	Diocese of California

V. UPCUSA: SYNOD OF THE GOLDEN GATE

<u>NAME/TITLE</u>	<u>AGENCY</u>
John Turpin Staff	Mission Strategy Council Experimental Ministries Committee
William Grace Former Staff	Urban Ministries Mission Strategy Committee

Diagram 2 (Continued)

V. UPCUSA: SYNOD OF THE GOLDEN GATE (Continued)

NAME/TITLE	AGENCY
J. Davis Illingworth Executive	Synod of the Golden Gate
O'Linn McGuire Stated Clerk	Synod of the Golden Gate

VI. JOINT STRATEGY AND ACTION COALITION (JSAC)

NAME/TITLE	AGENCY
Norman E. DeWire Executive Director	Joint Strategy and Action Coalition
Richard Rautio	Representative from UPCUSA
Alan Thomas	Representative from PECUSA

Doug Dibble, San Francisco Theological Seminary,
Berkeley, Calif.
The Rev. Dan Dorman, Free Church, Columbus, Ohio
Merrilee Grove, The Now Church, San Jose, Calif.
The Rev. Robert Hare, Congregation of Reconciliation,
Roger Hinkle, editor, Blood of the Lamb, Garrett
Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.
Fr. David Kirk, Emmaus House, New York, New York
The Rev. Paul Leonard, Church in the City, Charlotte, N.C.
Alice Murray, Alice's Restaurant, Akron, Ohio
Terry Nelson, Sam Mann, Van Anderson, Young Adult Projects,
Kansas City, Mo.
The Rev. Tony Nugent, Stephen Widden, Berkeley Free Church,
Berkeley, Calif.
David Oyer, Rochester Power and Light, Rochester, N.Y.
The Rev. Richard Righter, Congregation of Reconciliation,
Dayton, Ohio
The Rev. Stephen Rose, Jonathan Edwards Tithing Society,
Stockbridge, Mass.
John Shuh, Radical Seminars' Communications Network,
New York, New York

Here is a proposal to JSAC to support the Submarine Church Action Network (SCAN), an emerging national network of local communities struggling to shape a new social order by bringing to it the radical vision of Jesus, the prophets, and the beloved community...

The need of action-oriented churches for a national network was recognized by the United Presbyterian Board of National Mission, which brought together Presbyterian ministers from "issue oriented" ministries across the country at Princeton in March, 1969. A steering committee appointed by that group received funding from the Board of National Missions for a "National Convention of Liberated Churches" [in Kansas City] and for publication of the Liberated Church Press...

The Submarine Church Action Network is a coalition of the Kansas Convention Steering Committee and others from Jonathan's Wake...to implement the decisions of the Kansas City group and the desire of Wakers for a continuing presence at national church gatherings...¹²

The Proposal attempted to locate SCAN in the official policy of the Presbyterian Church, the recognized need for "issue oriented churches." George Todd, one of the key urban strategists within the Presbyterian Church, explained the rise of the "issue oriented church" in an inter-

view in 1976. It was the "issue oriented church" concept that provided the rationale and the rubric under which to fund such projects as the Free Church. Todd explains how the issue oriented church grew out of a 1950 emphasis on "new church development" (NCD).

There were large funds put up in the 1950's that were used during the great expansion of the Church in the starting of new congregations. You bought "choice sites" in expanding areas of the city and took the money---both national and local adjudicatories---to buy the choice site. It all circled around the property. Then you would build the "first unit" and put up the money for the first three years, on a declining basis, for the "organizing pastors." People developed special skills as organizing pastors.

That stuff went like a house afire and the organizing pastor went around the expanding area or suburb and called on the people and organized them, prayed with them and recruited them. And by the third year if he knew how to do it he had a self supporting congregation that could pay his salary and pick up the mortgage. Over the next twenty years the money was paid back, and went back into the fund. It was a revolving fund, a growing fund. For a certain amount of national money went back into the fund to build it up each year. There was quite considerable money available.

New church development loosened up. Under Gene Huff's leadership it changed from NCD, in the fifties definition, to congregational development, that is, aiding both new forms of congregations and congregations in their development. Gordon Skodra later became the congregational development man.

And by the 1960's some critical perspective had developed on all this and various problems had arisen too. For one thing the racial issue emerged. Therefore you had ethnic new congregations of black and Spanish churches. But now not just starting new congregations but aiding congregations in trouble...

Then "new forms of new congregations." The main policy thing is discussing new congregations that would be formed around an issue and not around a geographical site. And there the organizing pastor would bring people into the congregation who were concerned about racism. This became the organizing principle and the congregation found its worship and its service and outreach among the community involved in fighting racism or any other issue, e.g. vocational. And the Free Church fell within those policies.¹³

Nugent's proposal must also be seen in the context of a new development on the local funding front. Bill Grace had just been replaced

by John Turpin as Synod of the Golden Gate's staff person for Experimental and Urban Ministries. Nugent explained the significance of this shift this way:

The axe got around to Grace by the end of 1969, and when he got it I got it. It was impossible to avoid then. Turpin hated my guts for having supported Grace in a last-ditch effort to save him and keep Turpin from getting Grace's job. And that is when the Submarine was launched. Again, there was no "decision" to launch the Sub, no decision for the Sub and against the Free Church. Decisions, if they were made, were made at a higher level.

When Grace got the axe, we no longer had any Presbyterian support in the Bay Area and we had to go national. That was the only place to go to keep the ball rolling. Turpin, with York's and Brown's cooperation, I'm sorry to say did everything humanly possible to stop the Sub.¹⁴

The next letter illustrates John Turpin's point of view.

February 3, 1970

TO: Gene Huff, National Missions Staff
 Division of Church Strategy and Development
 United Presbyterian Church USA (UPUSA)
 New York, New York

FROM: John Turpin, Staff Experimental Ministries
 Mission Strategy, Synod of the Golden Gate
 UPUSA
 San Francisco, California

In the last few days...I have received three communications from persons responsible on the Board or Staff in the Free Church indicating that the old difficulties of relationship between Dick York and Tony Nugent never really healed and are now painfully reasserted.

Reports have reached us that Mr. Nugent has received further promises of funding through JSAC for the Submarine Press and for Steve Richardson to perform a regional function while based at the Free Church. Some people on the Staff and Board of the Free Church are saying, "funding of the Submarine Press contributes to the power base which Tony is using in the struggle with Dick York. It allows him to say to his followers that he is actually the leader and innovator, not Dick."¹⁵

cc: Gordon Skadra
 Richard Rautio
 J. Davis Illingworth
 John Gallagher...

The drama did not occur just on the Presbyterian side. If Nugent had the contacts within the Presbyterian circles, York had similar resources within the Episcopal Church. The next series of letters surrounding Alan Thomas, the Episcopal Church representative to JSAC, indicates that York had reached his friends in the bureaucracy. They were not about to have SCAN get started without a full accounting of their plans and goals in respect to the Free Church. This task belonged to Nugent and Steve Richardson, the designated staff person for SCAN, or the Submarine Church as it was now called.

February 10, 1970

TO: Anthony Nugent, c/o SCAN
Berkeley, California

FROM: Alan Thomas, Chairman Youth Ministries Team
Experimental and Specialized Services
Executive Council of the Episcopal Church
815 Second Ave., New York, New York

...your proposal was received in the JSAC Youth Screening Task Force, rather late. We stayed on to work on it and the group felt that the following questions need to be cleared up and answered by you and the Submarine Network group before we can act on it.

1. Need for determining validity of Network within movement, as against the perception of the Network as a takeover of a legitimate movement...
4. Concern for the local solidarity of the Free Church, Berkeley, as a source of much "liberated church momentum." Does the Network proposal represent the full genius of that ministry or a division without justification?¹⁶

The first response to Thomas came from Steve Richardson, now living in Berkeley. Not only did the principle of SCAN aggravate the Free Church internal dynamic, so did its location in Berkeley.

February 22, 1970

TO: Alan Thomas, Youth Ministries Team
Executive Council of the Episcopal Church
New York, New York

FROM: Steve Richardson
 S.C.A.N.
 Berkeley, California

Tony Nugent passed along to me your letter raising JSAC's questions concerning the SCAN proposals. The issues raised are among those which SCAN constituents have been trying to consider for quite a while.... One thing troubles me though. Your questions reflect JSAC's impression that we are asking for support in creating some tctally new animal...and will not come into being without JSAC backing... on the contrary...this network of people and organizations... exists now and has been developing for quite some time...

1. This is a heavy question. We have learned a lot from the bitter history of blacks during the civil rights struggle when all kinds of people benefited from the "popularity" of the movement. We are already plagued with people wanting to write books about the "youth subculture" without being a part of it. And we are having to deal constantly with hand-picked "Uncle Tom young adults" or "protests are bad" or "we love the church as it is" or whatever else would be helpful. The growing need to counter attempts to take over our movement is one of the key motivations in strengthening the network...

4. I share your feeling that Free Church, Berkeley, has been the source of much "liberated church momentum." I came here from Rochester, N.Y., where I think the work of Brian Becker, Mike Losinger and Dave Oyer has fully as much long range possibility... I think such heavy national attention to Free Church, Berkeley, has at times been bad for it and at the same time has made other communities feel they were out of it....

If you are really asking about differences between Dick and Jock and Tony, I have purposefully tried to stay out of that. I think I understand the conviction Jock has expressed to me that there needs to be a broad alliance of people committed to peace, liberation, and ecology; my own priorities are different. I think we will certainly continue to have creative interaction between Free Church Berkeley and other people in the network.¹⁷

Next, Nugent tried his hand at answering the questions raised by Thomas. In characteristic Nugent style, he signed his letter with a calculated "jab," "All Power to the People, including Bureaucrats."

February 24, 1970

TO: Alan Thomas

FROM: Tony Nugent

Friend, just received your letter and the incisive questions about the Submarine Network. I am forwarding these questions on to others who submitted the proposal and to Steve Richardson who is serving as organizer for the Network. Let me try to give you my own reactions to the questions which your Task Force is asking.

1. I see the radical church movement as a very broad spectrum---age-wise, lifestyle wise, and ideologically. I see the Submarine Network as one segment of that broad spectrum. It is difficult to know at this point what the character of that Network will be. At this point it is a very loose coalition of individuals and local communities who have made personal contact with each other at national gatherings and through the Submarine Church Press. It is a pulling together of folks who feel the need for a tighter network, but it does not pretend to represent the "movement" or to be any kind of vanguard. It represents only the desires of its constituents for some national coordination. It is designed to increase the effectiveness and sense of solidarity of these constituents, not to "take over" any movement. The Submarine Network is concerned with challenging the power relationships in the established churches and even eventually having those structures overthrown so that they serve young and disenfranchised people...

4. As for the Free Church of Berkeley, the Submarine Church Press has been a sore point with Dick and Jock since its inception. Jock objected to it on grounds of taste and strategy--"there's no national market for a radical church paper that uses 4-letter words." Dick has told me that he does not see national organizing as a "high priority." As a project under the direction of a national group and as a project related to the Free Church of Berkeley through myself and other staffers besides Dick and Jock, it has not been up to them to determine whether the Press would be published or its content. Jock has stated that he cannot endorse the Network proposal because it would be competitive with another JSAC proposal with which he is connected, namely the one dealing with military counselling. I do not see the two proposals as competitive in any way, but that nevertheless is his position.

I have served notice to both the Board of Trustees of the Free Church of Berkeley and the Synod that I will be leaving the staff. I have not submitted my resignation yet, but that will be taken care of in due time. Dick and I came to the conclusion that it was time to take this step. This departure is taking place in an

atmosphere of good will. I am not being fired, nor was there any move to fire me, although Steve Richardson says that a friend of his got this report at that national Episcopal youth ministries conference. When I leave the Free Church, there will be no one on the staff connected with the Press, with Glenn Clark (with the Free Church for a year and a half) and Steve Whidden having severed their ties. The "division" of which you speak is, therefore, no longer within the Free Church of Berkeley. This should contribute to the "solidarity" of the Free Church, rather than detract from it. I do not see the division as negative, but as a division of labor necessary for the greater effectiveness of the radical church movement of which we are all a part. My own plan is to organize a sister free church in another community in the Bay Area, possibly in Marin County, and to spend part-time working with the Submarine Network.

You are right, the Free Church of Berkeley is the source of much liberated church momentum. This momentum has been provided by many individuals, some of whom are still with the Free Church and many who have left. Some of them have left feeling that their time and talents were used by the organization and by the clergy (I include myself) who took the glory. I do not feel this way because I was able to have real participation in the decision-making and got tremendous satisfaction from my work, but some of the lay staff left with bitterness. Nevertheless, I have confidence in both Dick's and Jock's leadership and expect the Free Church of Berkeley to grow and thrive. I am leaving at a time when I believe my departure will strengthen rather than weaken the Free Church.¹³

York was also busy making his case known to as many people as possible. He drafted the following letter for wide circulation to the Free Church supporters and particularly Church funders. The letter gives us insight into York's perceived differences between himself and Nugent.

February 27, 1970

TO: To whom it may concern

FROM: Richard York
Berkeley Free Church
Berkeley, California

The purpose of this memo is to indicate my reasons for not signing or endorsing the SCAN Proposal, sent to national JSAC, for the sum of \$27,500. It is also my purpose to in-

dicade here that the Free Church of Berkeley has not taken official action to endorse this proposal. It is my hope that the Free Church as an organization will not endorse it in the future. (Most Board members and staff members have not seen the proposal).

REASONS:

1. The main purpose of the SCAN Proposal, as I read it, is church confrontation at national denominational conventions. \$10,000 of the budget is for this purpose. It seems to me that "denominational confrontation" is a low priority for the Liberated Church movement and that a budget of \$10,000 for this purpose is counterrevolutionary. \$10,000 would make a big difference to many radical congregations in terms of increasing their programs of direct service to the poor and alienated. If this money should be secured, it should go to the people, not to an organization of "ecclesiastical weathermen" for airline tickets.
2. An additional \$10,000 in the proposed budget is to salary the Rev. Steve Richardson as an "Organizer" (salary and travel). I presume this means organizer of the church confrontations mentioned above? What does that mean? Why is a full time salaried organizer needed? This part of the proposal smacks, to me, of laying on a salaried bureaucrat from the top. I don't want to be organized! The primary thing which liberated churches need, I would say, is better channels of communication and coordination--not organization! We already have such a network, in the FC published "Win with Love: A Directory of the Liberated Church in America."
3. \$7,500 of the budget is for the Submarine Church Press publication. I have not endorsed this publication either. I feel that it often lacks in maturity and revolutionary depth of thought. It appeals only to a small segment of the liberated church movement, i.e., the yippie youth-oriented groups. What is needed more is a paper which will serve the whole of the movement, including all styles and modes of operation.
4. Finally, I think that the SCAN proposal is limited because it arises out of a small essentially Protestant group of churches. It does not include a vision for a broad coalition of backgrounds and styles. It does not envision direct links with the secular movements for peace and liberation. It does not focus on the church's role in this revolution, or include a place for individual churchmen who have made their vocation direct involvement in the Movement. For these reasons I think that the proposal is incestuous: churches confronting churches for churches sake. Where is the revolutionary service to the oppressed in this proposal?

I would like to close by saying that I only saw the SCAN Proposal (for the first time) last week (Feb. 15, 1970). It

does not represent the Berkeley Free Church, which for the most part has not seen it, and has not acted in its support. Nor does the Submarine Church Press represent the Berkeley Free Church. It is a separate organization.

I would like to register here a strong protest over the use of the Berkeley Free Church Symbol (see this letterhead) for the organization SCAN and for the Press. I demand that the use of this symbol be dropped. If it is not, the BFC will be forced to drop this symbol by which it has been known for several years.

P.S. Contrary to popular opinion, Richard Nixon did not pay for the airline tickets to bring Abbie Hoffman and the Yippies to Chicago for the convention.¹⁹

Meanwhile, Alan Thomas was not satisfied with Richardson's responses.

In fact they offended Thomas, one of the few black clergy in the Episcopal bureaucracy.

March 4, 1970

TO: Steve Richardson
cc: Tony Nugent

FROM: Alan Thomas

Thank you very much for your response to the list of questions proposed by the JSAC Youth Committee. From all the good things I've heard about you, I must say that your letter displays a totally different point of view. You appear to be duping your colleagues with your Jykell [sic] and Hyde Trick Bag. What I'm referring to, is your preface to question #1, where you rap on about various black analogies. Steve I don't need you or any other person to "soft soap" me with such trivia. I'm hep to it. Worse yet, your "Uncle-Tom" reference etc. was not too cool either. Contrary to my first reactions of what to do, I'm going to let this pass right now, but you better believe, that should it happen again I will seize the time, and take care of business!!

In response to some of your other comments, I don't agree with the thing about Dick and Tony being irrelevant to SCAN, because they differ on such questions as value of Church meeting, confrontation and the content of the newsletter. Next, I'm not dumb, I know that Free Church, Berkeley is not the whole movement, but you must also realize that it is an important prototype which may be indicative of sentiment elsewhere around the country. Nuff said.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 9th, where I hope we can settle our differences, and discuss the S.C.A.N. proposal openly and without any hidden agendas.²⁰

Alan Thomas was not the only one unpersuaded by the various positions advanced in the leading ranks of experimental ministry forces in the U.S. John Backe, one of the original signers of the SCAN proposal, gave York's position a complete undressing. As an outsider to some extent, Backe was able to penetrate the inconsistencies emerging in the big controversy. His letter, though long, is worth quoting in full, for it indicates clear thinking when emotions and "politics" were clouded.

March 14, 1970

TO: Richard York

FROM: John Backe, Professor
Lutheran Theological Seminary and SCAN supporter

This is a response to your communication dated Feb. 27, 1970 regarding the proposal of the Submarine Church Action Network. I suppose you will get several replies, but feel moved to write none the less. On the one hand, I feel like not writing, because it makes me feel like a church administrator who must continually defend an action and doesn't get to do anything else. On the other hand, I feel moved by so many of your statements that I can't pass up writing to you. Although I had nothing to do with the drafting of the proposal, my name is first on the list of submitters.

I think the easiest way to respond to your points is the way you have presented them.

RESPONSES:

Although the proposal does ask for a large amount of money, the argument that said money would be better used for the programs of radical congregations is true, but I don't feel particularly moved by it. The money we use for many things could be better used by any number of groups perhaps, but that does not mean these other groups can get it (from the same source). It doesn't even mean the SCAN proposal will get it. The money it took to fly the Free Church to Detroit could have been better used perhaps but...

I really don't want to dwell on that. I do not understand the proposal to be the formulation of a group of "ecclesiastical weathermen", but rather an effort to help people who are already interested in "denominational confrontation" to get themselves together. Independently of SCAN, groups of Lutherans have been getting it up to go to several Lutheran conventions. The same is true of the Coalition for Houston, the Episcopal group set on that convention. (Unless your plans have changed since December, I remember you telling me that you were planning action at Houston) (I will make repeated references to Jonathan's Wake though I don't know if you remember me from there. Little matter). So, SCAN will not be to initiate convention action, just help where possible.

2. Likewise Rev. Richardson's role is not to organize said denominational confrontations (d.c.'s) but rather travel and help spread the word about the Liberated Church Movement. I think you overestimate the influence of the BFC, nationally speaking. I think "Win with Love: A Directory of the Liberated Church in America" is good, is necessary, but hardly sufficient. An organization I work with in Chicago received a copy, though they weren't listed, and the only Chicago group listed was at the time defunct. What I am saying is that with increased communication, we will do a better job, and Steve's personal touch helps even more.

3. I will here warn you about judging things across the nation from a Berkeley perspective. Perhaps you have received some reaction from other individuals regarding the appeal of the Submarine Church Press, but I find my experience to be quite different from the one described. In Chicago, I have little contact with groups whose ministry is to the "yippie-youth-oriented" segment of the movement. Specifically, I work with peace movement groups and people working with the poor and in race relations. Among these groups, the reception of the press and the SCAN idea, as I understand it, as [sic] been good. Precisely because I understand it to be an idea that complements, not co-opts, existing programs.

4. Here is where I am in most agreement with you, regarding the "essentially Protestant" base of the group. But again, in Chicago, I am beginning to reach others. As to our incestuousness, I suppose this is one way to see it. You ask "where is revolutionary service to the oppressed in this proposal?". For my self, I see this in the duality that while we are serving, living the gospel, we are also speaking "truth to power". Very clearly, the established church is an oppressor. I am part of that church. As I am responsible for the oppression, I am responsible for ending the oppression. I feel that part of doing this is being at the denominational conventions, which I am particularly involved in, in this case Lutheran. I have no special plans

for the Methodists or Presbyterians, and I know that Tony Nugent and Steve Richardson have no designs on the Lutheran conventions, personally.

I see your point about the Berkeley Free Church Symbol. I hope an amicable agreement can be reached between you and SCAN. I'm sure your concern here is for the immediate community you serve, for nowhere else has anyone I know recognized this symbol as standing for the BFC (although one person thought it was from the N.Y. Workshop in Nonviolence, WIN magazine, which has a similar symbol, and another thought it was my sign, astrologically speaking. I don't understand that.)

These are my personal views, but the views upon which I based my support for the SCAN proposal. I am sending a copy of this to SCAN, and would like to send this to more people, but don't have the resources. If they think that a good idea, they can.

I fervently hope that these differences are problems of communication, which seems to be our biggest problem. I think it would be dreadful for us to fall prey to the same type of infighting and organizational jealousy that so typifies the established church, and the secular peace and liberation movements in general. I also hope that I have been responding to a fair reading of your letter.²¹

I hope we can all come together sometime soon.

Meanwhile, the split was made official. Nugent left the Free Church. This opened the door for the York oriented Free Church to negotiate for funds directly with the local Presbyterians. Turpin confirmed this in his next letter.

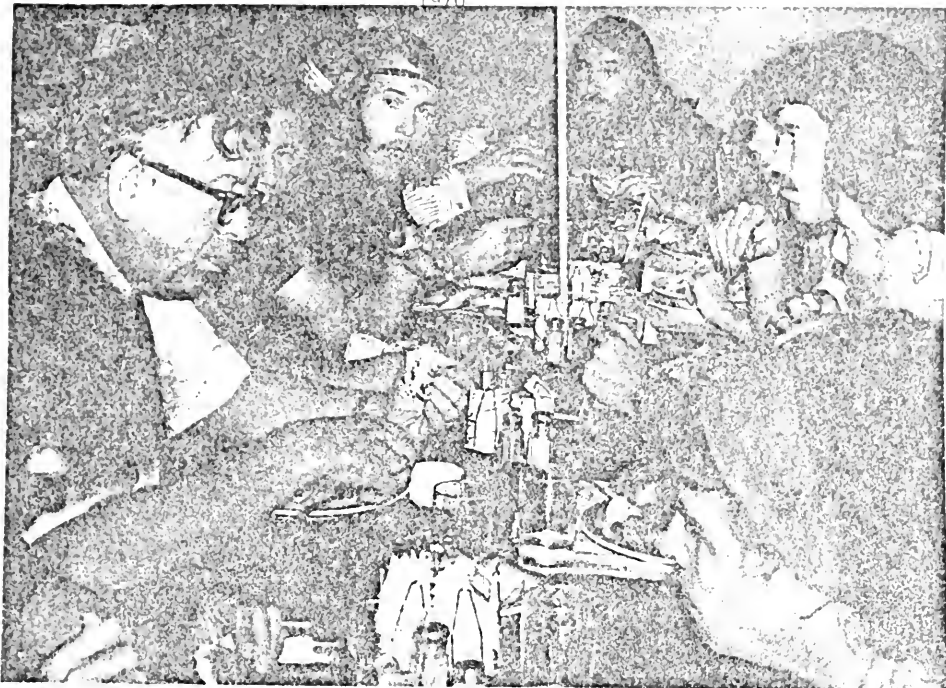
March 16, 1970

TO: Otto Smith, Chairman of the Board
Berkeley Free Church
Berkeley, California

FROM: John Turpin
Synod of the Golden Gate, UPUSA
San Francisco, California

...the Synod Mission Strategy Council took the following action on March 16, 1970:

1. that the services of Tony Nugent be withdrawn from the Free Church as of March 16, 1970 by the Synod. This means that his services to the Free Church will cease and his



Photographs taken at Sunday lunch: Moderator with the Rev. Steve Richardson, head of table (top); Laws with Peter Siersma, Chicago-based Submarine Church member (above); the Rev. Anthony Nugent, Mill Valley, Calif., and Mrs. William Laws (right); two seventeen-year-olds, Carol Henne, youth observer from Livermore, Calif., and Bob Schiller, youth advisory delegate from Lang Island Presbytery (below).



Source:
Presbyterian Life June 15, 1970

relationship to the Free Church will be severed.

2. that the Experimental Ministries Committee continue to relate to the Free Church during the next six months to determine what role the Free Church would like the Synod to play and what role the Synod feels it could play in that ministry.²²

The local SCAN activists wanted their day in court too. The following letter was sent to the Free Church Board in response to York's attempt to discredit SCAN. The letter tries to depersonalize SCAN's relationship to Nugent and illustrates a "collective" notion of organization that remained true to SCAN to almost a fault.

March 19, 1970

TO: Board of Trustees
Berkeley Free Church
Berkeley, California

FROM: SCAN
Berkeley, California

We recently received copies of 2 letters sent by Dick York concerning a proposal to national JSAC from SCAN, the Submarine Church Action Network. As the collective which produces the Submarine Church Press for the Network, which has participated in recent national gatherings, and which has past and present connections with the Berkeley Free Church, we are hurt and angry. We are hurt and angry because of the negativism of the letters, because of their personalization of large and important issues in the radical church movement, because of their outright mis-statements and distortions, and because they seem to widen the gulf between us at a time when we need to be mutually supportive.

The personal denigration hurt some of us the most. Dick's letter states that "the staff of the Submarine Church Press are not members of the Berkeley Free Church and have contributed very little to our work." In relation to both Tony and Glenn [Clarke] this charge is absurd. Tony is still officially a co-pastor of the Berkeley Free Church, having notified the Church of his intention to resign, but not having submitted his resignation. He and the Personnel Committee agreed to wait and see if another job opened up before making the resignation official. Both Tony and Glenn, who began working on the staff in a full-time capacity during the summer of 1968, contributed much time and energy to the Church. Would any others besides Dick who have been in the Free Church over this period make this charge? In the case of both Steve Whidden, who is on the Board of Trustees, and Doug Dibble, they are seminarians

at San Francisco Theological Seminary who have been assigned and still are assigned to the Free Church for their field work. Marie and Judy have both been active in the Free Church in the recent past.

The charge that Tony "is not the right man to be organizing a national network of liberated churches" ignores the fact that the national steering committee has asked the Rev. Steve Richardson, not Tony, to serve as the national organizer. Tony is working on the newspaper and seeking to develop a sister free church in Marin Co. or elsewhere. The charge that SCAN is "Nugent's personal proposal" is patently ridiculous.

Our collective is not Nugent's collective, the paper is not his paper, and the network is not his network. If there is ever a danger of that, we and others will put a stop to it. The Movement has no room for prima donnas or personal power trips.

Another charge in the letters is that the Submarine Network is an attempt to "co-opt" and "takeover" a movement by a "small group of people looking for jobs." This charge implies that the Network is attempting to use the movement for its own personal ends and purposes, rather than to serve the movement. This is a heavy charge, especially for Steve [Richardson], for whom the proposal seeks a salary. Ultimately those in the Network must be judged by what they do, not what they say. Whether the expenditure of funds for Steve's salary is in the interests of the movement as well as his own interests can finally be determined only if and when this arrangement is made. The Network is anxious for him to be paid to do what he is already undertaking. Since he quit his job as Director of Lay Training for the Board of Urban Ministry in Rochester in December he has been working in the radical church movement on a volunteer basis.

What about the observation that the Submarine Network is an outfit of "ecclesiastical weathermen" composed of "yippie, freaky groups", which "more often than not, are not the strongest and best of the movement." The irony of this is that Dick York is considered to be the ecclesiastical weatherman par excellence across the nation. What was the red paint on NCC officials and minutes? Actually the Submarine Network is composed at this point of a fairly "straight" cons[t]ituency, although they are folks who work easily with others who are younger and "freakier." The younger yippie types are more visible at national church meetings, since the delegates are almost exclusively older and short-haired. The delegates to the National Convention of Liberated Churches, however, looked fairly typical of delegates to other church conventions. At this point the Network is a real mix. The origin of the Network is Protestant, although Catholics were present in Kansas City and have been working on the

committee planning the St. Louis gathering.

Dick is correct that the Submarine Network is not "the whole of the Movement". This is a point which we and others have never denied.²³

Nugent's strategy to seek funds nationally was based on the "policy" of church funders to provide money to "nationally oriented projects" without the need for local "adjudicatory" support or consent. This policy was severely tested in the SCAN proposal, when SCAN decided to locate their "national" project in Berkeley, "next door" to the Free Church and in the jurisdictional area of John Turpin. Turpin, the local Presbyterian authority, did not want SCAN funded, recognizing this situation. The national Presbyterian funders attempted to interpret the SCAN project to Turpin, while politely maintaining that they were controlling the funding from the national level and the local had only an advisory role. Richard Rautio was the UPCUSA's representative to JSAC for projects such as SCAN and the Free Church.

March 19, 1970

TO: John Turpin
Synod of the Golden Gate, UPUSA
San Francisco, California

FROM: Richard Rautio, Associate for Ministry with Young Adults
Division of Evangelism
Board of National Missions
United Presbyterian Church, USA
New York, New York

Thought you might appreciate some response to your concerns about the Free Church and related matters from the vantage point of JSAC's Youth Ministries Task Force...

1. to seek validation of the network concept---seen in very general terms---within the movement itself, not the denominations;
2. to determine whether the York/Nugent conflict is indicative of broad disagreement between radical Christians nationally or only a personality or local clash, and
3. to negotiate a revised proposal which:

- a) spells out some working hypotheses about network building,
- b) does not fund national church confrontations as such, and
- c) provides for upgrading the Submarine Press.

Steve Richardson was here last week and spent many hours with Alan [Thomas] and myself. He now sees a need for spade-work on all of these points...You can be sure, however, that we will consult with you, John Gallagher and Bay Area JSAC if and when we have a new proposal. Even though the proposal has a national scope, we will want to be sure of the local implications...

The Free Church conflict, as I see it, will probably have some damaging effects on the radical Christian community in the Bay Area. We hope to avoid translating that damage into the national scene by the way we handle the Network proposal. But I hope it is also possible to minimize the rift locally. Toward that end, let me share this with you:

1. We (i.e., JSAC Youth Task Force) cannot buy any one version of the Free Church conflict, and we do have concern for all the participants, as well as respect for their activities.²⁴

However, as much as the national agencies were maintaining their power to do as they wished, Rautio's letter also indicates that enough pressure was applied by local church people such as Turpin to get SCAN to revise their proposal, upgrade the Submarine Church Press (i.e., eliminate "four letter words") and let national funders know that they could not fund an organization solely to disrupt church conventions. This power struggle between the local and national levels were to continue throughout the funding process for the SCAN proposal. The struggle was also to emerge in other forms, up until the reorganization of the Presbyterian Church in 1972. We will return to it below.

III

This litany of letters, though essential for understanding some aspects of the York/Nugent split, still ends with Rautio's question "whether the York/Nugent conflict is indicative of broad disagreement between radical churches nationally or only a personality or local clash." No single, precise answer to this question exists. However, we can draw some partial conclusions from these letters. There may be two radical churches in Berkeley but there is still only one national network to which York and Nugent, the Free Church and the Submarine Church must relate. The network may only be held together by national funders, but it is still intact, at least at this point. This fact seems to be confirmed by a letter sent by York to the April meeting of the Submarine Network in St. Louis, held before the United Methodist National Convention. The letter was sent via Lyle Grosjean of the radical ministry in the Haight Ashbury, a close friend of York's and a former GARC militant. It states that the Free Church was one hundred percent behind the movement of the "Guerrilla Church." However, it also stated that the Free Church has had to "rethink some of its local priorities and the demands of the revolution in Berkeley have led us to cutting back on National Church confrontation."²⁵ The tone of the letter was conciliatory and its only point of controversy was to make it clear that the Network should not turn into an "underground council of churches."

We need solidarity, not solidification; community, not organization! We need to build permanent coalitions, not only with each other, but with Movements for peace and liberation in our own communities. Our emphasis ought to be how to strengthen these coalitions with the Movement rather than our building organization among ourselves.

Keep the faith, baby. The submarine church is surfacing, the guerrilla church is recruiting.²⁶

Why York felt he had to develop this issue as a point of difference is not totally clear. The possibility of the loose 'non-organization' network becoming a supra-organization was extremely remote.

At least the national radical church network was still talking to each other after its vanguard church had come apart at the seams. However, the question still lingers as to what were the larger issues to which the above letters pointed. These were issues which went beyond the York/Nugent split and were to have dire consequences to the whole radical church movement. In order to get at these issues, still more must be said about why the split occurred. Was it just a matter of personalities? Did it indicate real ideological differences? Or was it just a power struggle between York and Nugent? In what way did the funding agencies by their own power struggle aggravate the split, even while holding together the national movement? And finally, what was the larger church and societal dynamic mirrored in these events---a dynamic that would eventually overtake York, Brown, Nugent, the Submarine Church, the Free Church, and the liberal church bureaucrats?

We have to go back to Nugent's reflections on the events in the above letters. He begins with church or denominational politics; he uses the analogy of a rope, "two strands woven together tightly." The Free Church was made up of the two strands. "In 1968 these strands came together."²⁷ On the church bureaucratic level the strands were the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians. "The Episcopalians were sensitive to the aesthetic, hip side of what was happening in Berkeley and the country, while the Presbyterians were politically aware."²⁸ In 1969 these strands were coming apart, at least locally from the Presbyterian side. As mentioned above, Grace had been replaced by Turpin. Nugent while trying to

block Turpin's appointment in favor of keeping Grace on the job, saw that the only way to keep the rope taut, at least around his agenda of a radical church, was to go to a friendlier national Presbyterian bureaucracy. Nugent's "national" strategy was the context in which the events of the split were played out, and point in turn beyond the Nugent/York split to the larger established church dynamic. The larger church dynamic was less an unraveling of the Episcopal and Presbyterian rope---as Nugent maintained---and more just a deterioration of the Presbyterian strand. There is no doubt that York's Episcopal funders, both national and local, supported him, just as there is no doubt that Nugent had the support of the national Presbyterian funders. However, the key to this unraveling was the local/national split within the Presbyterian church, a split which York could exploit in his struggle with Nugent. The local Presbyterians under Turpin could also exploit the Nugent/York split in their struggle with the "radical" National Presbyterian office. Before discussing this dynamic in more detail, let us first examine how York perceived Nugent's national strategy.

York could interpret this move to the national arena only in terms of past problems and conflicts with Nugent. York saw the disagreements and conflicts in terms of ideology, life style and competition within the organization. Ideologically, at least in terms of politics, it is acknowledged by both York and Nugent that their differences at the time could be characterized as: York was the Black Panther-oriented "politico" and Nugent was the hippie-yippie-oriented cultural radical. This was ironic and inconsistent with the original task assigned Nugent by Grace, as well as with Nugent's own characterization of the Presbyterian Church as politically sensitive and the Episcopalian Church as

culturally sensitive. Obviously something more fundamental was at work, but even the life style issue does not answer all questions. Nugent was oriented to free love; so was York. As much as York criticized Nugent's use of drugs, he likewise used drugs on a regular basis. It would be easier to make a case for the differences between the life styles of Nugent and Brown, Brown siding with York in the split. Brown was monogamous, and drugs were not part of his notion of a "life of simplicity." In fact it was Brown who in January of 1970 protested Nugent's teaching a course at the Free University in Berkeley which was listed in the catalogue next to a picture of a "dripping penis." Nugent's response to Brown in a heated discussion at a Free Church Board meeting was: "Well, isn't that what penises do?"²⁹ Actually Nugent had no part in the choice of pictures and was unaware that the catalogue was to be published with the picture. The fact remained, however, that Nugent's actions and associations were creating conflict within the Free Church. York was spending much of his time disassociating the Free Church from such actions of Nugent's. It was perhaps at this level that the most fundamental difference existed, in organizational style and commitment. York was the Director of the Free Church, an Episcopal priest and hierarchically oriented. Nugent was a "free form" militant, a Presbyterian minister, and more collectively oriented. Glenn Clarke, the Free Church C.O. and co-editor of the Submarine Church Press with Nugent, described Nugent with admiration as "spacy" and unconcerned about his own future or what might happen tomorrow.³⁰ York, on the other hand, "covered his bases." From York's perspective, Nugent was jeopardizing the very survival of the Free Church. If Nugent's national move gave him more control over the organization and its director, it would be only a matter of time be-

fore the Free Church ceased to exist. York also perceived Nugent's SCAN projects as competition for Free Church projects controlled by York. The most sensitive point of competition was the Win with Love directory of the liberated churches on which Jock and Emily Brown were working. Nugent, however, explains the directory competition this way:

To Jock, of course, the Sub[marine Church Action Network] was a rival to his and Emily's Win with Love network. But there was no room in Win with Love for freaks and militants. Win with Love was really a paper organization, and its participants never met face to face. It was held together by a pacifist, non-violent ideology. The Sub was entirely different. It was a network of individuals, not organizations, and it had no ideology. It changed as the individuals changed.³¹

The factor of "competition" eventually became the key focal point in the infighting between the Free Church and the Submarine Church once Nugent resigned. It was on this point that York could appeal to Anthony Morley and Allan Thomas, his Episcopal funders. York wrote Morley and Thomas the following letter in August of 1970. SCAN had yet to receive funding, and York wanted to be sure the Episcopal church did not fund SCAN.

My real reason for writing this letter is the subject: SCAN! I have been thinking much about your visit with SCAN, Tony [Nugent], and our meeting at our house afterwards... I remember your questions to me re: will funding of SCAN be pulling the rug out from under Free Church. At that point my answer was a little vague: yes, in the sense that we are competing for the same funds, and yes, in that we are a national network and they are a rip-off.

Well, a lot has happened since you both were here. Now more than ever, I would like to say that funding SCAN would be pulling the rug out from under us. SCAN is trying everything to become a replacement for the Free Church on the Avenue and in the Berkeley political scene. They are into everything...

I know I can't have it both ways. I criticized SCAN for not being a group that was serving the people locally now I criticize it for trying to do just that. But we have been assured all along that SCAN...was not to be another Free Church project in Berkeley. Rautio in his letter to me which I showed you, says: "I do not in any way see the

SCAN proposal as an alternative to the Free Church...Our Board said again and again to local Presbyterian people: we do not want a competitive Free Church in Berkeley and that is what we believe Nugent et al. are trying to bring about...

In summary, I see the funding of SCAN (a Free Church spin off in Berkeley)...as a duplication, undermining the very things we have been funded to do here...³²

York received assurances from Morley five days later that the Episcopalians would not be funding SCAN. He wrote:

What you say about SCAN is important, and I imagine Al [Thomas] can use it in JSAC youth circles. I reported my conversation with SCAN to Al, and we've rapped about it a good bit. We haven't notified anyone formally, but I'm sure we won't back funding for SCAN.³³

But York was not as successful on the national Presbyterian front in heading off the funding of SCAN. The money had not arrived from the Presbyterians via JSAC by October, but decisions had been made that were to assure \$10,000 for SCAN from the Presbyterians. The first indication of this was a \$1,000 grant that SCAN received from the United Methodist office of John Jordan. The JSAC process included a policy which stated that for a project to be funded it must receive the support of two or more denominations. The Methodist money assured the support of the Presbyterians. However, the money was not to arrive for another four months. And in fact, local Presbyterian pressure almost stopped the funds. York had strange allies in the local Presbyterian Synod who sought to stop the SCAN money. In a confused series of protests from local Presbyterian officials, they made their wishes known to the national bureaucracy. On November 4, the Stated Clerk of the Synod, O'Linn McGaire Jr., took it upon himself to write the following letter:

The General Council of the Synod of the Golden Gate wishes to object in the strongest terms possible to the grant of \$10,000 to the Submarine Press which operates in this Synod. We understand it was made over the objection

of the Mission Strategy Council as tendered by John Turpin and J. Davis Illingworth...

Whether justification [for funding] is either local or national this group is exceedingly destructive---not just against the conservative element of the church but against most of the avante guard churchmen who are dedicated to social change such as the Free Church, the Free Food program and our UMHE Ministry through UNITAS.³⁴

This letter was later retracted by the head of the Synod, J. Davis Illingworth. But it was clear that Illingworth was against the project. It was a matter of protocol and "statesmanship" that prompted his retraction.

...There are items in his letter that should be retracted. I am sorry he did not clear this letter with me.

First, it should be clear that this grant was not made over the objection of the Mission Strategy Council. Mission Strategy Council has been in discussion about the Submarine Church and has had initial conversation with them but has taken no official action because it is a National Network and not operating in our area alone. Mission Strategy is discussing with the Submarine Church local relationships and concerns. The General Council of the Synod did take action to express strong opposition to this grant and Mr. McGuire was requested to write to you.

Let it be understood that I have some hang-up concerning the Submarine Church but even I cannot buy the language of Mr. McGuire when he writes, "this group is exceedingly destructive." It is my opinion they have done little in a constructive way but I don't believe they are exceedingly destructive.

I do believe we will have a hard time defending the action to grant them funds but we will live with it if and when it comes.

One of my personal problems with the Submarine Church is its method seems to be primarily in the direction of confrontation. I hope we have reached the period in the life of the church when we can deal with issues on a stronger basis than confrontation.³⁵

In January of 1971 in a letter to Steve Richardson, Richard Rautio explains the status of the SCAN \$10,000. It is clear from this letter that there were forces within the Presbyterian Church that were

controlling the tempo of the transaction. However, people like Huff and George Todd, it appears, were equal to the challenge.

I asked about the National Missions grant to SCAN today (again), and found that no letter has been received from the Sub, so I will confirm my phone message to Betsy Siersma of several days ago.

Huff tells me he needs a letter in his file which details the uses of SCAN money for 1971. Two reasons for this: (1) presumably the expenses projected in the original proposal include some events which are now past and (2) Presbyterian Lay Committee and other witch-hunters are breathing hard on National Missions and Huff needs an up-to-date rationale for interpreting the grant.

I admit I am somewhat confused about the first point because I didn't think the expenses were that detailed in the original. My conclusion is that somebody is still gunshy about paying back bills for trips to G. A., Houston, etc. So my advice is to project a strictly 1971 budget. As for point two, the language of the letter to Golden Gate Synod (George Todd's hand over Gene Huff's signature) seems to define the rationale nicely.

If you are puzzled, call me. The important point to me is that this is not an attempt to run SCAN through Mission Development Cabinet for a Yes/No decision.³⁶

The final episode of this kind of bureaucratic maneuvering was to force a new policy within the Presbyterian Church. Future projects, had to be cleared at the local level before the national office could grant money. This new policy was part of a massive shakeup and reorganization of the Presbyterian Church by conservative in-church forces, who wanted to return to the local levels power they felt had been misused at the national level. John Fry, in his book The Trivialization of the United Presbyterian Church, discusses the national/local dynamic.

All along there had been greater resistance to the activities of the national church---meaning the General Assembly and its agencies---than a representative form of church government would force church leaders to acknowledge. They conceived their responsibility to be one of educating and leading your average angry Presbyterian to some better understanding of the gospel and its relationship with the modern world. They conceived their responsibility to Presbytery

delegates and General Assembly commissioners in these terms: to present them with the opportunity to lead the denomination. The farthest thing from the leaders' minds was to believe they had a responsibility to reflect the views of the members. They believed their responsibility was to God, not to the members of the church. Therefore, the resistance of some alleged greater strength than met the eye at General Assembly was for church leaders an irritation. According to Paul J. Cupp, one-time president of the Presbyterian Lay Committee:

Back in 1963, there began some communication between a small group of United Presbyterian laymen in the Greater New York area and the top leadership of our church, expressing concern over the increasing emphasis of the church in purely secular matters, and the evident neglect of the church's primary mission. These concerns were on several occasions expressed in writing---and face to face---with strong convictions, to our church's leaders. The response of the church leadership in essence was this---whoever does not agree with the policies and programs of the United Presbyterian Church is free to go wherever he chooses.

I tend to credit this as an accurate reminiscence. That would have been the response of some top leaders all right, although I can't imagine their not having invited these conservative business persons to move on into the twentieth century as the happiest solution to their problem, and Cupp doesn't report their having made such an invitation.

There were indeed a lot of unhappy people in the UPCUSA. Before C-67 they were sort of unconnected and privately fed up. In the Presbytery of Chicago, for instance, a conservative pastor, the Rev. Roland Showalter, said, "If you took a head count of every Presbyterian in the Presbytery, you would find a clear majority dissatisfied with the liberal policies of the national church and Presbytery staff, yet at Presbytery meetings we (conservatives) are outmaneuvered and outvoted every time. You would never know we are the majority."³⁷

Conservative backlash to liberal politics was sweeping the country, and the churches were not exempt. Anthony Morley, the key Episcopal funder, had announced, in January of 1971, staff cutbacks of fifty per cent due to the "unwelcome necessity and not-so-welcome desire to rethink the function of national staff along leaner, more disciplined lines."³⁸ Allan Thomas lost his job and Morley himself was forced to

leave. The financial necessity was a reflection of the decline in giving and attendance in the 1960's within mainline Protestant churches. The churches mirrored the polarization of society at large.

When the SCAN money finally arrived from the national Presbyterian offices, most of SCAN's principal leaders were off or on their way to other projects. Steve Richardson joined an alternative legal project in San Francisco, the People's Law School. Glenn Clarke began to set up the Berkeley Youth Hostel; and Nugent was on his way to a Ph.D. program in sociology at the University of California in Berkeley.

IV

Behind the power struggle between York and Nugent and the bureaucratic maneuvering there were substantive differences consciously defended by the two radical churches in Berkeley. The struggles and maneuverings, however, cannot be totally understood by these differences, but they are worth documenting to get a better picture of the radical church movement in 1970. It must be stressed, however, that these differences in theory and practice were only matters of degree and not always consistently held. There were large areas of agreement too, but in the polarized setting of 1970 it was the differences that were accentuated not the commonalities or the common enemy. The fundamental difference between the Free Church and Submarine Church, which cut across political and religious perspectives (or perhaps was the basis for these differences in perspective), was style of activity or praxis.

There was a strong material reality dictating this difference of style for most of 1970. The Submarine Church's JSAC grant was held up for all of 1970. Therefore, the Sub (which was its shorthand name) had to band together to make ends meet. This financial reality put them more in touch with the large "living off the land" youth ghetto in the South Campus. They lived off welfare, numerous give away boxes, food stamps and food conspiracies; while the Free Church, though still in periodic financial crisis, was maintained by large grants and large salaries for the staff. The Sub Church was by necessity more organically part of the youth ghetto while the Free Church became more of an outside service agency with a ministry to the South Campus. Steve Richardson confirmed this difference between the two churches in an interview in 1976. He based these different styles of activity or approaches on the issue of professionalism.

I felt that the principle difference between us and them in the realm of theory, and as far as I could tell, in the realm of practice too, was that we were trying to struggle against professionalism and against a notion of the Church which was "the Church ministering to somebody," or even "the Church providing services for somebody..."

We were concerned with the radical church being a church that was struggling with people for their own liberation. These concepts, of course, fit in with youth culture, feminism and notions of "people taking responsibility for their own lives."

By contrast we felt that the Free Church, which really was Dick York , was the minister to the Avenue, to the hippies...

...For example, he would say "his flock was on the Avenue..." This was a very different way of presenting your work and ministry. It was very different from us. As far as we were concerned we were the people...We were not the Church ministering "in the presence of" the street people or the left. We were the street people; we were the left. There was no difference between us and anyone else.^{38a}

This basic difference in style of work permeated the way in which the Free Church and the Sub Church understood themselves religiously and politically. The difference over professionalism also dictated the organizational structure that was used to do their political and religious work.

First, in terms of religious differences, beyond style of ministry, it is important to see that the Free Church in 1970-71 was staffed by two Episcopalians (York and Brown) and one Catholic (Boylan described below). On the other hand, the Sub Church was largely composed of Presbyterians with ministers, not priests and with organizers, not charismatic leaders like York. Though Brown was not a typical Episcopalian, his new sacramental emphasis in Planet on Strike and his general emphasis on liturgy did help to confirm York's sense of himself as a priest. Also as mentioned in more detail below, Boylan's background in hierarchical Catholicism, perhaps unwittingly, helped to foster the reimposition of old Free Church structural patterns where York was the Pastor or Priest.

However, the religious differences between the Sub and Free Church can best be illustrated by their orientations to liturgy. The Free Church saw their liturgies as special events with separate meaning and symbols, though often communicated in new language or idiom. The

Sub Church saw liturgy to be more organically rooted in and not separate from the normal (or special) events of people. The Free Church became well known for its liturgies, such as its blessing of Peoples Park by York. According to Richardson, this was a liturgy imposed on events. It was neither necessary nor developed organically from within. Perhaps this point could be argued, for the Free Church was deeply involved in the Park Battle. But Richardson's notion of liturgy, actually his concept of religion, would not have allowed for or seen the need for such a blessing. The effervescence of just building the Park was sufficient liturgy. On the anniversary of People's Park Annex (which the Free Church helped liberate a year earlier) Richardson wrote these thoughts:

The counter-culture is so much more
unified than the schizo dominant culture
that communal celebrations really
speak to the mythic needs of the people
thus there is not a need for some kind of
special church-type celebration
to legitimize the events

That is, at the annex we found about five
hundred fold
we all made our own music
we roasted a pig to symbolize the
end of that form of oppression
freeks, blacks, politicians, browns, young,
old---we gathered out of
sense of common culture
then we burned down a replica of the
moncado barracks
(fidel lost in an attack on moncado
barrack 26 julis, 1953---seen as
the launching of the revolution)
as far as i can see that is pure
liturgy, celebration, affirmation
reminds me of the old medieval
mystery plays in Europe
as we danced around the fire and spoke of our
plans to liberate our own country
we were affirming our deepest hopes and fears³⁹
[Italics mine]

This same organic or perhaps this misunderstood tribal cultural notion of the sixties was also the basis of the Sub Church's politics. Again, this is what distinguished them from the Free Church which, as Richardson mentioned above, they only understood to be Dick York. The Sub and Free Church worked on the same community political issues: Berkeley Tenants Union, Youth Coalition for Self Defense, and community control of police. However, according to Richardson, while the Sub Church walked the neighborhoods knocking on doors, York participated in high level organizing or strategy meetings, or lent his name to favor such issues. The Sub Church's politics were, by no means, hard ideological politics. They were "community based" growing out of the needs of the people for their own liberation, according to Richardson. Therefore, it followed that the Sub Church's politics were "anti-imperialist " not because of theoretical Marxism, but because of their affirmation of self liberation struggles in general, in this case for the Third World. Neither group was ideologically Marxist and the Free Church also supported liberation struggles in the Third World. However, the Sub Church would have seen those struggles sufficient and justified in themselves, while the Free Church still held onto its critical calculus of nonviolence and the politics of the "third way of Jesus." The Sub Church discarded the notion of nonviolence. Both organizations, however, had common political heroes, and they were primarily Marxist: Che, Mao, Fidel and Ho.

In the final analysis, the contrasts in style and approach seem to be confirmed as the basis for whatever differences in thought and structure that emerged between the two radical churches. These approaches were once integrated within the Free Church with Nugent's presence (though Nugent was less a pure Sub Church type than was Richardson). In many ways the two approaches were complementary and could

have had a creative relationship if these points of common substance were stressed and were acted on in cooperation. The consequences of the two isolated groups and their separate approaches were drastic for both the Sub and Free Church. The Free Church increased its isolation from the very community it was said it was called to serve. The Sub Church became too isolated in and too much like, in all respects, good and bad, the community of which it was a part. It had no basis for an independent critical perspective. The Free Church became paternalistic to the youth ghetto by its professionalism. The Sub Church became arrogant to the professional world and lost contact with helpful resources and political and religious allies.

Steve Richardson talked about these limitations of the Sub Church, which he more clearly saw from a hindsight perspective of four years. Though he left the Sub Church in October of 1970 for many of these reasons, they were not totally self-conscious at the time.

What led me to pull out was the feeling that something fundamentally dishonest was going on. It just didn't seem right for us to be going to these denominations and telling these church people that they were full of shit.

It was like I was using Christian ideology and ideas to appeal to those people but I didn't "believe" them. It wasn't that I was lying, for what I said about the radical Jesus I did think to be true. But I wasn't a part of them. I wasn't appealing to people who were my people...

I was trying to "have my cake and eat it too..." It's not the confrontations that I am criticizing but it was us saying that "we are your people," "we are part of you" and "we are the church..." It gradually didn't seem right... Maybe it was true for some Sub Churchers .

Sometimes when I think back on it, maybe the strategy of the Berkeley Free Church or Jock Brown was better. In the sense that Jock does consider himself to be a Christian and to be part of the Church. And the people he was chastizing

are the people he loves, cares about and respects... where we would go and do excessive stuff. I remember when we simulated smoking dope on the Presbyterian Convention Grand Assembly floor... It was phony because I didn't even smoke dope that much. It was like taking a shit in your parents living room and leaving. That's a real hindsight perspective though.^{39a}

The Free Church, however, in the end, and perhaps all along, was not immune from what Richardson described about the Sub Church. In many respects the two radical churches had more in common than they both were willing to admit. The differences in style and the power struggle between Nugent and York only served to mask their similarities, both the positive and the negative ones.

V

However, back at the Free Church, the struggle for existence went on. In fact, considering the polarized climate, Nugent's departure did have one of the consequences Nugent thought it might: "I believe my departure will strengthen rather than weaken the Free Church."⁴⁰ He also stated that he had "confidence in both [York's] and [Brown's] leadership and expect[ed] the Free Church of Berkeley to grow and thrive."^{40a} Again, considering the growing odds against the Free Church, there was a semblance of recovery and growth. The organization was consolidated around York and Brown. Now more than ever, the Free Church became "York's ministry," with Jock Brown as the "Resident Theologian." The Resident Theologian was to play an increasingly important role in the Free Church, particularly on the national level, where Brown had most of his contacts.

The road to organizational stability and health was not an easy one. The volatile months of the split and its aftermath were only part of the story in 1970 and early 1971. The 1969 dynamic of repression

was inherited by 1970, and teamed with conservative backlash to produce the most polarized climate within the nation and church since the origin of the Free Church. This climate took its toll on the Free Church, and continued to provide the backdrop for more splits.

There were, however, intermittent periods of cohesion and stability. A symbolic turning point for new hope of stability came on May 23, 1970. Richard York and Melinda Harley were married. They took a honeymoon in Europe, paid for by Free Church Board members Otto and Phyllis Smith. Many Board members hoped that, with York's personal life improved, the Free Church would follow suit. Harley had been a Free Church volunteer since the summer of 1968 and had taken an active part in all the guerrilla liturgies of the Free Church since that time. However, at the time of their marriage, her Berkeley associations were not moving in the direction of Free Church work. She was increasingly defining her politics by a Berkeley political commune, the Red Family, which gained notoriety chiefly through its most famous members, Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda. Harley also spent much of her time organizing the Free Clinic, which was to take her away from day-to-day Free Church work. On the personal side, the marriage was not a hallmark of stability. It ended in divorce in 1973, and was constantly punctuated with conflict and separation. Perhaps it was a marriage for its time. The prayer given at the marriage service indicates the backdrop of conflict surrounding them.

Richard [York] and Melinda [Harley] are marrying
 In a time of war
 In our world and in our streets
 When the planet is groaning aloud for peace.

Our father, 3,000 miles east of here
 Bobby Seale is locked up and waiting
 Busted leaving a wedding at the Free Church

Our father
 13,000 miles from here
 The war in Cambodia begins
 called
 "This is how the Vietnam war ends"
 or this is how the world ends...

Today therefore
 In obedient joy we gather
 To do this. To break bread. To pass the cup.
 To get married. To make love. To unmake war.
 To remember all our brothers and sisters
 Amen. Right on.⁴¹

This was also the time that: National Guardsmen fired on students at Kent State; the Isla Vista branch of Bank of America burned; the Berkeley Police Department tried to purchase helicopters; and police "incursions" on the Berkeley campus peaked, surpassing all previous years combined. Police harassment at the Free Church also continued. In February, for example, the police had "busted into the Free Church" looking for run-aways. Windows were broken, files were searched. Even with the substantial support the Free Church received from its Board and its sponsoring agencies, the breakin proved costly in time, energy, and bad publicity. An illustration of these costs occurred when the the Diocesan Council of the Episcopal Diocese of California passed a resolution condemning the police bust at the Free Church. Such support was of doubtful value, since it angered the mobilized conservative clergy in the Diocese. They secured and presented a different set of facts, from official police reports, and demanded a retraction by the Diocese.

The support was never officially or publically retracted but the conservative challenge put the Free Church on the defensive. They now had to justify their existence at numerous meetings with church officials. The conservative backlash made it clear that they would not tolerate liberal or radical church people who wanted to "fund revolution"

within the churches. At the beginning of the year, for example, the chairman of the Board of the Free Church, Ray Jennings, admitted that his efforts to raise funds for the Free Church were now limited:

...Those who have the kind of resources that would enable them to give to [the] Free Church more than a few dollars, are, without exception, people who are considerably disturbed by the Free Church and their pastor's involvement with it...

...Even though I have been a professional fund raiser, with the time and prospects available, I couldn't raise the kind of funds now needed---especially when the cause is so controversial.⁴²

The controversial nature of the Free Church was getting wide coverage by the media. Such media exposure helped to fuel the instability and backlash surrounding the Free Church. In March of 1970, there was a series of articles in the San Francisco Chronicle and the Berkeley Daily Gazette that accused the Free Church of "fostering riots" and "harboring protesters" during riots in their buildings, particularly in their first aid work in the midst of demonstrations.⁴³ There also appeared a Gazette editorial by Mike Culbert, Berkeley's conservative mouthpiece, in response to a "letter to the editor" written by York. York was protesting Culbert's insensitivity to the problem of street life for "free life style people." Culbert replied:

It is the persistent attempt by would-be revolutionaries and adherents of the "social gospel" and their satellites to paint Jesus Christ as a socialist revolutionary, an anarchist and a hippie.

Not so long ago, it was standard Marxist-Leninist agit-prop to refer to the great Nazarene as "the first communist."⁴⁴

After a long essay on Biblical exegetical "proof-texting" on the life of Jesus, Culbert concludes:

No! Jesus was no anarcho-nihilist hip-hedonist, and no attempts to display him as same,---even if we base our assumptions on how he appeared and dressed on the fantasy

flights of Renaissance painters---and he did not preach rationalist positivist hedonistic humanism.

He was not an anti-Establishment revolutionary... He was a REAL revolutionary who taught that the major collision of values is not human social organization or even temporal existence (fleeting thing that it is)---but in the soul.⁴⁵

VI

It was publicity from media people such as Mike Culbert that made it difficult for the Free Church to regain their stability. They had to forego much of their own agenda, while defending themselves. In retrospect, it was a real feat that they gained as much internal coherence and stability as they did in the summer of 1970. The stability they achieved had to be credited to Brown and a new co-pastor. When York returned from his honeymoon, the Free Church hired Richard Boylan to replace Nugent. Brown's role in the Free Church gained new importance but it was Boylan who provided the administrative skills and organizational stability that York, the Free Church's charismatic leader, lacked. It was fortunate that Boylan was on the scene, for the current of repression, backlash and factionalism did not subside, and only by organizational unity could the staff have made it through the year with some degree of self-understanding, funding, and sanity.

Boylan remained as the co-pastor through the spring of 1971. However, his greatest contribution was made in 1970, getting the Free Church back on its feet and holding its own against its opposition within the community and the churches. By the spring of 1971, even Boylan's presence would not have been sufficient to hold back the flood of events which submerged the Free Church. York was to call Boylan the de facto

Director of the Free Church, even though he still retained the Director title during Boylan's stay at the Free Church. Boylan met York in 1969, while participating in a coalition of Bay Area radical religious groups that York helped to organize. Boylan was a member of one of the groups, the Society of Priests for a Free Ministry. The Society was a Catholic organization largely composed of "ex-priests" such as Boylan who had married. In 1969 Boylan went back to school for his Masters of Social Work at the University of California at Berkeley. Boylan's work at the Free Church doubled as his fieldwork placement for the School of Social Welfare.

Boylan's and York's work together in the Bay Area Radical Church Coalition (BARCC), as it was called, in the late winter and spring of 1970, convinced them that they were compatible organizationally, ideologically, and personality-wise. They felt they could complement each other on the work that needed to be done at the Free Church. Boylan understood York to be the "charismatic presence" and "guiding spirit" of the Free Church. He saw himself as dealing with the "nuts and bolts" of the administrative side. He said York "was good at getting things started but the trivia of administration was too much for him."⁴⁶ While Dick was out on the street or in community meetings "he needed someone to mind the store." Boylan did this and more.

His job at the Free Church consisted of overseeing all the day-to-day details of the service ministry. In 1970 the service ministry included the switchboard, the crash pad service, the coffee house, and the Backpack storage for youth transients. He also handled the "staff development" screening process for the volunteer staff running the switchboard, which entailed skill in peer counseling. In general, he

provided the "stable adult presence" for the largely volunteer-run service ministry on the street. He also helped York with the countless wedding ceremonies and premarital counselling sessions.

By the time Boylan joined the Free Church the switchboard was operating on its own momentum. The volunteers organized themselves into a semi-autonomous collective with the assistance of Phyllis Smith. In the midst of the York/Nugent difficulties, she assumed primary responsibility for the oversight of the switchboard. She had been a long time switchboard volunteer herself, and is perhaps to this day one of the most knowledgeable people in Berkeley on the Telegraph Avenue street scene. However, it was left to Boylan to maintain the morale and smooth functioning of the switchboard workers on a day-to-day basis.

Boylan had other "staff development" duties too. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the Free Church's stability was his role in the relationship between Brown and York. Boylan put it this way:

[Brown] has had a very persuasive influence on Dick [York], often in spite of Dick's better judgements or own convictions. He could be persuaded heavily by Jock [Brown]. One of my functions, of course, was to try to mead the two, keep Jock from leading Dick into something that he would later discard because it wasn't his. I tried to have them give each other enough space to hear the differences, in order to do some real compromising.⁴⁷

Boylan had what he called a "dumbbell theory" about the Free Church. At one end was Brown, "the writer, ideologue and brain trust,"⁴⁸ and at the other was the street scene to which York and Boylan related. This characterization was true mainly at the level of official function and responsibility within the Free Church; it was not accurate in terms of competence. Certainly Boylan and York were bi-polar in many respects. However, in elaborate "job descriptions," the calculated

effort of Boylan, the spheres of influence and roles were well defined. In terms of Boylan's dumbbell theory, York and Brown were the weights on either end, and Boylan was the connecting bar. Boylan felt that this dumbbell model was what kept the Free Church not only stable but, more importantly, creative. He saw that Brown and York needed each other. Brown was indeed the "father figure that Dick needed;" and "Dick was Jock's alter ego, doing the stuff on the street that Jock knew needed to be done," but could not do, "due to age and life style," according to Boylan.⁴⁹

It is not surprising that York began to depend more and more on Brown. York had always depended on Brown, but this dependence increased during the split between York and Nugent, and even more so when Nugent resigned. Therefore, when in June of 1970 the Free Church Board raised some questions about Brown's value, it is not too surprising that York made an eloquent case for Brown's contribution. A two year "anonymous grant" of \$12,000 a year, to begin that June, was the occasion of the defense. York requested that Brown's salary be raised from half-time to two-thirds time, and that a portion of this grant be used to cover the increase. Brown's work seemed too remote from the daily service ministry to warrant the increase. York had to admit that Brown was not on the street.

It is true that his visibility in the local operation is less than my own, but that is the nature of his job description which the Board originally endorsed for his work.⁵⁰

What York was referring to was the original terms of agreement between the Free Church and the Episcopal funders, that made Brown's half-time salary contingent on his not meddling in the "decisions or activities of York or Nugent." A communique from Anthony Morley, as mentioned in

Chapter IV, made it explicit that Brown "not be considered a regular staff member, but a kind of resident theologian."⁵¹ The Episcopal grant money was contingent upon this agreement. Therefore, the detached nature of Brown's work was written in from the start.

But in June of 1970, with Nugent gone, York wanted a revision of these terms. He felt that Brown had de facto become a "regular staff member" and that his working relationship with Brown was "very close and a workable team ministry."

Many times a quarter I come to Jock asking for a theological treatment of a specific problem: like what should be the structure of the new church? How do we conceive of the Bay Area Coalition? How should we relate to the youth in straight churches? ...He has written many such working documents for me, providing a theological basis for continuing discussions of these problems...

...his job description and the way in which it has been altered and developed by practice, is essential and top priority to all of our work local as well as national.⁵²

York carefully detailed all the accomplishments of Brown and his wife, Emily, including Brown's books, his travels to conventions on behalf of the Free Church, and his work with Emily on the Win With Love Directory: the latest issue had 10,000 copies printed. Brown's constant fundraising and general "covering" for York in times of political or personal crisis were also mentioned. Perhaps Brown's fundraising talents were most persuasive to the Board. The Free Church was not assured of continual church grant money. Brown had been developing a large and growing network of small individual givers who were not tied to the political shifts of the time. In collaboration with York, he was also responsible for proposal writing and the general public relations of the Free Church. The interpretation of the Free Church's controversial work was a thankless but essential task. So Brown re-

ceived the increase in salary.

Financial solvency was crucial to the level of stability that was maintained in 1970. Along with Brown's efforts, the two year grant was vital to keeping the Free Church alive, if not too well at times. The anonymous donor was Jean Weaver, the soon to be former wife of John Weaver, Episcopal Arch Deacon and right hand person to Bishop Myers. It was her money (based on inheritance from the Proctor and Gamble fortune) that had given the Urban and Experimental Department of the Episcopal Diocese of California its start. Also encouraging on the financial front was the possibility that local Presbyterian money would be coming to the Free Church. John Turpin was in contact with York about this. As an act of defiance over the National Presbyterians' decision to fund the Submarine Church, Turpin was supporting the Free Church. Since York and Brown knew this arrangement would not last, the Weaver money took on added significance.

By the summer of 1970 the Free Church was enjoying a precarious stability. Numerous factors seemed to indicate a new-found sense of direction. There was even some good press coverage. The "ultimate" compliment was paid the Free Church in a Newsweek magazine article devoted to an avant-guard liturgy performed by Harvey Cox. Cox, one of numerous well known religious personalities to have visited the Free Church, was wellinformed of its activities. The liturgy he used was one of those developed by York and Brown.⁵³ Here, at least, was confirmation of their worth by a Harvard professor with "radical credentials."

However, there were more substantial marks of success. The Network of Radical Christians still viewed the Free Church as a source of inspiration. But perhaps more importantly, York was once again in

control of "his" ministry. He was the Director. Attempts to organize the Free Church into a "collective" under Nugent's influence were now considered unworkable. A soft hierarchical structure was now in effect, with deference to York as the "head Pastor-Director." Boylan was comfortable with this arrangement, and helped to define it. In fairness to York, this was not a development totally to his liking. However, he preferred it to the conflict with Nugent and to undefined responsibilities.

VII

Certainly, the well-defined lines of authority could be justified in the last part of 1970 and the beginning of 1971; a "tight ship" was needed. York was beaten by Berkeley police July 4 while walking home with his wife Melinda Harley. Melinda, several months pregnant, was also roughed up but escaped into a nearby house. This episode was just an extension of past police harrassments, notably the police break-in at the Free Church at the beginning of the year. It was at that time that York reported being threatened by police officials; "You are going to get hurt, Reverend," one of the officers stated. York was well known at the Police Station as a trouble maker. He was also easy to recognize with his big head of bushy red hair. The police made good their threat, and York was beaten unconscious. Police surveillance, which had become so routine prior to the beating that the switchboard workers not only logged the telephone calls but the license numbers of unmarked police cars, now increased. Boylan was certain their phones were tapped. But the Free Church survived these attacks, at least organizationally. It is not clear to what extent such harrassment and

overt repression hindered a more creative program at the Free Church. Unfortunately for the Free Church, this repression was combined with lingering problems that strained its theological and programmatic coherence and creativity.

Two problems stand out in 1970 as both contributing to the strain and illustrating the deeper internal crises of self-understanding and direction. The first was the local competition of SCAN. And the second was the continual backlash pressure from conservative church people and journalists.

As mentioned above, York was still maneuvering to stop the funding of the Submarine Church as late as August of 1970. In the letter to Anthony Morley, quoted in part above, York went into detail about SCAN's presence in Berkeley. He felt they were jeopardizing his ministry, for they were attempting to delegitimatize the Free Church to the street people.

Example: they threaten to start a switchboard because ours is not 24 hours. Example: they are bum-tripping us at many local political meetings. They are telling the movement and street that our funding is corrupting, "you ought to see their budget," "let's demand their money," etc. Example: they have come to the Youth Coalition meetings I have organized and are trying to get involved in the whole runaway thing...⁵³

The presence of SCAN was obviously a headache to York. It is not certain why he was so defensive about SCAN's willingness to become involved in issues that could have been jointly sponsored. No doubt Morley was correct in responding to York's letter when he characterized the problem on both sides as one of "mutual vendettas" and "fratricide."⁵⁴ But it seems clear, at least in retrospect, that if York could not work with people who should have been his allies, due to style and not substance, a crisis existed in the self-understanding of the Free Church.

Nugent, not a paragon of political coherence either at this time, felt it was widely recognized that York's politics had become "wishy washy."⁵⁴ In retrospect, York admitted that from late 1970 on the work of the Free Church just "felt fake." He felt the Free Church was "just imitating the past and not developing."⁵⁵

The second major problem of contending with backlash illustrates further the Free Church's ambiguous political and theological direction. One specific case involving the growing Free Church nemesis, journalist Lester Kinsolving and conservatives within the Episcopal Church, is worth examining in some detail. The controversy surrounded the Free Church Collective Handbook, which was conceived and published in late 1969 and early 1970 when Nugent's influence was still felt in the organization, even though he did not work on it. It was written primarily by Carl Bangs, a "subsistence wage" Free Church worker with a Marxist ideology, and Melinda Harley. A product of the Berkeley streets, it was cast in the language of street politics, rather than the translated language of reflection on street politics that Brown produced. York also had a lengthy article in the Handbook, one of his most radical political statements. However, under attack from the conservatives, York and Brown, for the sake of funding and due to a legitimate evolution away from some of the ideas in the Handbook, denounced it.

The Handbook controversy began in the local Episcopal Diocesan Council meeting of October, 1970. York had to answer certain "charges" concerning his ministry. In the midst of the meeting, a motion was made to cut off funding for the Free Church. Though the motion was defeated, York was asked to return a month later to further explain the Free Church ministry. Prior to the next meeting Lester Kinsolving,

still an Episcopal priest, one time supporter of the Free Church, and then religious editor of the San Francisco Chronicle, wrote a letter to Thorn Corse. Corse was lay head of the Diocesan Urban and Experimental Ministries, which funded the Free Church, and a vice president in the Bank of America's legal division. Kinsolving thought Corse would be sympathetic to his line of reasoning about the Free Church. Kinsolving's letter:

Here enclosed are photostatic copies of the more interesting programs and assertions of the Berkeley Free Church---which is being supported by your money and mine.

John Gallagher, who admitted to me that he had read only "parts" of the Collective Handbook disclosed that grants of 22,000, 10,000 and 8,000 have been made by the Executive Council through our Diocesan office...

I realize that it is currently in style for 815 Second Ave. to engage in the most meretricious word games to justify grants to obviously violent groups (say Leon Modesto: "What is violence? How can the church judge?"). But as I am a depositor with the Bank of America (and a financial supporter of the Episcopal Church) I am obliged to wonder what you would do if the enclosed poster (with the caption: "We will celebrate with such fierce dancing the death of your institutions") featured Banks of Americas instead of burning churches? This, as I mentioned, has already been done---a poster of a Bank of America check with the burning at Isla Vista. This is supposed to be humorous, but I am unable to laugh at the BFC [Berkeley Free Church] or regard their rantings as acceptable rhetoric, which should be ignored in the continued financing by the Episcopal Church.⁵⁶

Evidently this letter and other arguments did not persuade Corse to stop supporting the Free Church, even though he did not agree with all that was done in the name of the Free Church. In an interview in 1976, Corse admitted that it was his job to provide the establishment credentials on the Urban Department in order to convince conservative church people that the Department knew what it was doing in funding the Free Church and other "radical" projects. Corse also recalled one

Graphic 10
FREE CHURCH POSTER



Urban Department meeting when Lyle Grosjean and York "mockingly" presented him with a copy of the check that Kinsolving mentioned. He said he was amused.⁵⁷

Kinsolving did not stop with official channels in his crusade to expose the Free Church. He went directly to the general public. On October 17, 1970, he printed a critique of the Free Church Handbook in the San Francisco Chronicle. The article quoted at length from the Handbook and spared none of the "juicy tidbits" such as: "capitalism is a form of anarchy," or people should get "food by ripping off, begging, garbage runs, expropriating, or in extreme necessity, buying (co-op or Food Conspiracy, of course)."⁵⁸ Kinsolving's timing was good. Not only was the Diocesan Council meeting to take place in November, but in December the full Diocesan Convention would be held. This publicity was sure to cause problems for the Free Church when the budgets were scheduled to be passed at the Convention.

Beginning with the November meeting of the Diocesan Council, the Free Church, and especially Brown and York, began their own counterattack. York took the offensive and criticized the Council for reviewing the Free Church program only "when charges are presented, never to really find out what good it has been doing."⁵⁹ Then in preparation for the December Convention, Brown and York sent a letter to all the clergy in the Diocese of California. They wanted to answer the charges in regard to the Handbook by presenting the Free Church's side of the issue.

We have had publicity which could be seen as criticism. We know Who it is that justifies us, and are less interested in justifying ourselves. Private criticism has been privately answered. We have seen a bundle of sheets supposed to represent our position. Part came from draft

document once studied by a local coalition, never issued, and in the end rejected. Part are unrevised versions of our liturgy. Part come from a bright idea which never panned out, the Collective Handbook, now replaced with other proposals...

If we offend any by words or actions of our own we apologize. If we offend any by the offense of the Gospel we hope they will take heart...We indeed work among a community which eats food either discarded from supermarkets or picked off their shelves, and makes little distinction between the two. We also work for a master who, with his field staff, made his meal by harvesting privately owned fields on a holy day, and told us that human need takes priority over unresponsive institutions.⁶⁰ [Italics mine]

Key "respectable" members of the Free Church Board of Trustees were mobilized for the December Convention to make a strong appeal for the Free Church. A letter from the Board was passed out on the Convention floor. The Free Church had a booth that was constantly staffed for instant information and distribution of Free Church literature. As an added bonus for their strategy, Thorn Corse was the moderator for the Convention. The money for the Free Church passed, but at what cost?

The most obvious cost was that the amount of time and energy it took to strategize and to answer charges hindered the Free Church from keeping up with new developments on the street, in the country, in the Church and other church funding agencies. By June of 1971 the Free Church was faced with bankruptcy. Reorganizational plans were called for. On the street the scene had changed from hip youth from middle class backgrounds to working class youth, "bikers," and indigents. In the country at large, the political situation was still polarized, but a new movement was reaching its peak. The "Jesus Movement" was emerging as the religious phenomenon of the 1970's. It was largely an indict-

ment of liberal Christianity and the Berkeley Free Church was not spared. But more needs to be said about the Free Church's membership and structure in late 1970 and early 1971 in order to set the stage for the Free Church's "final hour."

The new hierarchical structure in the Free Church was in response to numerous factors. Perhaps one of the most significant was the changing street scene mentioned above. The disparity between and separation of the Free Church staff from its clientele had steadily increased ever since the Free Church consciously recruited the more politically aware transients (1968) or relied on local seminarians (1969) to compose its bottom tier and lower level staff. However, beginning in the summer of 1970, when the collective plan was an acknowledged failure (eliminating many seminarians), the Free Church took a paternalistic turn with a renewed emphasis on social service work to a less politically aware clientele.

The social service ministry not only had to deal with a less political aware street person but a more violent total street environment. The Free Church, still located at its Oregon Street store front, had to deal directly with the transient on the street. This situation was unlike the Submarine Church, which had a location in a more stable community (though by normal standards still very transient), ironically situated several houses up from the old Free Church building on Parker Street (See map page 7). Ray Jennings documented the changes on the

street for the local press and social service agencies. He was also involved with the Berkeley Runaway Center, which was housed in the basement of his church, The First Baptist Church.

By late 1970, the "drug culture," originally perhaps a sign of social liberation began to turn sour...

Drugs and drug dealing had become big business for some, a way of life for others. Large numbers on the street had need of money for drugs and legitimate jobs were not only scarce but couldn't provide the kind of money required. Criminal activity of many kinds began to increase. The ever-present shoplifting yielded to robbery.⁶¹

Jennings also indicated that local businesses and social service agencies were "attacked" and disrupted at the "hands and chains of 'bikers'--- the would be Hell's Angels."⁶²

The Free Church and Free Clinic had experienced invasions by police during riots but these incursions by the people they sought to serve were far more demoralizing.⁶³

In this climate it was not too suprising that the Free Church was not actively recruiting its clientele for membership in the organization. But it was not just the street scene that prompted the re-institution of a hierarchical structure for the Free Church. York and the board, in response to the Nugent/York split, sought to eliminate leadership conflicts by consolidating the leadership under York. The formal job descriptions drawn up late in 1970 made clear the lines of authority and responsibility. York now officially recognized as

the "Pastor/Director," was "the person to provide overall leadership, pastoral care, and program direction."⁶⁴ Nugent's co-pastorship became the "Administrative Assistant" (A.A.) under Boylan, subservient to York.

The A.A. sees to the accomplishment of the policies and decisions of the Pastor and Board and is directly under the Pastor for administrative responsibilities.⁶⁵ [Italics mine]

While Boylan's duties were basically defined to be facilitating York's leadership, Brown's job description was also written to make his powers even less. Brown's role was defined more as a resource person, still maintaining the "Resident Theologian" title.

The composition of the board was also more a carry back to earlier times. The board now had a large number of representatives who were "sponsors" from local churches and agencies. But they were not hostile sponsors, for they were carefully chosen by York to both support and legitimate the ministry in the eyes of the community and the denominational funders. These older members were less interested in the alternative church aspect of the Free Church than they were in the social service ministry. In a questionnaire to the "members" early in 1970, these more "establishment" oriented board members put the highest program priority on "service to the alienated community in the form of corporal acts of mercy."⁶⁶ Though the membership criteria of the 1968 by-law revision remained, giving voting membership status to all who

elected to participate in the programs of the Free Church, the board membership was heavily deominated by the older community sponsors. They considered it their main function to facilitate York's ministry. Now this was not just a ministry to the clientele, but even the lower staff positions and the twenty-five volunteers who staffed the switchboard. Further indication of this hierarchical attitude was Boylan's "peer group" counselling session for the switchboard workers. He ran these sessions not as a peer but as a professional social worker.

Therefore, the Free Church's membership orientation and structure in late 1970 and early 1971 resembled the 1967 South Campus Community Ministry when it was a ministry to the alienated hippies. Once again it was a paternalistic, professionalistic, top down service agency, the kind York denounced during People's Park. Before long the old problems of this model would reassert themselves and call for another drastic restructuring, one that would have dire consequences for the Free Church. These consequences were the result of forces similar to those Richardson outlined in connection with the Sub Church. Essentially these forces were an inability to face up to dishonesty and a "wanting it both ways" syndrome. The Free Church tried to deal with these forces as they sought to resolve their contradictions. Was the Free Church a self-conscious church or the incognito church? Was the Free Church an independent radical church or the dependent reflection of the established church's liberal bureaucratic strategies? Was the Free Church a social service agency or a church? The list was seemingly endless.

VIII

The Free Church turned the corner into 1971 and found itself in a new world, complicated by some of the same old problems. Repression continued. Boylan was arrested twice in 1971 for alleged voter registration fraud. The charges were later dropped, but they were calculated to harrass individuals active in getting out the vote of youth and students in the upcoming Berkeley city election. The Free Church played a significant role in this effort. They backed a slate of "radicals" running for city council and helped put the Community Control of Police Initiative on the ballot. For Boylan's efforts in the face of police harrassment he received the "First Annual Victim of Piggery Award" when he left the staff in June of 1971. There was some consolation, however---three of the radicals were elected to the city council. And even though the Police Initiative failed, the organization behind it was to continue to be a political force in Berkeley with the help of the new Council members.

With Boylan's departure imminent, and in a short breathing space between outside attacks and internal confusion, a "Proposal for the Reorganization of the Berkeley Free Church" emerged in May of 1971. It had much to recommend it. A coherent statement reflecting Brown's politics, it was an honest attempt to come to grips with the new era and the new organizational contradictions that were were emerging. However, it appeared to be too little, too late. Financial problems

were still dictating much of the Free Church's future, and Brown's own position was again called into question as a priority. It appeared that the choice was between retaining the Resident Theologian or hiring a new co-pastor to replace Boylan---but not both. Clearly the financial crisis was only a surface issue. It was exactly a year since York's eloquent defense of Brown's work in the Free Church, but no major defense of Brown occurred this time. Decisions were made, however, to keep the Resident Theologian position and look for a new Administrative Assitant---the title given to Boylan's job. Boylan left and the search began, and the "Reorganization Proposal" was still being discussed.

The Proposal was officially endorsed by York. But he added to it his old introduction to the Free Church Collective Handbook and Mao's tract on How to Combat Liberalism. Such an apparently contradictory move, that is, going back to a document he had recently denounced, had its merit and logic. York's article for the Handbook had been hammered out at a time of internal organizational struggle when Nugent was with the Free Church. A document geared to organizational strife was most appropriate for the Free Church in the remainder of 1971 and its final year, 1972. The inclusion of Mao's tract further illustrates York's awareness that internal struggle lay ahead.

A closer look at the "Reorganizational Proposal" and York's article will help us understand the growing contradictions---political, theological, and organizational---that worked themselves out in a Free Church trying to find its anchor.

NOTES

Correction: The documents are no longer held at the CRRE Historical Archives, but as of 1995 are in the Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.

¹Richard York to Personnel Committee of the Board of Trustees, December 1969, CRRE Historical Archives.

²Anthony Nugent to Harlan Stelmach, 14 May 1976, CRRE Historical Archives.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Richard York to Anthony Nugent, March 1968, CRRE Historical Archives.

⁸Nugent to Stelmach, 1976.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹"JSAC Memo, Implementing JSAC Style," CRRE Historical Records.

¹²SCAN to Norman DeWire, 25 January 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

¹³George Todd, Telephone interview, Berkeley, California, 22 June 1976.

¹⁴Nugent to Stelmach, 1976.

¹⁵John Turpin to Gene Huff, 3 February 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

¹⁶Alan Thomas to Anthony Nugent, 10 February 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

¹⁷Steve Richardson to Alan Thomas, 22 February 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

¹⁸Anthony Nugent to Alan Thomas, 24 February 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

¹⁹Richard York to Whom it May Concern, 27 February 1970. CRRE Historical Archives.

²⁰Alan Thomas to Steve Richardson, 4 March 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

²¹John Burke to Richard York, 14 March 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

²²John Turpin to Otto Smith, 16 March 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

²³SCAN to Board of Trustees, Berkeley Free Church, 19 March 1970, Personal files of Anthony Nugent on loan to CRRE.

²⁴Richard Rautio to John Turpin, 19 March 1970, Personal files of Anthony Nugent on loan to CRRE.

²⁵Richard York to Guerrilla Churches, April 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Nugent to Stelmach, 1976.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Anthony Nugent, interview, Berkeley, California, 5 March 1974.

³⁰Glenn Clarke, interview, Berkeley, California, 24 June 1976.

³¹Nugent to Stelmach, 1976.

³²Richard York to Anthony Morley, 1 August 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

³³Anthony Morley to Richard York, 5 August 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

³⁴O'Linn McGuire, Jr. to Kenneth G. Neigh, 4 November 1970. Personal files of Anthony Nugent on loan to CRRE.

³⁵ J. David Illingworth to Kenneth G. Neigh, 17 November 1970, Personal files of Anthony Nugent on loan to CRRE.

³⁶ Richard Rautio to Steve Richardson, 25 January, Personal files of Anthony Nugent on loan to CRRE.

³⁷ John R. Fry, The Trivialization of the United Presbyterian Church, (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 14-15.

³⁸ Anthony Morley to Project Directors - Episcopal Experimentation and Development, 12 January 1971, CRRE Historical Archives.

^{38a} Steve Richardson, interview, San Francisco, California, 26 November 1975.

³⁹ Steve Richardson, "hi trudi," Summer 1970, CRRE Archives.

^{39a} Richardson, interview.

⁴⁰ Nugent to Thomas, 24 February 1970.

^{40a} Ibid.

⁴¹ "The Marriage of Richard and Melinda: May 23, 1970," CRRE Historical Archives.

⁴² Raymond Jennings to Otto Smith, 21 January 1970, CRRE Historical Archives.

⁴³ Marshall Schwartz, "Doctors and Civil Strife--a Dispute," San Francisco Chronicle, 10 March 1970; Mike Culbert, "An 'Underground' Article that All Berkeleyans Should Read," Berkeley Daily Gazette, 25 March 1970; "Surgeon Says Shut Free Clinic," Berkeley Daily Gazette, 12 March 1970.

⁴⁴ Mike Culbert, "Christianity's Founder was not Anarcho-Nihilist Hip-Hedonist," Berkeley Daily Gazette, 2 April 1970.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶Rich Boylan interview, San Raphael, California, 18 November 1975.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Richard York, "Director's Report on the Work of the Resident Theologian: June 12, 1970," CRRE Historical Archives.

⁵¹Robert R. Hansel to James Guinan, 2 January 1969, CRRE Historical Archives.

⁵²York, "Director's Report on Resident Theologian."

⁵³"Dionysus in Boston," Newsweek, (May 11, 1970).

[sic] ⁵³York to Morley, August 1970.

⁵⁴Morley to York, August 1970.

[sic] ⁵⁴Nugent to Stelmach, 1976.

⁵⁵Richard York, interview, Berkeley, California, 22 April 1974.

⁵⁶Lester Kinsolving to Thom Corse, 17 September 1970. Diocese of California (Episcopal), Urban Department Archives.

57 Thorn Corse, interview, San Francisco, California,
20 March 1976.

58 Lester Kinsolving, San Francisco Chronicle, 17 October 1970.

59 Richard York to Harold Brumbaum, 25 October 1970, CRRE
Historical Archives. Richard York, "Presentation to Diocesan
Council: November 24, 1970," CRRE Historical Archives.

60 Richard York and John Pairman Brown to the Clergy of the
Episcopal Diocese of California, All Saint's Eve, 1970, CRRE
Historical Archives.

61 Raymond P. Jennings, "Changing Scene on Tele," 24 October 1971,
CRRE Archives. Was published as a four part series in the Berkeley Daily
Gazette, November 1-4, 1971.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 "Pastor-Director of the Free Church, Job Description,"
22 December 1970, CRRE Archives.

65 "Administrative Assistant, Job Description," 22 December 1970,
CRRE Archives.

66 "Results of Program Goals Questionnaire," CRRE Archives.

Chapter VI

THE LEFT CHURCH?

Middle 1971-1972

I

The message in the Reorganization Proposal was clear: "We have a fragmented organization lacking in cohesion, direction and effectiveness."¹ Added to this list was the ever present nemesis, "financial pressure." It was a hard assessment to face, but honest and true. There was, however, some consolation in the present condition, for it existed, to some extent, because the Free Church had been "successful." Old services, initiated by the Free Church, where "others^{*} feared to tread," were now being run by separate agencies, which Free Church people helped to set up. The record was impressive:²

<u>The Service</u>	Begun by <u>Free Church in:</u>	Picked up <u>in:</u>	<u>by:</u>
Free food	1968	1969	Emergency Food Project
Medical help	1967	1969	Free Clinic
Runaway help	1967	1969-70	Berkeley Runaway Center
Crash pads	1967	1970	Berkeley Youth Hostel
Street work	1967	1971	Hillel Street Work Project

All that remained of the Free Church's service ministry was the switchboard. The switchboard became both its remaining source of energy and its final energy drain in the next nine months.

What to do next? What to be? These were the questions that the staff tried to address in May of 1971 in the Reorganization Proposal. There was still much potential in the Free Church. The switchboard, though

not without morale and staff problems, was functioning and providing a needed service. The publications wing under Jock and Emily Brown was prospering. A new edition of the Liberated Church Directory was planned, a calendar for 1972 was being printed and a new book was "in the works" by Jock Brown. Most important, however, was still the potential to become "an emerging Christian community," for which the Free Church was funded, received national attention and still kindled commitment and hope on the part of York. York still wanted his church. What kind of church should it be? What kind of church could it be?

During the early part of 1971 York had ample time to reflect on this question. According to Boylan it was an introspective time for York. A time when the administrative aspect of the Free Church was under control and York could pull back, get a breather, and reflect on the street experience and its "ultimate purpose." Boylan felt York was burned out by the street experience and began to return to a "religious and ecclesiastical center."³

The Reorganizational Proposal was an attempt to put on paper how to become this new Christian community. The basic notion put forth was the idea of a covenant.

What is a Covenant? This word should not be new to people of Christian or Jewish---or American, for that matter---heritage. Synonyms are: constitution, contract, compact, peace treaty. A covenant is an agreement, made and ratified by a group of people to certain principles of community behavior and work; it therefore becomes the organizing basis for a community.⁴

Examples of covenants in Church Tradition, American history and modern times were outlined in the Proposal. The Covenant in Church Tradition, from the Israelites up to the "self styled Free Churches of the

Radical Reformation" was the basis for the covenant envisaged for the Free Church.

Covenant in Church Tradition. The Israelite or Jewish people were aware of a deeper bond of unity than other people, abundantly illustrated in history, and as inexplicable to them as to us. They could only symbolize it as a covenant between themselves and the dynamism of their own history; they saw it as contingent only on their fidelity to their own character, the "law" of being themselves.

The prophets saw this covenant even at its best as ethnocentric and limited; they spoke of a coming new age, a coming new covenant in which, by writing a universal law in people's hearts, the power of history would smash the weapons of war, liberate the oppressed, make peace with nature and human nature. We see this symbolism as our best hope, our strongest handle on white America in the struggle for peace, justice and ecology.

The church makes no other claim than to constitute, by virtue of the symbols which it transmits, a potential nucleus of world community. It sees its founder as embodying the promise and discipline of the Covenant of Peace, in all three areas, in his own life...The name "Free Church," given us almost accidentally by the street, marks for us a precious link with self-styled Free Churches of the Radical Reformation...Which in America have born the clearest witness for peace and the rights of the oppressed.⁵

The covenantal documents in U.S. history---the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution---are mentioned as ambiguous but important in that they "have roots in Deism and the French Revolution" and because they are outgrowths from "Greek democracy and Jewish Christian symbolism."⁶ The staff then pointed out in the Proposal some modern examples in the U.S. as possible models for the Free Church, such as Reba Place Fellowship and the Community of Christ, "in Washington, D.C., of which Rosemary Ruether is a member;" they "scrap a covenant every six months and write a new one."⁷

However, when the staff proposed the covenantal "direction" for the Free Church, they found it "necessary to propose a two-level covenant,

out of the pressures of our own situation." Why two covenants for one organization? The Free Church had developed, in its four year history, a constituency, a clientele and a work group (volunteers, Board and staff) cutting across many categories of people, old/young, "hip/straight," religious/non-religious, etc. Therefore, in order to maintain inclusiveness but develop the needed organizational discipline the idea of two covenants was proposed.

...We cannot exclude those who have been active in the Free Church but who do not relate to the historical symbolism of the Church as a means of understanding the task of social and planetary renewal. Nor can we exclude people who for good reasons which they cannot change are active only in a supporting role. (2) We cannot exclude those either who are committed, both personally and vocationally, to working inside the old symbolism---that is, working inside the old church.⁸

The staff only submitted the idea of two covenants. In fact, no specific covenants were initially submitted in the Proposal by the staff. It was not until the annual meeting, a month later, that a covenant was proposed by the staff, consisting of Jock and Emily Brown, Boylan and York. The covenant was circulated with four other documents. They all are significant. The first was a diagram of "Energy Centers in the Berkeley Free Church."⁹ It consisted of seven "spheres" orbiting around the "Board of Trustees." The spheres were an attempt to be non hierarchical, for two of the other three documents made clear a movement back to the "bright idea" of a collective organization that had been presented in the previously denounced Free Church Collective Handbook. The second document was a complete reprint of Mao Tse-Tung's On Liberalism, subtitled by the Free Church as "how to be a good collective member." The third document was a reprint of the "November Fifth Statement" adopted

by the Free Church and Berkeley Switchboard on November 5, 1969, printed in full in Chapter V. It was considered to be the minimal expression of the covental statement needed by the Free Church. The final supporting document to the proposed or sample covenant was York's article from the Free Church Collective Handbook. As mentioned before, York's article was appropriate for the present Free Church crisis. It was hammered out during the internal struggles at the peak of the York and Nugent split at the end of 1969. A "timeless" section from York's Handbook article:

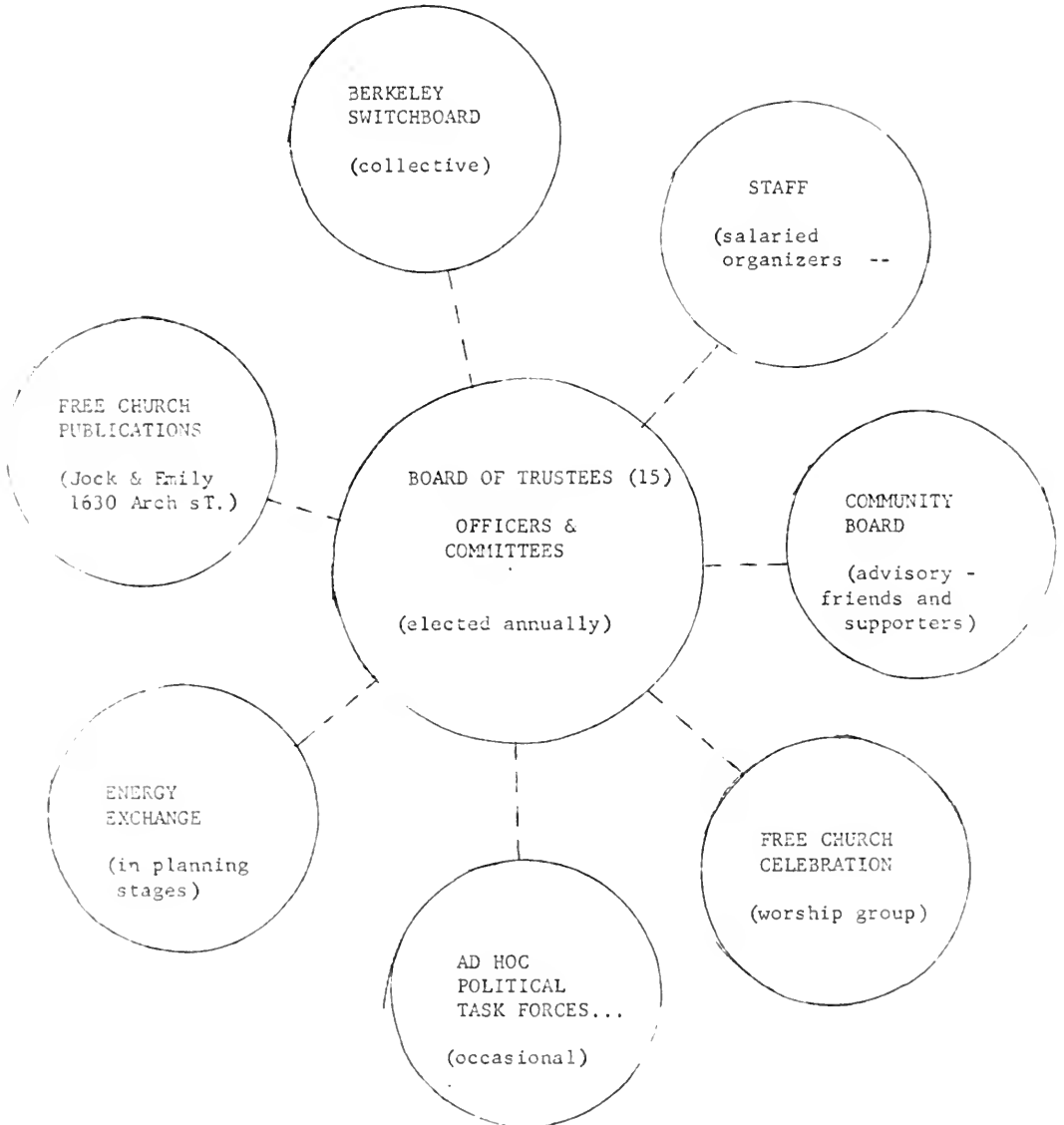
When our community shatters into warring camps or personal attacks and hatreds, we should recall that it is the strain of resisting the World Pig that has broken our unity. It is the psychic violence of the system which breeds anger and self-deception in our fellowship. Our only strength is the forgiveness which recognizes no hatred or violence as alien to ourselves, and at the same time resists to death the dark powers which colonize men.¹⁰

There was no doubting "the psychic violence of the system" by this stage in the history of the Free Church. Unfortunately for the Free Church, the strength of forgiveness would prove to be no match for the "dark powers" that lay in its future.

The actual covenant proposed was not drastically new to Free Church community about to celebrate its fourth birthday. One element was new, a greater awareness of the oppression of women. "I will share in every kind of collective task within the community, resisting the exploitation of thinking some task improper for my sex, or beneath me."¹¹ A recurring theme, however, was most prevalent in the covenant, consonant with the supporting documents: a new discipline necessary for collective life. Mac's eleven theses from On Liberalism were reworked

Diagram 3
ORGANIZATION SCHEMA
1971

ENERGY CENTERS IN THE BERKELEY FREE CHURCH



into six points of membership "availability." For example, one of the six points:

If I have a complaint against a sister or brother or hear one, I will not hide it or speak of it behind their back, but bring it up openly in a meeting, having first properly investigated it.¹²

The documents, though available for the annual meeting of the Board in June, were not discussed in detail. It was realized that the Reorganizational Proposal had not been properly discussed. Therefore, a discussion of a sample covenant was premature. The only substantial discussion of the Free Church's future occurred in York's "State of the Church" speech. It was essentially a "pep talk" for greater cohesion around the notion of energy centers (see p. 231 for diagram). The Board minutes recorded this speech.

Dick began with a "state of the church" rap calling on all "energy centers" within the larger umbrella of Free Church to pull together and affirm that we are one community with one goal of working for the renewal of society and nature. He said he still has the vision of the Free Church being one community struggling together to resist oppression and to demonstrate an alternative kind of community, one based on service, liberation and celebration. Free Church is, he said, "phone answering, crashing, listening, information giving, publishing, network developing, marching, protesting, advocating, community organizing, celebrating, wedding, praying, energy exchanging, counselling, fund raising and most important, human-being!"¹³

Further discussion of the Reorganization Proposal and other possible covenant formulations would not occur for over two months. This proposal, like many others in the history of the Free Church, may have died due to neglect.¹⁴ But the nature of the disorder was too great to continue without some new charter or covenant. The Board was given homework by the staff (now only the Browns and York) for its September 7 meeting. Each Board member was asked to write four statements that would

help to provide "ideological clarity" for the Free Church. The impetus for this assignment, besides all the documents in circulation, was the internal struggle and self-clarification taking place within the semi-autonomous switchboard. The "switchboard collective," as they still called themselves, produced their own covenant, as a way of coming to grips with their internal self-clarification. The Board was being asked to do the same. The switchboard collective's covenant was called the "Manifesto of the Berkeley Switchboard Collective August 1971." It was ready for the September 7 Board meeting.

The Manifesto was the most explicitly Marxian socialist document to be produced by the Free Church since the Handbook. The wording and content of the Manifesto are very far from the Reorganizational Proposal of May. After stating commitments to "education, struggle against injustice, and love," the switchboard collective made nine pledges. The first pledge was "to oppose by any means necessary the genocidal and ecologically catastrophic policies that are the natural consequence of the advanced stages of capitalist decadence."¹⁵ Seven of the remaining eight points pledged support for the women's movement and anti-imperialist struggles. One point addressed religion:

We pledge support and solidarity to the radical church, recognizing its essential function in exposing hypocritical Christianity and in providing a humanistic alternative to the established distortions of the teachings of Jesus. However, we clearly recognize the validity, significance, and richness of various radical mythologies and encourage, support, and respect their co-existence and comradeship.¹⁶

The Manifesto was discussed by the Board. It was approved as a working document for the switchboard collective but was not accepted as a self definitional statement for the entire Free Church. The Mani-

festo was a document that emerged from daily struggles and discussions at the switchboard. The Board never produced a similar document. It is not clear if such a document was even a possibility for the Board or for the entire Free Church. The switchboard and the Board were now contradictory forces within the Free Church which York and Brown made some effort to reconcile. The Board was increasingly seen at best as an anachronism, maybe helpful in the early Free Church, but no longer acceptable to a new self understanding: a disciplined collective. Hierarchical lines of power reinstated with Boylan were giving way to a new collective spirit. The workers at the switchboard with York's encouragement were largely responsible for this new spirit. Also within the Board itself there was a growing awareness that the present organizational structure was untenable. Dissension over the concept of the Board model for the Free Church was more severe than at any previous point in the Free Church's history. A resolution of the conflict over the Board was essential if the Free Church wanted to gain at least some organizational health to meet the ideological and program issues before them.

What was at stake in the organizational conflict was now clear; it was political and theological clarity for the sake of the future direction and very existence of the Free Church. Was the Free Church to be an "emerging Christian community?" Was the Free Church to develop an integrated theology and politics to support this emerging Christian community? Could the Free Church reach the next step in its evolution, a "left church?"

The reorganizational attempt indicated by the numerous documents

in circulation set the stage for the final performance of the Free Church. The documents, however, only tell part of the story. We have to look at the events behind these documents. The organizational crisis and program confusion that the paper covenants tried to mend is where this drama was worked out with much personal pain and frustration.

II

The organizational structure of the Free Church late in 1971 was essentially the same as it had been since the early months in 1967. There was a three tiered structure; the Board, the paid staff and the volunteers or "subsistence wage workers." Formally the relationship between tiers was hierarchical. However, in practice at key moments in its history, the Free Church lived up to its rhetoric about being a collective. These key moments were generally during major demonstrations. It took a total organizational effort at all levels to meet these crises. Perhaps the "high water mark" of organizational unity, cooperational and mutual learning and respect was the Free Church's role in the French Solidarity Strike in 1968. Glenn Clark, a subsistence wage worker at the time, recalled how all levels of the organization seemed to "flow into each other." All levels of the organization were intimately involved on a day-to-day basis during the protests.

In general, however, the Board consisted of community supporters unrelated to the day-to-day work of the Free Church. The staff, usually three or four in number, were overseers of the day-to-day work hired by, responsible to and ex-officio members of the Board. In practice the staff's loyalties were not at the Board level. The Board was often little

more than a support mechanism for the staff. The subsistence wage staff, variously called "stipend staff" or "worker bees," were part time workers. The worker bees coordinated the work of the many volunteers, and were directly responsible to the staff. There was formal access to the Board if they were elected and traditionally the worker bees held at least one position on the Board, the secretary.

The built in contradictions of this organizational structure were often discussed. These discussions became most heated when the collectivist sentiment was strong or the bottom tier asserted itself.

There were at least four major episodes in the history of the Free Church when the organizational structure was the point of conflict. The first occurred the second month of the Free Church's existence, the bottom tier of the organization came into existence and called itself the "Free Church." The second occasion was in the early summer of 1968, when Brown and Nugent were added to the staff and a large group of 'worker bees' joined the Free Church. The third episode was during the collectivization plan outlined in the Handbook in the midst of the Nugent and York split. The fourth and final conflict began in the late summer of 1971 and lasted until the end of the Free Church.

The fourth and final conflict period was preceded by, as mentioned above, one of the most hierarchical and paternalistic structures in the Free Church's history. Also as mentioned in the previous chapter, this hierarchy, in part, was due to the changing street scene and the consolidation of the ministry under York. These two forces continued unabated or without little challenge until late June of 1971---in spite of the reorganizational plan in May. The reorganizational plan, by its

proposal of two covenants for two types of membership, could even be seen as an institutionalization of the contradictions involved in the hierarchical structure.

The nature of the transient youth in the youth ghetto, to which the Free Church was "called" to serve from its inception as SCCM, still continued to be lower class, less educated, and older young adults. It was not a group from which the Free Church desired to recruit its lower level staff or volunteers. These older youths were basically free floating transients. But perhaps out of tradition, some altruism, some continued notion of conflict resolution, or maybe because they were funded to do "corporal acts of mercy," the Free Church still made efforts to serve the transients by its switchboard or its rejuvenated food program. One of the last programs the Free Church "spun off" was its free food program--though the Free Church staff was active in a supportive role almost to the end of the Free Church. However, by late 1971 the transients were only the "objects" of the service ministry. The motivation was "charity" not self liberation. Therefore, the Free Church's paternalism plus the nature of the street transient helped to reimpose the clientele relationship in the social service ministry.

Two surveys were administered in early 1972 to the users of the food program. The program served over two hundred people per night. The surveys confirm what Ray Jennings had concluded in 1971. The Free Church administered one survey in February. The other survey was conducted by Jim Baumohl and Henry Miller. Baumohl and Miller's survey was commissioned by the Joint Community Affairs Committee of the City of Berkeley and the University of California.¹⁷ The two surveys sub-

stantiate the trends begun in early 1971, that on the whole the youths were older than the early 1967 hippie transients. In 1972, 55.9% of the youths surveyed were between 21-30 years of age.¹⁸ The Baumohl and Miller study indicated that they were also less educated, with over 60% never attending college and 32% only completing the ninth grade.¹⁹ Parental subsidies were few and when they did exist they were only marginal amounts.²⁰ Most of the transients lived on \$100 per month and 71% were employed on a "short term or odd job basis or unemployed."²¹ The statistics on their family backgrounds showed 38% from single parent families.²² But perhaps the most significant datum was the total transient nature of the youths existence: 68% were "habitual movers, those following a discernable pattern of loop of cities and those seeming to flit about at random."²³

The Free Church survey was also interested in the political consciousness of the street people. A major question in the survey was: "What is most likely to serve as the means for making the necessary changes in American society?" The responses were: introspection, 30%; armed struggle, 27%; socialist legislation, 25%; nonviolent resistance, 14%. There was also a sortment of: "electoral politics," "anarchy," and "ingestion of LSD."²⁴ If these responses indicate anything relative to the Free Church, they were certainly at odds with the Free Church's professionalism and paternalism in 1972. Though one might say they had in common a lack of unified direction.

It is interesting to note that the Free Church was so isolated from its people that it resorted to a questionnaire to find out who they

were. In the past, whether right or wrong, the Free Church staff were always confident they knew their constituency well. While this isolation from the bottom tier of the organization and the possible recruits continued, the board became more defined and integrated. The by-law revision, so often talked about in the past, happened in June of 1971. But this was not a revision to give greater voice to the bottom tier, as was its focus in earlier discussions; it was to sharpen up the board model. The revision gave greater responsibility to board members and sought to give more legitimacy to the Free Church. The revision also made formal the fact that York was the "Pastor/Director" of the Free Church. York's staff position was the only one that was ex-officio a board position too.²⁵

The new by-law changes set up the structure for task-forces with designated "chairmen" and a new emphasis on board accountability by "regular reporting." Another effort was made to bring in supportive community leaders to bolster the legitimacy of the Free Church. The old "Advisory Commission" idea of 1968 was revived, but this time with a new name, "The Community Board." (See Diagram 3 p. 277). Also there was a greater emphasis on their integration into the organization even though they were understood to be a group separate from the regular board. However, the Community Board was basically a public relations effort.

The members of the Community Board shall consist of representatives of churches and community organizations and individuals who are concerned, helpful and influential. Community Board meetings shall be held quarterly for the purpose of hearing reports of the work of the corporation and offering advice and ideas.²⁶ [*Italics mine*]

Board revisions were the only changes made in the by-laws. The much

talked about changes in the spirit of giving greater representation to individuals interested in the congregational aspect of the program or at bottom tier were non-existent. The old vague and loose membership criteria of 1968 still existed. And these criteria de facto served the hierarchical structure in June of 1971.

The old forces of bottom tier representation and other internal tensions were not to be denied, however, by late summer 1971. They forced themselves upon the Free Church to the point where they either had to be resolved or the organization was to die a slow death. The resolution that was demanded could not be a facile job of unification or an attempt to provide each conflicting force its own sphere of activity, like the dual covenant approach. The contradictions were too fundamental, choices between them had to be made, not greater communication for an untenable simple reconciliation. Also once the choices were made, for they were made in 1972, the organization had to be willing to accept and follow through on the consequences.

The tensions descended on the Free Church from a number of different sides, both ideologically and structurally. I will treat the ideological tensions below. There were two basic structural tensions that now pulled at the Free Church, as they had previously with varying degrees of intensity. The first was the unfulfilled vocation to be a worshipping congregation vs. being just a social service agency. York's official title "Director/Pastor" symbolized this split. This duality was creative and tenable when those who served (bottom tier workers and lower level staff) were also those who worshipped. This relationship only functioned because they were a part of an integrated community building process. Brown's interests and notions of what the Free Church's

vocation should be were more in line with the congregational model. He increasingly wanted to make the necessary break away from established church and be more self-consciously the alternative church. But the re-emphasis of the social agency model did not give space for the congregation model or provide the impetus to break away from the established churches who were more willing to fund the service model.

The second tension was the constant pressure from the bottom tier of the organization over against the top tier, particularly the board. They resented being closed off from the real power centers of the organization. The power centers being, at different times, the paid staff (York in particular), the board or some combination of the two. Therefore, in the last six months of the Free Church the notion of collectivization once again became an issue. But the nature of the bottom tier pushing for collectivity was not church or house church oriented. It was a more political and non religious oriented bottom tier, represented by new lower level staff at the switchboard.

The present composition of these two long time tensions in the organization (church vs. service and bottom tier vs. top tier) created a totally new dynamic in the final months. Whereas in the past the bottom tier and church were often in league with each other to counteract a hierarchical service agency model, now the church orientation was seen by the political switchboard workers to support the hierarchical structure. Therefore, the tensions that often in the past were separate and manageable tensions were now both in conflict with each other and cut across each other. Also the bottom tier politics and Brown's al-

ternative church model, which had allied in the past to put pressure on the established institutions now saw themselves at odds over which established institutions should be deserted or in which alternative institutions to put their faith---a religious sect or a political cult. Therefore, it was this new tension which subsumed all the old tensions to secondary importance which pulled the organization programmatically into two irreconcilable directions. This is not to say that theoretically the political and religious could not be integrated. It is only to say that the religious and political wings of the Free Church at the time could not be reconciled and for good reasons---though York still tried. The two wings were: Brown's church oriented religious wing vs. the switchboard workers' political service wing.

The inability to integrate the two wings was based not just on their own fundamental theoretical differences in vocation but the more basic structural tensions that still existed. In fact York did manage to unify the two ideological positions at odds over the Free Church's vocation. York's unification once again, at least in his mind, brought together the religious and political and church and service. But this unification was not sufficiently grounded in the organization's most basic reality that York was unwilling to jeopardize:dependence on the established church institutions. Brown's alternative church would have jeopardized established church funding, for he was moving in a more sectarian or "free church" direction. He also preferred, contrary to the switchboard workers' assessment of him, a more democratic model which would have called into question the hierarchical board structure. Also the politically oriented service workers with explicit socialist or anti-capitalist

ideologies would have jeopardized the funding. Their notion of collective structure would have also called into question the hierarchical board. And at this point in the organization, the hierarchical board existed primarily to legitimate the Free Church to the established church funders. The Free Church could not "eat its cake" from the one side of each of its structural tensions and then expect to have it served on the other side. Perhaps, in the final analysis, the larger contradiction of the Free Church, which fostered all the various kinds of sub tensions described above was: the Free Church as a real alternative vs. the Free Church as still a dependent "missionary church."

This same "eat your cake and have it too" or wanting to have it both ways dynamic, as Richardson described about the Sub Church, was also evident in the thought of the Free Church. Therefore, the independent level of thought, once a corrective for bad practice in the Free Church, paralleled practice in 1971-72, which will be described below.

Ray Jennings, the Baptist Pastor and the on-again-off-again President of the Free Church Board, was the most consistent voice drawing attention to the structural contradiction. During the Nugent and York split in 1970 his comments were recorded in the Quarterly Report sent to church funders.

Ray Jennings says that there are built-in contradictions in the [Free Church] which will continue to make problems as long as they exist. He sees the tension that exists between straight and hip members, collectives and staff/board, radical and liberal, theological and non-theological members, as real contradictions.²⁷

The Report continued, outlining and anticipating the future:

In a way, we begin to agree with him [Jennings].

Certainly many of our organizing problems, staff disagreements and problems with worship stem from this. So the problem of defining [Free Church] membership, moving it to a new level of commitment and organization, still remains. We are spending a lot of staff meeting hours now in discussion of this. One suggestion has been to build the organization around a Covenant statement, rewrite by-laws, perhaps even examine the validity of a Board.²⁸ [Italics mine]

However, in September of 1971, even after numerous covenants had been attempted, the contradictions continued. The secretary of the Board, Carl Kakasuleff, a worker at the switchboard, submitted his resignation in the following letter:

I herewith submit my resignation as Secretary. Several reasons prompt this action and it is hard to say which is the most important. One that sticks out is the very nature of a board, as part of the bureaucratic structure on which this country is based with the board itself, if not an invention of the capitalist system, one of its most important tools (Board of Regents, G.M., Board of Corrections). This is not to compare the beliefs and attitudes of [Free Church] or any other worthwhile organization with those monsters, but I can't help but feel that to use the exact tool which capitalism uses to rule this country is an expediency and a mistake.

I personally feel a need to work with less structured groups with less hierarchy and more personal inter-action, which I plan to do. These smaller groups, which I feel are more in touch with each other and the people they are working with and serve, seem to promise more for the needed changes in this country...

I think as long as FC continues to resemble and do the many things the pig society espouses (expensive salaries for its employees, retirement funds, insurance, etc.) then it will continue to be separated and alienated from the youth it is supposedly serving and in effect, not be serving them but only itself.

The Manifesto (of switchboard) points in this direction but is directed too much to society and in a general way and hardly at all to the Free Church (in a specific way).²⁹

Again, on the occasion of Kakasuleff's resignation, Jennings raised the issue of "irreconcilable contradictions" within the Free Church. He felt the Board structure maintained the impossibility of having

under one organizational roof, "establishment types" like himself and the majority of the staff and "worker bees" who were "hip-radicals." Jennings eventually led the Board in a major discussion about the validity of maintaining the Board hierarchy. However, as much as Jennings was correct about tension the Board structure created, there was another more dubious role the Board played toward the end of the Free Church. This role was the "rubber stamp" for York's ministry. This was not simply a matter of whatever York did was right. The Board rightly recognized that it was largely York's "genius" that made the Free Church what it was; it was his ministry. Besides, not being involved in the daily work of the Free Church it was difficult to gain an independent perspective; they had to give York the benefit of the doubt in any controversy. There were many controversies in the last days of the Free Church. The Board, still having legal authority, became the arena to "solve" the controversies, largely centered within the staff.

III

Before examining the details of the future staff controversies, a better understanding of the Board is necessary. The Board may have been a rubber stamp but this did not mean it was a dull group of people. There were many dramatic moments toward the end of the Free Church. For example, resignations were not uncommon in the last year, beginning with Kakasuleff. Even Jennings resigned his Presidency in January of 1972, ostensibly due to an over extended schedule. Babbette Chamberlain, the President of the Board during the previous year, threatened to quit unless the Free Church's Liturgical Calendar mentioned more women. Chamberlain,

like most of the Board, with some important exceptions, saw her role on the Board to support York. She did not have an independent stake in keeping the Board alive or in taking too active a role in reviving a struggling organization. A closer look at the key individuals who composed the final Board of the Free Church will be helpful background information for understanding the staff controversies. These people had to make painful organizational decisions.

Babbette Chamberlain, an ardent feminist, was a co-founder of the shortlived Up Haste feminist book store in Berkeley. Chamberlain was one of the most politically conscious Board members. On many occasions she would prod the Board to discuss potentially divisive political issues such as the community control of police, which the Board did not officially endorse. She played a key role in the 1971 fight with the local Episcopal Diocese when the Free Church funding was in jeopardy. Her political life eventually moved away from compromised organizations such as the Free Church and her feminism. She joined the Marxist-Leninist sect, the National Committee of Labor Caucuses (NCLC). NCLC gained notoriety for their disruptions of meetings of the Communist Party USA, with "goon squads."

Ray Jennings, the Baptist Pastor, served on the Free Church Board almost from the moment he arrived in Berkeley. As mentioned above, he was "radicalized" in the French Solidarity Strike riots in the summer of 1968, the same month he arrived in Berkeley. He put a great deal of energy into the Free Church as a Board member and remained loyal to the Free Church to the very end. However, he always voiced his differences with the staff and other Board members which were considerable. He was Pres-

ident of the Board for three different years, and gained the respect of staff and worker bees too.

Phyllis Smith, the Board's Vice President, began working on the switchboard in the summer of 1967. A middle-aged woman, Smith gained the confidence of the young hippies and street people. She and her husband Otto, a past Free Church Board member, eventually adopted one of the run-aways with whom she worked at the switchboard. As mentioned above, she helped the switchboard to collectivize itself in the winter of 1970. Both Phyllis and Otto were long time Free Church supporters. They were very close to the early staff, Glee and Darrow Bishop. Their home in the Berkeley Hills was a constant retreat from the front lines of the street. After Glee and Darrow divorced, Glee married the Smith's son. Phyllis was one of York's "strategic" Board members in 1971-1972. He specifically asked her to serve on the Board to assure a sympathetic voter.³⁰

Robert March was the Treasurer and eventually the President after Ray Jennings and Phyllis Smith resigned in the spring of 1972. March's "political" background was the consumers cooperative movement. He was and still is employed at the Coop Credit Bureau. March, a member of Trinity Methodist Church, was Trinity's representative to the Free Church during the period when sponsoring church's had representatives. He was interested in the Free Church, for he felt the established churches were bankrupt and was hoping the Free Church would become an alternative church, living the real Gospel.³¹ He began his work with the Free Church in the summer riots of 1968. March was another "loyal" York supporter who understood the Free Church to be York's ministry.

Ester Davis was the Board's Business Manager. She took over the

total bookkeeping job, with Jock Brown's help, in the summer of 1968. Like March she got involved in the Free Church because she saw its potential as an alternative church.³² A boarder at the Brown's home, she had split loyalties. However, as an independent thinker, she was skeptical of all the staff "power plays," particularly York's. Davis is a Deaconess in the Episcopal Church and the full time Burser at CDSF, the Episcopal seminary.

Daniel Boone was the Free Church's Attorney. Boone was not very active in the monthly meetings of the Board. He did, however, play a big role in the out of court settlement the York's won due to their 1970 July 4 beating. He could be counted on to support York in any controversy.

Brad Rogers was one of the token "worker bee" representatives on the Board. He was a close friend of the Smith's and was a volunteer on the switchboard.

Nancy Hink's contact with the Free Church began when she offered her home as a "crash pad" for hippies. She was the Christian Education Director at All Soul's Episcopal Church, one of the original sponsoring churches. Politically she was active in the Episcopal Peace Fellowship.

Isabel Weissman held the important position of head of the Personnel Committee. Weissman began her work with the Free Church in the very early months of its existence. She worked for the Berkeley Mental Health Department and later became its Director. She was a crucial liaison person with the community service agencies, giving the Free Church its community service legitimacy. Her job description with the Mental Health Department included her Free Church work as a legitimate way to

spend her time. When asked about her role on the Board she candidly replied that she was largely there to be "Dick York's person on the Board." "I trusted Dick's judgement nine out of ten times and when he went wrong he came to me with his tail between his legs and we worked things out."³³

Norman Gottwald was the Board's head of the Church Relations Committee. Gottwald, a radical professor at the American Baptist Seminary of the West, had just joined the Board in the summer of 1971. He was a friend of Jock Brown's, and a participant in past Free Church activities. Gottwald remained neutral in the staff disputes during his tenure on the Board.

This was the composition of the Board---with minor changes---during its last year. To a large degree it was hand picked to represent, or at least not overtly oppose any direction that York might feel appropriate for the Free Church. Even though the Board was exercising less and less power, legally it still had the power to make all policy decisions regarding future directions and staff composition. These two issues, direction and staff composition, were merged in the last nine months of the Free Church. Behind these issues was the more significant issue of political and theological clarity, to which the struggles for direction and staff composition point. The final days of the Free Church were marked by staff splits, dissension and purges. This drama illustrates the breakdown of the Free Church's "religious politics." The Board became little more than a court of appeals in this final drama---perhaps, due to its "stacked" nature, not even that.

The final drama, to put it bluntly, was total staff and organizational breakdown. The total breakdown did have positive elements within

it--though difficult to perceive at the time. There were honest and courageous attempts to come to grips with what should be done next to "serve people." There was a legitimate concern to regroup and live up to past goals and new hopes. Perhaps the economic and social climate of a polarized nation precluded a resolution of these hopes and goals. Perhaps the Free Church had outlived its usefulness. It began as an "issue oriented church," its issue (take your pick) no longer demanded an organization.

The final evolution of the staff and the direction in which it moved began with the attempt to find a replacement for Richard Boylan, that is, the search for a new Administrative Assistant. With the attempt to replace Boylan, there were three distinct staff periods leading up to the dissolution of the Free Church. The first was the establishment of the "Living Collective," which was the collectivization of the Administrative Assistant job and salary in the hands of four people. The second period was the effort to form a total "Staff Collective." They sought to breakdown all hierarchical distinctions with all "staff members," the Browns, York and the Living Collective. The second period, the most volatile in Free Church's history, featured the purging of Jack Brown by the Living Collective and York and climaxed with York purging what remained of the Living Collective. The Board remained in existence throughout these attacks and counter attacks, which lasted until May of 1972. The Free Church, however, had ceased to exist as a functioning organization. What was a final attempt to reorganize a dead organization. The third period was York's attempt to assemble another Staff Collective. The Board eliminated itself and the staff became the Board. However,

before the new staff even began to work, York decided to take a sabbatical. He was going to write a book about the Free Church. With that decision, the death became official with no promise of a "second coming."

IV

The search for a replacement for Rich Boylan began in April, two months before he left. The decision for the new staff member was not reached or announced until the August 3 Board meeting. Diane Breznau, a former nun and wife of a Graduate Theological Union doctoral student, was chosen. She was one of two finalists from a group of forty-five applicants. The Board minutes report, "She was recommended over a man from the east, partly because it was felt a woman should be hired for the position."³⁴ Babbette Chamberlain led the fight for a better "sex balance" on the staff. It appeared that the first woman full-time-paid staff-member, since Glee Bishop in 1967, was now a reality. But there were other developments which headed off this decision.

At the same Board meeting York reported on staff struggles at the switchboard and their decision to write a covenant, which emerged as the previously mentioned Manifesto. The events at the switchboard, now the Free Church in a microcosm, were to overtake the hiring of the new Administrative Assistant. At a special Board meeting three weeks later a "Proposal for the Reconstitution of the Administrative Assistant Position" was submitted by four switchboard workers, Jim and Lynne Soderberg, Roberta Jacobson and David Howard.

It is our proposal that the Administrative position be abolished by the Board and that the money formerly used to staff that position be redirected towards the creation and subsistence of a Free Church living collective. We feel

that this would be a further step towards integrating the Free Church with our personal lives and away from the paternalistic volunteerism which has so often tempered the effectiveness of our ministry to the Berkeley community.³⁵ [Italics mine]

The Reconstitution Proposal stated that the "living collective," as they were immediately called, would be "directly responsible to Dick York and the Board of Directors," in carrying out "essentially the same" duties "as outlined in Rich Boylan's job description of the position." However, "new responsibilities" were indicated in the Proposal too.

In addition there will be new responsibilities which we share with all Free Church members as a result of the movement towards greater collectivity. As a new experimental community within the Free Church we will be in a unique position to offer a new dimension to the continuing process of self-definition in current programs and future direction of the Free Church. We will continue to give flesh to the spirit of the switchboard Manifesto of which this program is an expression. We will continue to take an active part in the men's and women's groups and will help foster the processes of self and group criticism through small group meetings of the Switchboard Collective.³⁶ [Italics mine]

It was clearly understood that the Reconstitution Proposal was outlining a new structural and directional shift in the Free Church. The thinking behind the Proposal was a direct response to the "lack of ideological and political clarity." It was an attempted resolution of past structural problems that inhibited programs. And it sought to overcome the "contradictions" which were "implicit in hiring of an Administrative Assistant," given the stated interest in "greater collectivity," throughout the Free Church. Part of the Proposal dealt with the plan for the four people to "live together;" thus, the name "Living Collective." They proposed that the Living Collective "would eventually include up to ten people." The four people presenting the Proposal promised to "commit themselves for at least one year" to this collective experiment.

There was a "long discussion" of the Proposal by the Board. Babbette Chamberlain raised the issue of the Free Church's financial condition; it was not certain that the position could even be afforded. Ray Jennings raised the issue of the relationship of the Proposal to the Manifesto. He did not like the sectarian flavor of the Manifesto, nor its explicit exclusion of people from the switchboard if they did not agree with the correct line of the Manifesto. He wanted to know if the Living Collective would be run in a similar way. He was not convinced with the responses.

However, the Proposal was passed by a vote of seven to one with Jennings the lone dissenter. The motion included a six month "subject to review clause." The "movement toward collectivity" was now given official sanction. In order to understand the collectivist trend it is important to get a sense of the context out of which it grew.

Lynne and Jim Soderberg in a thoughtful interview in 1976 reflected on the problems within the Free Church that the Manifesto and the Living Collective tried to remedy. They felt there was a real "leadership vacuum" in the period leading up to the Living Collective. This vacuum existed throughout the whole organization. Jim and Lynne never saw Jock Brown at the street front location, Richard Boylan was easing out of the Free Church, York was "burned out" and the volunteers at the switchboard were no longer initiators---at least until the Soderbergs, Howard and Jacobson came along. In fact, according to the Soderbergs, "anyone wanting to put in time would become a leader in this leadership vacuum."³⁷ Needless to say, the Soderbergs, Howard and Jacobson were welcomed by York, given this vacuum. But the leadership vacuum was

only part of the problem, according to Jim Soderberg. He said a fair assessment of the politics of the switchboard volunteers was in his words, "Neo-Nazi-biker politics. Too often during this period of time, Viet Nam war resisters or dissenters would be turned away from Free Church counselling assistance and told the "war was a good thing."³⁸ Jim Soderberg went on to cite other dubious achievements of the new breed of switchboard workers:

Older men used the Free Church crash pad program as an easy access to young women, by offering them housing for a night. There was little concern that this was going on...and sexism in general was rampant in the Free Church. We later found out that one of the volunteers had been using the switchboard for a pornography racket. When we closed it down there were numerous threats and violent acts...All this was leading to the uneasy feeling that the switchboard should be shut down or become something else.³⁹

It was at this point that the Manifesto was written, primarily by David Howard, as an attempt to deal with the deteriorating switchboard situation. The Living Collective immediately followed. According to Jim Soderberg, "twenty five percent of the switchboard workers could not agree with the Manifesto and would not sign it; the Board thought it was totalitarianism."⁴⁰ But the only way to "weed out" the Neo-Nazi-biker politics was to be more specific about what the switchboard stood for and enforce discipline to the principles of the Manifesto. York agreed:

This month the switchboard collective wrote and adopted a manifesto, a party line, or, if you are from that tradition, a confession of faith. Survival demanded it. Clear ideological unity was a necessity. In the course of signing the manifesto/covenant, some members were purged, like the long haired veteran who could not take a stand against the war...

In adopting this manifesto, the switchboard became much more the church. It abandoned the do-your-own-thing liberalism of that institution, which currently calls itself "church," and moved toward building itself into a

radical counter institution to the state, identified with the poor and oppressed, demonstrating a life of service and intolerance for injustice.⁴¹

York was critical of the Board's reaction to the Manifesto:

Several of the clergy from local Churches were upset not only by the language of the Manifesto, but more, by what they called its "exclusions," seen as inconsistent with the spirit of the Church. I will never understand how an Episcopal priest, whose collective demands confession of the creeds and episcopal confirmation, or a Baptist minister [Ray Jennings] whose collective requires believers' adult baptism, can find fault with what the switchboard did. It took a stand and made a decision, when most churches are trying desperately to forget their own "Manifesto," the gospel of Jesus.⁴²

The collective oriented language used by York in the above quotes made it clear that he supported the "movement toward a collective" with "internal discipline." Who were the members of the Living Collective who York now saw providing a solution to the direction of the Free Church? How did they relate to Jock and Emily Brown? How successful was the experiment?

The Living Collective had its first serious setback when David Howard was arrested and sentenced to a six month jail term. Howard was acknowledged to be the "most politically knowledgeable" of the four. He had "been active in radical causes" and was "doing legal research, counselling, organizing a men's group for the Free Church and was the primary architect of the Manifesto." He failed to finish college, attending Franklin Pierce College in Ringe, New Hampshire. Jim Soderberg gave his opinion of Howard, described the circumstances of his arrest and explained Howard's role in the Free Church:

Howard was from an Orthodox Jewish background. He was a pleasure to be around, very bright and sensitive to all types of people...He played a real leadership role in the

Free Church. His six months in Santa Rita [prison] were a radicalizing experience for all of us when we went to visit him. The prison experience also radicalized him even more...He was the most radical of all of us. He was a feminist and very conscious of sexism...

When he was in Berkeley he was very poor. In order to get spare change he would go out on Telegraph Avenue and put his finger in his pocket and hold up people.⁴³ He did this several times and was eventually caught.

The present location of Howard is not known by any of the people connected with the Free Church. The historical record has to rely on reflections from people such as the Soderbergs. He did write letters from prison. One letter gives us a sense of who Howard was and the way in which he interpreted his prison experience.

Nixon's prisons taught Timothy Leary to speak of "armed love," Chang's impelled Ho Chi Minh to say, "calamity has tempered and hardened me/and turned my mind into steel." This vision develops not out of bitterness or hatred but out of reason and its active expression, an unemotional confidence. I'm thinking about a graceful revolution, about replacing rhetoric with culture, with knowledge, with love."⁴⁴

Jim Soderberg was a second year student at the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) when he and Lynne began volunteering at the switchboard in January, 1971. They had spent a whole year away from seminary. They dropped out and became involved in the anti war politics of the East Bay Resistance, "bootlegged yogurt" and "picked up babysitting jobs to get enough money to pay for an apartment and buy food stamps."⁴⁵ Lynne Soderberg described this period of their life as when "they had time on their hands, relaxed and spent a lot of time on the South Campus in Berkeley."⁴⁶ They intentionally lived in the South Campus because "PSR was a closed community" and they wanted a "broader involvement in the community." The Free Church experience helped to provide this community involvement.

There were other factors motivating the Soderbergs' decision to work with the Free Church. The Free Church still maintained its mystique as an important radical religious organization. The Soderbergs were interested in joining an organization that could give expression and direction to their political and religious convictions. The Free Church by its past record should have been that organization. In fact the first contact the Soderbergs had with the Free Church was in 1969 during one of their many liturgies. The one they attended was the memorial service for Ho Chi Minh. The service culminated in a mass parade and the re-dedication of one of Berkeley's parks in honor of Ho Chi Minh. This event impressed the Soderbergs, and reinforced in their minds what the Free Church represented in radical church circles across the country. Therefore, the Free Church seemed a logical place for the Soderbergs to begin work. However, the Free Church in 1971 was not the Free Church of its "golden days." The crisis state of the Free Church was an early realization for the Soderbergs; they hoped they could help out. They began by working two days a week on the switchboard.

The Soderbergs remained on the staff of the Free Church until January of 1972, living collectively with Roberta Jacobson and her roommate---David Howard was in prison. The living experience did much to persuade the Soderbergs to resign from the Free Church. The relationship between the Soderbergs and Jacobson became strained as Jacobson developed a brand of feminism that was hostile to couples, particularly married couples. Lynne described the living situation as "terrible," and the relationship with Jacobson as "not positive."

But we made no real effort to make it work. Then I

[Lynne] became pregnant, and we were looking forward to having a baby and wanting real privacy.⁴⁷

Jim also wanted privacy:

Privacy was a real problem with me. I wanted distance. I wanted to keep my own individuality, and avoid getting involved in intense interpersonal relationships. I guess the sex thing was a factor, my own fear of becoming involved with other women.⁴⁸

The living situation was not the only aggravation in the Soderberg's relationship with Jacobson and the Free Church. The work outlined in the job description in the Reconstruction Proposal primarily fell on the shoulders of Jim Soderberg. He was spending forty hours a week at the switchboard. Roberta's work, according to the Soderbergs, was not the day-to-day work of the switchboard. Her main involvement was the Berkeley Women's Movement in no specific terms. This vague "Free Church related work" was never overtly challenged, but it did create friction within what was left of the Living Collective. Late in 1971, Jacobson's commitment to the Women's Movement was intense, even though her "politicization" only began in the summer when she first started to work at the Free Church. Data on Jacobson, like Howard, is sparse. We have to rely on the observations of the Soderbergs in order to get a glimpse of who she was. Roberta, also like Howard, had a Jewish family background but she did not consider herself very religious. She was an undergraduate at the University in Berkeley, at the time, expecting to graduate in December.

Her parents were divorced and her father was very wealthy. Roberta did not seem to worry about money, even though her father later lost much of his money. She talked once about having an LSD experience...and here politics were unformed when she came to the Free Church in the summer. That is when she got involved in the Women's movement.⁴⁹

Jacobson's feminism was also a point of conflict in her relationship with Jock Brown. But tension with the role of Jock Brown was not just centered with Jacobson. The Soderbergs were critical of Brown's non-involvement in the day-to-day community work of the staff. According to Jim Soderberg, late in 1971 there were numerous discussions about Brown. These discussions all took place in the context of reflecting on the meaning of collectivity and "serving the people."

We wanted to be more radical and relate to the community. Jock had the theory but never got involved. I don't think Jock and David ever met.⁵⁰

Lynne added:

Jock was a nice person but we were never sure how Jock's work connected with the rest of our work.⁵¹

Jim concluded:

...We wanted to be a collective and did not want anyone to be a leader like Dick was in the past--- a media freak.⁵²

Therefore, with Jock's increased isolation from the new directions represented by the Living Collective his position within the Free Church was again called into question. But Jock commanded national respect and attention for his work with the Free Church. In eyes of many people Brown was as much the Free Church as was this new direction. What specifically was the nature of this new direction and what were the specific points of conflict with Brown?

In order to adequately answer this question an analysis of the religious politics of the Free Church in the last half of 1971 is crucial. The religious politics articulated late in 1971 set the stage for the next organizational period: the attempt to form a total Staff Collective.

V

The integration of the religious and political components of the Free Church's self understanding began to break down toward the end of 1971. Organizational breakdown and ideological breakdown had a direct relationship in the history of the Free Church. There was work being done to shore up the ideology and to try to integrate the two rapidly separating components. York in his public statements made valiant efforts to show the coherence of the Manifesto and the work of Jock Brown. In August Brown had just returned from a national Clergy and Laity Concerned meeting in Ann Arbor. He was largely responsible for the drafting of the "Ann Arbor Statement" which was the official statement, or "covenant" of the meeting. When he returned to Berkeley Brown was greeted with the Switchboard's Manifesto. Quickly the Ann Arbor Statement was presented to the Board as "a theological translation of the Switchboard Manifesto," which was "adopted by Staff and Living Collective." In a progress letter to a National Presbyterian founder in September York explained the relationship of the statement and the Manifesto.

We see the two documents as saying the same things---
one in secular revolutionary language and one in the-
ological terms.⁵³

If this was true than the long process of formulating an agreed upon ideological statement, a covenant, had finally arrived.

There were problems, however. David Howard was now in prison and his approval of the Statement as a "translation" of the Manifesto would have been difficult to attain. The Ann Arbor Statement did include most of the points of the Manifesto and with an emphasis on greater commitment and discipline. It was clear that all agreed that internal

discipline was essential to the task that lay ahead. Renewed "dedication," "internal development," these were the organizational directions now becoming important to the Free Church and the Ann Arbor Statement had sufficient doses of this cult-like development. However, the model was more the German Confessing Church and not the revolutionary collective on the left. The Statement was a call to penitence, action and community. The community was to "support in every way possible our brothers and sisters who suffer for their faithfulness to this covenant, regardless of the cost."⁵⁴ There was to be "discipline in action," engaging in "regular study and analysis, realism and hard work in organizing." And finally the community was to "work toward a life style of greater simplicity and joy."

The Statement represented a "religious politics" very much in continuity with the Free Church's past. The new twist was greater organizational discipline. It echoed much of the Re-organizational Proposal of May and the Staff's sample covenant in June. It was John Pairman Brown at his best.

The Statement, at least, had guidelines for a real "Movement Church Collective," or a worshipping community with ideologically clear politics. At a worship service for a core group of disciplined members in September the new Free Church seemed to have arrived. The "emerging and worshipping Christian community," the issue oriented Church, for which it was largely funded, was still alive. The vanguard church on the "cutting edge of Christianity" was still in business. The Left Church was not far away, if not already here.

The First Congregational Church of Berkeley is one of the most uptight churches in town. They, along with others,

have consistently refused to give Free Church and other movement organizations any space in their extremely unused buildings. But we have, for a time at least, infiltrated First Congo. You see, their janitor is a Free Churcher, and so every other week we gather in his apartment in the bowels of First Congo, to celebrate the Freedom Meal.

This week about eight of us were there. Some brought bread and wine, others contributed spaghetti, others salad. It began like our men's and women's liberation groups, with self-criticism. We went around the circle, in no particular order, criticizing ourselves for chauvinism, counter-revolutionary attitudes, sloth, not being upfront, oppressing someone. When we were done, someone read from Luke and Matthew about Jesus washing feet to give us an example of his way of serving the people instead of exploiting them. Then we passed around a basin of water and all washed our hands (and our brother's blood) for dinner.

We set a table in the middle of the room, and people presented their gifts of food and drink. "If you are bringing your gift to the altar, and there remember that your sister or brother has something against you, leave your gift there; go and first be reconciled to your sister or brother, and then come back and offer your gift." So we criticized each other. Not just to get things off our chests, but as a revolutionary discipline. When this was done, we passed around the kiss of peace, and sat down to eat.

Halfway through dinner the bread was broken and we were reminded that Jesus did this with his collective and that to eat it here has special meaning: it is like signing a revolutionary manifesto, like joining the Movement again. To do it lightly means trouble, because it is solidarity with your sisters and brothers that you are eating it lightly. Eating it lightly, you condemn yourself to your own ego-tripping or elitism, because you betray the collective Body.

Then the wine was poured---"this is the Constitution of a New Society in my Blood." After dinner we poured more wine and drank toasts, responding to each with the amen of "Right on." Our toasts were to our brother David in Santa Rita, to the freedom of Angela, the Soledad Brothers, the Berrigans, and all political prisoners; they were for our Switchboard and its growing political consciousness; for the junkies we met that week, for the several couples just married, and a special toast to Corey Hue, our newborn comrade. And there were more. Late in the night, the age-old revolutionary meal over, we went home.⁵⁵

This small service was now typical of the Free Church. The days of the large public services were gone. Free Church services were "intentionally" not "publicized on the street." It was a "celebration and study together within the core community" that was "most needed." York's description of the Freedom meal is an important indication of the Free Church's movement to the next stage of organization and direction. It is also important for it gives us information about how York was interpreting the larger religious and political environment.

There were new religious developments, inside and outside the Free Church, that seemed antithetical to the Free Church's emerging left church orientation. York's reference to First Congregational's failure to offer space related to one inside development. The Free Church had been given its notice on its building location and were looking for new space for over six months. This search was to culminate in September with a denial by the City Council for a "use permit" on a house they wanted to buy. York had been looking forward to this new building.

"We have gone through incredible ideological/theological tribulations over the subject of buying property, but there seems to be no other way to remain at the heart of the South Campus. The churches just are not willing to give us space, nor was Unitas, or the Baptist Seminary. Now it becomes a radical and innovative step to buy rather than be forced out of the community by uncooperative churches.⁵⁶

The search for the new building was a good example of the Free Church trying to break out of the "wanting to have it both ways" mentality, but not quite soon enough or with sufficient resources. The

Free Church had spent much of its history criticizing the churches it sought help from, in the form of money in the past and now building space. They had to be partially kidding themselves to think these churches would allow their disruptive presence inside their walls.

A new building never materialized. Alternate sites were looked at, but financial problems soon overwhelmed the Free Church by the end of the year and money from the "building fund" was used to cover deficits. The final \$2,000 installment of the National Episcopal grant arrived in October. No more money was expected, nor would it be forthcoming from National Episcopal offices. As mentioned in the last chapter, national church agencies concerned with experimental ministries were reduced or almost eliminated. The Episcopal Church was one of the hardest hit, its total national staff was reduced by fifty percent. The Presbyterian money was still earmarked for the Free Church in 1972. But that too would prove to be problematic.

The Free Church was able to find space in January of 1972. They moved into the UNITAS building, the home of the ecumenical campus ministry, which had originally turned them down. However, with the arrival of the new UNITAS director, John Moyer, a radical minister, a new arrangement was worked out, less threatening to the UNITAS board. The Free Church remained in this location until its final disruptions. Prior to the UNITAS building location (See map page 7) the Free Church experienced another brief sojourn on the Northside of campus, 1816

Scenic Avenue. The Scenic location was a one room office which allowed the switchboard to keep its lines open. By this time in late 1971 Brown was doing most of his work out of his home. He only came around the organization for its board meetings.

Perhaps if the Free Church had obtained their building, the momentum of the physical structure may have sustained them through their most significant crisis. But a building was not possible and it seemed to go counter to the old rationales for funding an experimental church, one not "hampered by a building." The idea of this kind of permanence was not well received by local churches either. But it was clear York, for good reasons, wanted it. "I wanted a church, but we never 'built one'," he was to say later.

The general religious and political environment in 1971 was not conducive to an integrated religious politics, much less a new building. The growth of new religious groups and factionalized political sects characterized the context in which the Free Church tried to develop its own clarity. York in particular was caught in a period of time when the tasks of putting together a coherent religious politics, based on the best in the left that he saw and his own religious sensibilities, was almost impossible. A good example of the difficult nature of this task was the occasion for which he wrote the above description of the Freedom Meal at the First Congregational Church.

He was invited to a Church Society for College Work Conference, on Block Island with such religious notables as William Stringfellow,

Jim Forest and Dorothy Day. The Conference was called to discuss the new spiritual quest among young people. It was largely in response to the growth of the "Jesus Freaks." The Jesus Movement had been featured in TIME magazine in June of 1971, so it was a legitimate phenomenon. York wrote an article that appeared in a follow up book to the Conference, edited by Myron Bloy Search for the Sacred, the New Spiritual Quest.⁵⁷ The book included articles around the appropriate themes of "loss of direction," "quest for direction" and "confronting the 'sacred yes'."

York's contribution is important for it documents the political context out of which his theology was being expressed. A Left Church was the only alternative for him. And it was at odds with the religious environment around him.

The Block Island meeting was not what I'd expected. For three months since then I've tried to write this paper, expand on the ideas I presented there in abbreviated form---the spiritual quest of the young. Now, a month past deadline I'm angry. Angry at myself, angry that the Block Island conference was so much intellectual gamesmanship, angry at the bullshit, angry at the liberalism that sucked me into its mystification of the issues and away from plain speech and telling it like it is...

The murder of George Jackson, San Quentin, the SF Tac Squad, Attica, Santa Rita, junkies on the Avenue, a Freedom Meal at First Congo, a Switchboard phone number---what has all this to do with the spiritual quest of the young? Just everything!

Only two questions have to be answered here. Which youth are you talking about, and which spiritual quest? I am a partisan on both questions.

Movement youth, struggling with the demands of history and of the planet---peace, liberation, ecology---are the cutting edge, not only of their own generation but of the future. I choose them. Jesus freaks, various forms of navel-gazers, astrologers, Krishna chanters, Babaites, dope heads, and the liberal churches are escape artists we have all met before. They are all quests, to be sure, but the more important Quest is that one being made toward us by the power of history

whose name we have known in the Scriptures, and whose name is now San Quentin, Attica, Santa Rita, Vietnam, junkie. In this quest God is doing a new thing. He is doing what lies beyond the power of any individual or group acting in history. He is raising up a new community, a Movement of people for peace and justice. Some of the Movement respond to this quest with God's name and some do not. But as there is one human race with one history, so there is one Power beyond history and one Movement for peace and justice. Now is the day of our liberation. Seize the time!⁵⁸

York's footnote to this passage is revealing, "Some of this wording from the 'Ann Arbor Statement'."⁵⁹ There was integration of left politics and religion once more, if only in York's head. And maybe that was all that was needed to keep the Free Church on the cutting edge. Even though Brown had a national reputation for his work with the Free Church, it was York who was acknowledged by this point in time to be the Free Church. Brown himself would make this comment of York. Therefore, with York convinced that a collective staff arrangement was the right direction, it became important to break down the barriers between the staff (York and the Browns) and the Living Collective. The first Staff Collective was soon proposed after David Howard's release from prison on January 1, 1972.

VI

The Staff Collective became a reality, but the price was great. York referred to this staff period as "just a lot of head rolling."⁶⁰ What happened and why? Again only the events themselves point us to an answer. York, in retrospect, reduced the events of the whole period to "everyone panicking on the question of how to make the Free Church survive."⁶¹ There were many panic-like activities, but why the

panic? What happened to the coherence and new direction that York appeared to have reached just months ago?

One cannot attempt to present the events or answer the relevant questions concerning this period of the Free Church without some mention of the breakdown of people's personal lives. Perhaps York's life was hardest hit. Peter Haynes, more than anyone, was the person closest to York during this period. His account of the personal dynamics is important to give us a perspective on the official reasons for the turmoil that would make York the only remaining staff person of the Free Church on April 3, 1972.

Peter Haynes functioned de facto as York's personal counselor beginning in the fall of 1971. Haynes began working for the Free Church in the summer of 1971 as his field work placement at the School of Social Welfare at the University. His official job was to help counsel switchboard workers, but he soon saw his role more and more as York's personal counselor and advisor. An Episcopal Deacon planning to be ordained, Haynes was quickly type-cast in Rich Boylan's job. Even though he never officially became part of the Living Collective, the "Staff" or the Staff Collective, it was clear that his work at the Free Church by the first of 1972 was almost on a full-time basis but for no financial compensation. Haynes had just returned to Berkeley, where he was an undergraduate, after graduating from the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There he worked for an alternative youth services program, "The Sanctuary," operating programs similar to the Free Church. This similar background and the Free Church's national reputation compelled him to seek out York. Or as he put it, "I wanted

to sit at the feet of the master of alternative ecclesiology."⁶² His graphic account of the Free Church he encountered:

Essentially what I did was to counsel Dick, to take care of him and try to get the Free Church out of the hassles it was in religiously and politically. For when I got there...Dick [York] was in a really strange place... It took me a while to get over the shock that he was not the alternative ministries guru that I had in my mind... He was really a very anxious, nervous, scattered, tired, and freaked out person who couldn't figure out what the hell was going on.

...I tried to get Dick to see what the reality of the situation was. It was no longer the groovey sixties and things were pretty oppressive. If he wanted to live his life he had to make some serious decisions about his vocation. It did not seem to me that he could continue his present life-style and survive much longer. This was right after he had been beaten,⁶³ and he was not well physically and certainly was not well emotionally and psychologically...So I spent a lot of time counseling Dick.

...Dick was a personal "basket case" during that time trying to work out a lot of personal issues...Therefore there was no Free Church at this time...The internal institution just disintegrated bit by bit...Dick wasn't capable of work. He would come into the office and not settle on doing any particular task. He would just fly around the office crazzily sorting through old files...but work never got done and there were days that repeated themselves.

When I renegotiated my contract with the School of Social Welfare in January for the second half of the year I set as my goal to be Dick York's official counselor and to try to bring the Free Church, as it was then, to an end gracefully and calmly...This meant closing it down as a direct service agency...and trying to figure out what to do next.⁶⁴

If Haynes was right that York was a "basket case" at the end of 1971, York was not alone, and it was to be expected. The movements that York staked his life on were corporate basket cases by that time. It was as if the dynamic of history that Nugent referred to earlier had caught up with the Free Church once again. The counter-culture radicals in Berkeley either retreated to the country or began to set up alternative

record stores and natural food coops. In a four part article for the Berkeley Gazette, Ray Jennings described the changing street scene from its hippie days to its new composition at the end of 1971. He concluded that the alternative service agencies should now be dealing with a "skid row situation." The kids were "basketcases," "caught up in drugs and petty crime." They were from less affluent backgrounds than the 1960's hippies. They did not need temporary housing or just a place "to crash," or to store back packs. They needed jobs and a permanent residence.⁶⁵

The left, or radical political movement, also had its version of the 1970's identity crisis, another "basket case." Haynes attributed much of the Free Church's lack of direction to the fact that the left in Berkeley was dead or no longer viable. It was true the left had entered a new stage, even with some cause for hope. The three radicals elected to the Berkeley City Council were now in office, functioning with some degree of effectiveness. However, the Viet Nam war was still being waged, now with saturation bombing, and no end was in sight. There no longer existed a national left organization or viable coalition to focus energies, SDS having facionalized itself out of existence. The left, much like the Free Church, was seeking new directions which took the cult-like form of small disciplined collectives. The Red Family was the most notable in Berkeley at this time, with York's wife Melinda still involved in its activities. York also had close ties with the principal individuals in the Red Family. The sphere of influence of the Red Family now included Ramparts magazine and the radical political newspaper The Berkeley Tribe. The Tribe was formed by the former workers of the Berkeley Barb. The Red Family was a model York used for the

political component of the Free Church. However, the Red Family's life span did not go much beyond the Free Church's, and it ended for similar reasons.

Jim Soderberg tried to analyze the relationship of the breakdown of collectives and peoples' personal lives, typical of Berkeley at that time:

...as a group, as individuals we were going through the same kind of turmoil that the left was going through. It was a rather painful period of time. I don't think it was just the Free Church, the whole left, was going through it. We were beginning to question the politics of the last five or six years. What had they led to? What had they accomplished? The war was going on, as strong as ever. We realized that as we escalated our efforts to end the war, eventually we confronted escalated violence directed at ourselves. How would we respond to that? That was really a sobering experience. We were confronting the pain of trying to change our own life styles...the process was indeed painful.⁶⁶

It was in this context of personal and corporate breakdown that the "Staff Collective" on March 6, 1972 submitted a "Memo" to the Board of Trustees of the Berkeley Free Church regarding the "Resident Theologian Job Designation and Free Church Publications Discussion." In the panic of survival York decided to "throw his hat" in David Howard and Roberta Jacobson's direction. In the Memo the Staff Collective outlined their major difficulty: "The problem here is that Jock and Emily have not wanted to be part of this Staff process, and so for the last five months we have had two separate staffs."⁶⁷

The "recent events" leading up to the March 6 Board meeting were listed in the Memo from York, Howard and Jacobson's perspective:

These four areas are woven together in the recent history of this matter.

A. As the staff has collectivized itself and the program,

Jock and Emily have opted out of this process, especially from the increased attention to group process, honesty and criticism in staff meetings. This led to the end of joint meetings while Dick was on vacation last Fall.

B. Upon his return, Dick met first with the Collective, and then with Jock and Emily, trying to find some solution. Then again on Jan. 12, at the insistence of the Collective, Dick met with them, but failed again to elicit their participation.

C. On January 18 all agreed to hold a joint meeting to discuss the deadlock. Emily failed to come. The meeting was held anyway (after long discussion of whether it should or could be without her). No resolution was forthcoming.

D. In the meantime Jock had become very involved in organizing the Ecumenical Peace Institute (EPI), seeing this work as part of his "theologian" function. The Collective did not recognize this work as being in the name of Free Church, since no collective decision had been made (nor do we believe the Board ever acted on this program). Further, we feel it to be too liberal an approach to peace action and education and certainly not a staff or program priority.

E. On February 9, a second joint meeting of all the staff was agreed to. Only Jock came again. At this meeting, the Staff Collective offered a compromise which was:

- **that Jock and Emily would be relieved of being part of the Collective and its personal process;
- **Both would be designated and paid as "Publications Staff" (Resident theologian to be dropped in all its forms);
- **Fiscal controller to become a collective function;
- **Joint staff meetings only to deal with Publications decisions;
- **The rest of the direction of Free Church program solely in the hands of the Staff Collective.

At this meeting Jock said he would like to take his involvement with EPI to the Board for a decision, because he understood that he had a mandate to do this work. One more joint meeting was scheduled to be held on Feb. 14, for Emily's input. The Browns later cancelled this meeting and referred the whole matter to the Board.⁶⁸

Haynes also supported York in his struggle with the Browns, Jock in particular. York did his "homework" with the Board and "I helped him," said Haynes. "Together we met with most of Board members lining up their support and getting the votes."⁶⁹ The Board met and Brown made a substantial case for his ministry with the Free Church. But he did not have

the votes and the outcome was a foregone conclusion with the composition of the Board. Bob March saw the decision to be made as a choice between Brown or York. Isabel Weissman said she never really understood the "national network" of political groups in which Brown was interested. She also saw the Board showdown as either supporting York's ministry or Brown's ministry. York's ministry was the Free Church, Brown's was considered something else in 1972. Norman Gottwald and Ester Davis were Brown's sole supporters. Brown resigned.

Four years later in an interview York reflected upon this period of time in his relationship to Jock Brown.

I was the son and he was the father it was all so classically Oedipal...At the end I just had to come out with the Oedipus relationship and say you [Jock Brown] are staff and I [Richard York] am the Director. Jock was antagonistic to Roberta and against the collective idea. Jock would even say that I was the Free Church, and that he did not know about the Free Church street scene and he didn't want to know.

...Planet on Strike had just been published and David and Roberta read it and were embarrassed by it. I read it and also had some difficulty with it...But the crucial thing was that Jock and Emily would not subject themselves to collective criticism. And as Director I said, 'Thou shall not refuse.' Then the collective took over and Jock and Emily were offed."⁷⁰

York later admitted he paid a great price for siding with Howard and Jacobson. York cut himself off not just from Brown but from many of his own hopes and convictions. The maneuver to "off" Brown created a new direction that was very much out of line with a crucial component of the Free Church, its religious side. York always wanted the Free Church to be a church. But the Memo to the Board indicated something different. After outlining the "history of the Resident Theologian Staff designation," the following discontinuous comment was made:

With the decrease of the church emphasis in our programs in the last two years and with the completion of the Prayerbook, all the staff agree that this job designation makes very little sense now.⁷¹ [*Italics mine*]

"With the decrease of the church emphasis" the problem of maintaining an integrated and coherent "religious politics" ceased to be a concern. Much like the wider radical movements, the Free Church's cultural-religious component now was completely severed from its political component. The small disciplined cult could not emerge from its internal study and assessment to become a viable organization. The goal of liberation with the churches and society was not possible for the "new" Free Church under York, Howard and Jacobson. York did not realize this before it was too late. Thinking back on this turning point he realized:

I finally gave up...this happened because we never built a church of believers..."all right," I would say, "anything, lets do anything just get going." I would drop my church trip and a new thing might emerge... But I really sold out lots of my own views, just to keep the whole thing going. Like I said, we should have closed it down a year ago.⁷²

Even in the midst of the Brown showdown he must have been very aware of selling out his own views, for his interest in a church was very deep. In May of 1972 York wrote the following litany, very reminiscent of some of his early reworkings of Brown's ideas and continuous with the evolution of his own religious and political thinking.

I have a vision a community which I've sought for five years and only in brief moments found, and sometimes entirely lost.

I have a vision of a community which is authentically the church: which not merely uses the myths and symbols of the Gospel politically, but which takes the Gospel of Jesus Christ more seriously than the established churches do.

I have a vision of a community which is revolutionary and yet compassionate; which doesn't just cloak a revolutionary collective in Christian rhetoric, but which is revolutionary because of Christ!

I have a vision of a community which is revolutionary in an authentic disciplined sense---not just a lukewarm Church mimicry of the secular movement, but a radical Christian vanguard.

I have a vision of a community which resists the institutions of piggery, works to establish the better of two choices, and illustrates in its life and celebration a radical alternative.

I have a vision of a Eucharistic centered community, which seeks and finds its source of strength and community in the Meal of bread and wine---and recognizes that more is happening in that meal than mere human effort and "significance"?

I have a vision of a community which is prophetic in words and actions: which speaks the words of power to the demons of our century, but with humility and a sense of obedience.

I have a vision of a community which recognizes that the Church is not something men and women create, but which is created with them by God's spirit.

I have a vision of a community which loves, each other, the unloved, the world---because we all know how needful we are and how we have been loved.

I have a vision of a community which is Servant; which recognizes the spirit of God moving outside it, and responds to that which serves with liberation.

I have a vision of a community which understands that it is false humility to withhold that one thing we hold most dear: the Good News of Jesus, our liberator.

I have a vision of a community which is willing to suffer.

I have a vision of a community which seeks always to root out from itself colonies of the invading spirit of pigging: racism, sexism, chauvinism, violence.

I have a vision of a community which embraces revolutionary non violence.⁷³

VII

The heads continued to roll. York might have realized his mistake, but he did not revise his tactics. Howard and Jacobson were next. The same "homework" with the Board was repeated by York and Haynes. But this showdown was less delicate than Brown's elimination. The Berkeley Barb and Lester Kinsolving got in on the action; and Howard mobilized certain street people.

A Board meeting was scheduled for April 3 as a "courtesy" to formalize York's firing of David Howard. Roberta Jacobson had already resigned, just a week after Brown. Howard presented his perspective of the events in an eleven page document submitted to the Board prior to the April 3 meeting. The document included an outline of the circumstances of his firing, his grievances against York and a "Proposal for the Abolition of the South Campus Ministry, Inc. or Berkeley Free Church, To be Replaced by REALITY." I quote at length from Howard, for his side of the story is only available in this document.

Dick York has reached in recent weeks the apex of a reactionary trend that has been observable throughout his career in Berkeley. In the name of revolutionary collectivity he has assumed an outrageous and intolerable directorship-dictatorship. The concept of collectivity is used only insofar as it advances York's self-interest, power, prestige, and privilege.

He has ruthlessly and relentlessly attacked women, blacks, gays, convicts, and street people; coincidentally, historically, the most oppressed and exploited segments of the population: all in the name of revolution, brotherhood, sisterhood, communism, Christianity, and collectivity. This is a use of language as audacious, as abusive and insulting to human intelligence, as inimicable to genuine communication as that of George Orwell's "Big Brother."

The staff collective never really existed. What went by that name was entirely manipulated by Dick from its inception, serving as a medium for the establishment of

personal alliances of "friendship" (another Yorkspeak euphemism for a dominant-submissive relationship) to enhance his revolutionary image, as a means of delegating shitwork to subordinates, as a means of maintaining power, influence, and prestige under the guise of shared decision making.

Roberta and I, two conscious victims of this arrangement, were skeptical from the beginning. We knew that we did not trust Dick; we wondered why so many seemingly dedicated people had left the organization in disgust; we knew that we felt totally manipulated; that we could not be "up front" without jeopardizing our precarious positions as staff members; but it took some time before we were able to theoretically articulate these gut-level feelings.

Dick York has been and remains - the boss.

We remained powerless and victimized. Roberta ultimately resigned, announcing her resignation at a staff meeting with the agreement that her three hundred dollar per month salary would be proposed to the board for the funding of a salary for Reginald (Makini) Dudley as co-ordinator of the black street worker program. Dick had met Mr. Dudley at Santa Rita several weeks prior to this staff meeting and had at that time communicated to us his great enthusiasm about working with him. It was also agreed upon at this meeting that I would continue to receive an equal three hundred dollars per month. More on this later.

I understood Roberta's resignation to be a protest against York's politics of hypocrisy and a further indictment of his role as pastor/director. I also understood it to be a statement that her struggle, as a feminist, was not at the Free Church.

The day after Roberta's resignation, Dick ostensibly as a reaction to the Dog Shit Newsletter, told me that the staff collective had been a failure and was terminated. He asked for my resignation and discussed his plans for the future of Free Church. These plans involved the formation of a "new collective" whose membership would include Peter Haynes and his wife, some other church-affiliated white men and Kaye Thompson as an auxiliary stipended woman at one hundred dollars per month! This clever little scenario, this insidious Coup, would, of course, exclude Makini, myself, and Nick Benton and ensure straight white, married clergyman control of Free Church.

In regard to Nick Benton, in defiance of the March Board's directive, York arbitrarily refused to consider the application of such a person for one of the Pubs positions. Besides, he had already worked out how he wanted Pubs run.

I refused to resign and after some discussion, he agreed to allow me to continue as "Food Program Co-ordinator" and agreed to propose to the board a three

hundred dollar per month grant, for two months only, for Makini's salary.

At the same time, however, he began to clandestinely move for my elimination by negotiating secretly with Hillel about taking over the lunch program and thereby leaving me without duties. He also began an attempt to discredit Makini and generally let it be known that he was opposed to the Free Church's association with the black street worker program, at least insofar as it had been formulated and "collectively" agreed upon.

Witness also, board members, how he was able to have me "fired" in violation of the by-laws by mis-representing them and by deceiving the executive committee with false allegations including his "fear of violence" from Nick Benton. This absurd attempt to discredit our criticism and reduce it to insane brutality is typical of York's politics of personalization. He continually attempts to assert that we are not making a genuine criticism of his power and of this society in general, that it is not a political class struggle that we are talking about, not legitimate grievances but just the incomprehensible vindictiveness of a few crazies.

In regard to the letter York handed me, signed by Isabel Weismann, representing the executive committee, I strongly protest his fascistic, paranoid and incredibly manipulative approach to settling disputes. Not even traditional bourgeois due process (I don't think I exaggerate in using the word fascistic); no regard for my side of the story. I ask the board to censure Dick York for his panic-stricken lies and I suggest that the executive committee consider the degree to which its members have been duped and used.

Naturally, I do not recognize this illegal action. I have, however, on the counsel of Isabel Weismann, agreed to voluntarily suspend my activities at Free Church subject to a full and in-depth discussion of these issues at tonight's board meeting.

I have been accused of "involvements to the detriment of the Free Church." Just who determines what is to the detriment of the Free Church: the community it is supposed to serve or those who have made their fortunes and reputations off the misery and deprivation of that community?

Personal loyalty to Dick York or political integrity in regard to the issues?⁷⁴

COMMUNITY CONTROL OF FREE CHURCH

REALITY proposed by Howard and four others was to be an organization of "autonomous street workers," engaged in "self organization

under the dictatorship of the femininity." They wanted

No Christian vocabulary words like "church," "ministry," "jesus" represent danger and hostility to street people because they are inextricably linked to that power in the ongoing society which is wiping out their lives.⁷⁵

The Berkeley Barb ran two articles on the furor. The first mainly relied on Howard's document quoted above under the "juicy" front page headline of: "Free Church Double X, Street People Put Out."⁷⁶ The second article, following the April 3 Board meeting was entitled "The Free Church Fizzles." The Board meeting was called a "tragicomic meeting" and each participant was treated in the derogatory manner consistent with the Barb's irreverent orientation to the news in 1972. The second article also angered Howard and his street friends. They criticized the articles' "cynicism" which "reinforc[es] all the decadent values of the ruling class while simultaneously bolster[s] the ego of the aloof, more-enlightened-than-thou cynic. The oppressed cannot afford to be cynical."⁷⁷

Lester Kinsolving wasted no time in proving Howard and his friends right, but with articles more subtle. His articles in the San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner proclaimed the closing of the Free Church. He relished in the opportunity to quote Ray Jennings on the irony of the situation.

The Rev. Mr. Jennings noted "the irony of these attacks on Dick York---in very much the same manner he has criticized the straight churches."⁷⁸

And he delighted in quoting from the leaflet printed by the "Peoples Revolutionary Committee to Off Dick York."

The hirsute and outspoken Episcopal priest is "too liberal" (meaning insufficiently radical). "...Those

who build careers for themselves off the (street) people have no right to ask the support of the people any more,...York receives \$12,000 a year---for what?"⁷⁹

And to illustrate the state of paralysis at the Free Church Kinsolving quoted the acting secretary Peter Haynes: "I found the last meeting so displeasing that I just didn't take any notes."⁸⁰ Haynes was referring to the showdown with Brown.

The Free Church was closed, but officially only temporarily. The Board directed "all services to be suspended and directed York, with whatever help he requires to submit proposals for new programs at a special board meeting the President will call when York thinks he has something."⁸¹

There had been numerous crises in the Free Church's almost five years of existence, but it was acknowledged by Bob March, now the acting Board President, that the crises with Brown and Howard were "the most serious in the Church's history."⁸² The gravity of the situation was particularly acute, for the Free Church could not afford more adverse publicity and still hold on to the only remaining and meager funding from the local Episcopal Diocese and Presbyterian Synod. It did not take York long to issue his own "Report on Recent Press Concerning Berkeley Free Church." This Report gave York's side of the crisis. It was specifically prepared for the Diocesan agency funding the Free Church.

Recent stories have appeared in the press and concerning the closing of the Free Church, but since none of the information for these stories came from the official Board or staff of the Church, needless to say they are distortions at best. Press which has covered this issue include: Berkeley Barb and Tribe, Daily Cal, SF Examiner and Chronicle, Berkeley Gazette, Los Angeles Times, and others.

The Board and staff are concerned that these inaccurate

stories will prove detrimental to our funding sources and regular contributors. Due to misleading information in the Examiner article (the first established paper to carry a story), the LA Times article read: "Berkeley Free Church has folded." This is untrue.

The following might help to clarify what is happening:

1. At my recommendation, the Officers of our Board approved on March 23, the closing of the Berkeley Switchboard and related services. This action was taken for several reasons:
 - a. Over the past 5 years Free Church has been successful in demonstrating the needs of street people, designing and initiating programs to meet them, and then turning these programs over to the community to operate as separate agencies. The Free Clinic, the Runaway Center, the Emergency Food Project, the Youth Hostel, and the Jewish Street Program are all examples. Since the Free Clinic maintains a 24-hour switchboard, our Switchboard has become less and less needed. Most of the services to street people we at one time met are being offered now by these daughter agencies.
 - b. We chose Easter week to close because most of our student volunteers were out of town and the Switchboard was nearly untended.
 - c. We wanted to give full time to the development of new programs and new directions.
2. Secondly, also at my recommendation, the Board terminated the employment of a staff member, David Howard, for actions detrimental to the program and the unity of the Church.
 - a. Those actions included distributing leaflets around the Church and on the street attacking Free Church and me, intentional destruction of property, as well as general lack of performance on the job.
 - b. Further, David was the last remaining member of a 4-member Administrative Assistant Collective. When the third member of this team left in early March this brought that collective-staffing experiment to an end. David continued his attacks on the Church following his firing, and sent releases to local press.

To summarize our current status:

1. We have not folded. We closed Switchboard, and are continuing our other programs, while developing some new directions.
2. Closing this part of the program for regular evaluation has been a policy of our Board for 5-years (we have been closed in certain areas at least 10 times). Lester Kin-solving deems it newsworthy each time.
3. The closing of Switchboard marks 5 years of successful organizing as an initiator of direct-services to street people in the South Campus. There is much yet to be done.

4. The press was also incorrect in stating that we fired John Pairman Brown last month. Jock resigned and that was unrelated to the current program evaluation.⁸³

York also counterattacked Kinsolving, registered as a priest in the Diocese. He called for the Diocese to censure Kinsolving. Kinsolving had many enemies in the Diocese, but York's credibility, at this time, was not much better. No censure was imposed. But York managed to hold on to his funding at the Diocese. He was not so fortunate with the Synod. The Presbyterians had just initiated a review process which was the contingency for the remainder of the two year grant earmarked for the Free Church. The Howard furor, and the "closing" to reassess what to do next was not well received at the Synod. John Turpin said he just did not see anything happening at the Free Church worth funding. The Presbyterian funding stopped.

VIII

A brief analysis of the conflicting streams of thought is necessary to help get a better sense of the various contradictions that contributed to the Free Church's disruption. Unfortunately, the thought, like the practice, of the Free Church in 1971-72 could be characterized as "wanting to have it both ways." What was at stake was whether or not the Free Church would be able to integrate its politics and religion and become a left church. York became aware of what was at stake, and the substance of the problems, only when it was too late. The problem could be summed up by saying that, at its best, the

Free Church became an organization of "spiritual politics." The independent spiritual component, the transcendent critical factor, functioning in the thought and practice of the Free Church was now fused with its politics. It was not a "political spirituality" where the modifier was politics. How did this happen? And did all participants in the Free Church represent this position?

In fact this position of "spiritual politics" did not happen all at once. It was always a sub theme in the Free Church since its very beginning. Sometimes it was elevated, as in 1967 with the "Church incognito" emphasis; or sometimes it was receded, as in 1970 with Brown's self-conscious church emphasis. In 1970 the fusion mentality was actually forced out when Nugent was eliminated from the Free Church. In the struggle with the Sub Church the differences, at the level of thought, could be characterized as the Free Church representing a type of political spirituality and the Sub Church spiritual politics. However, because the Free Church's religious integrity at the level of principle was maintained at the cost of organizational dependency on the established churches, the Free Church only postponed its day in court to be tried for spiritual politics. Therefore, by late 1971 this fusion mentality was back inside the organization. Also in late 1971 with the added establishment oriented board presence there was the reentry of the old stream thought "defeated" in 1969, that of simple reconciliation. There were now so many different streams of thought flowing in the Free Church that a whirlpool, with currents not streams, would be the best metaphor to describe the thought of the Free Church in 1971-72. It was York, the unifier, the Free Church and the heart of the organization who had to work from the center

of the whirlpool. It is not surprising that York and the Free Church appeared to be dizzy from the task of controlling the waters.

From the center of the whirlpool the currents are hardly distinguishable. However, analytically there were four main currents within the whirlpool. From his vantage point in the center, as the Pastor/Director, York found himself being a part of each current on different occasions. The four currents represented four different understandings of the purpose and nature of the organization. The possibility of a left church, a self conscious religious organization with deeper political analysis, was precluded by the four currents: 1) Was the Free Church a vanguard church within (though on the periphery of) the established churches being funded for its own renewal? 2) Was the Free Church a vanguard church to the radical church movement having made its break from the established churches? 3) Was the Free Church a radical political "service" organization in the community with little or no independent religious identity? 4) Or was the Free Church a social service agency to the community with some religious sponsors to help guide its charity? These four currents are sketched in Diagram 4 on page 331.

What appears to be very different orientations to the Free Church's self understanding, represented by these four currents, was not easily discerned from the vantage point of the participants in 1971-72. This fact is particularly clear when individuals tried to harmonize all these contradictory positions. A good example of this harmonization, other than York's efforts, was Brown's reorganization proposal. Though Brown represented a version of the second current, a break from the established

Diagram 4

TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS
IN THE THOUGHT OF THE FREE CHURCH
1972

	Establishment Emphasis	Alternative Emphasis
Religious Dimension	(1) A vanguard church within the the established churches being funded for its own renewal.	(2) A vanguard church to the radical church movement hav- made its break from the established churches.
Political Dimension	(4) A social service agency <u>to</u> the community with some religious sponsors to help <u>guide</u> its charity.	(3) A radical political "service" organization <u>in</u> the community with little or no independent religious identity.

churches, he still proposed a reorganization that was "necessary" due to the "pressures" of the situations and the "divisions."³⁴ For some reason his proposal was not based on his more consistent and deeply held notion of the church. Perhaps he had given up on the Free Church being this new church. This "giving up on the Free Church" explanation seems plausible, for Brown now spent most of his time organizing a coalition of church radicals called the Ecumenical Peace Institute. Therefore, after writing the reorganization proposal, Brown was more consistently adding pressure to his second current of thought, thus, helping to churn up the waters. In a document prepared for the Bay Area Radical Church Coalition as far back as 1970 entitled, "You are the Rising Bread, A Manual for Doing the Work of the Church in America," Brown's position was unmistakably clear:

Readers of this manual have discovered that the tasks of justice, peace, and conservation to which they are committed cannot be done through old institutions. Make a clean break! New jobs can only be done through new structures.³⁵ [*Italics mine*]

The "Rising Bread" document was eventually "scrapped" because it was not accepted by the forces of renewal in which Brown had been in contact. Perhaps they were representative of the first current of thought in the Free Church, a vanguard within the established churches, and unwilling to make the break. This is a plausible explanation, for many of his contacts were with liberal church bureaucrats still "tied into" the established church and radical church youth (like York) still living off the funding of these bureaucrats. At this point in 1970 the liberal bureaucrats were also being pressured by conservative backlash. Their job security was tenuous, therefore, acceptance of such a document would be a kiss of death. Or perhaps Brown's document was

not agreed to because of Brown's emphasis on "the Church" as the only arena for renewal and the only principle for a counter institution.

That [counter-] institution cannot be a government or an economic system or a class, for they are incapable of radical self-criticism. This manual assumes that in spite of all its failures, and corruption, the principle represented by the Church defines the self-connecting institution needed.⁸⁶ [Italics mine]

Portions of Brown's reorganization document also make this church emphasis clear, in spite of his recommendations in the proposal. Here Brown is definitely separated from the third current in the Free Church, a radical political organization.

Many of us see the Movement and church symbolism as supplementing each other. Only the Movement in our day even begins to do justice to the cry for peace and liberation.⁸⁷

Then Brown adds the all important qualification to this statement:

Only the Church provides the symbolism and insight which can prevent the Movement from becoming, in eventual success or eventual failure, another imperialism.⁸⁸ [Italics mine]

This was a far cry from the third current which saw the Movement, without religious resources as the means to revolution. According to Brown, class warfare was the wrong principle on which to base a revolution.

The third current in the Free Church was represented by David Howard and Roberta Jacobs. Howard's position in the document calling for the "community control" of the Free Church is a classic representation of the third current. Jacobs' secular feminism was the basis on which she would also fit into this third current. However, the data is really insufficient to claim this. The position of Lynne and Jim Soderberg is interesting, for it is idiosyncratic to these currents. If anybody overcame the solidification of these divisions it was the Soderbergs.

However, because they left the Free Church before the final curtain they do not figure into the schema.

Brown's position, however, was not just incompatible with Howard's and Jacobs', more importantly it was also at odds with York's. If York could be said to represent any one of the currents, it would probably be the first one. However, due to his stake in keeping the organization alive he did try to harmonize the second and third currents. This effort was reflected in York's contribution to the Block Island Conference mentioned above when he states:

...the more important Quest is that one being made toward us by the power of history whose name we have known in the Scriptures, and whose name is now San Quentin, Attica, Santa Rita, Vietnam, justice.⁸⁹ [Italics mine]

Brown would not agree with this. God was God, he was not San Quentin. But York's next sentence would have been acceptable to Brown: "In this quest God is doing his new thing."⁹⁰ Here God was separate and only working at or through San Quentin. York could not have it both ways from Brown's perspective. York had a spiritual politics, at best, and Brown wanted a political spirituality. A left church would not be built on these inconsistencies and confusions.

What about the other currents mentioned above. The first and fourth currents represented the established, hierarchical, reconciliation components of the Free Church; and most importantly they represented the money. York was not willing to let go of these currents, they represented his salary and some degree of stability. But in order to maintain these two currents York needed some semblance of an organization, therefore, he had to reconcile currents represented by Brown and Howard. However, when this proved untenable he used the currents in the established churches (1) and the board service agency model (4) to eventually

purge Brown (with the help of Howard) and then Howard.

It should be stressed that this should not be seen as a cynical interpretation of York, for no current was acting with much integrity in this battle. Brown did not want to give up his organizational support either. Consequently he was willing to stay in the organization beyond the time it was compatible with what he thought was right. Howard also wanted it both ways. What kind of person does it take to be a "conscious victim" of all that you find reprehensible, as Howard admitted in his "defense." Also the board was willingly used or just not involved. The established church bureaucrats were willing to fund organizations to do their dirty work but failed to get enough involved when the going got tough for these organizations and instead hid behind the forces of backlash. Actually the only really viable established church current that existed in 1972 was the one willing to fund social service or charity to "alienated kids," that is number four. By 1972 most of the liberal or radical bureaucrats had already lost their jobs. Only John Turpin of the Presbyterian Synod even talked about the vanguard nature of the Free Church, and it was more within the context of their service ministry.

The only key individual yet to be mentioned in this analysis of the Free Church's thought is Peter Haynes. Haynes, like the Soderbergs, was somewhat of an exception to these four currents. In many ways, he functioned as York's new alter ego with Brown gone, therefore, he supported York and was loyal to his manipulations at the end. However, as an individual he would fit more into the first current. Haynes felt that "experimental ministries" like the Free Church only should have a temporary life. When they fulfilled their purpose, in this case, renewal of the "Mother Church," they should die and new ones will take their place.²¹

It should be stressed that this analysis of the thought of the Free Church is not to be seen as a cynical interpretation. The end of the Free Church must be seen in the context of the larger society. It was not, and is not, a society conducive to healthy human interactions nor kind to alternative movements. The larger interpretation of the disruption of the Free Church has to be dealt with in order to fully understand all the sources producing the whirlpool in 1972. No doubt these sources began in the high mountains of technocracy picking up speed and pollutants as they wound their way through cities and the subterranean water table of profit motives and commodity fetishes only to spoil the fertile watershed of the youth revolt of the sixties. The speed of flow, the level of the pollution and the fragility of the watershed prejudiced the final outcome of the Berkeley Free Church.

IX

Looking back on the final days of the Free Church, York somewhat philosophically subsumed the "whole era" under the notion of Free Church having outlived its vocations. There were three, at least three vocations, service, political and religious, according to York.

It went through all those phases...It's vocation of service ministry was in its first years. Its vocation in the political phase was at its height during the People's Park era. Its vocation as an alternative church was...but I think all those phases were gone at the time of Howard and Roberta. I wanted a church but it wasn't happening and they weren't in it or was any one else. The underground church thing seemed to be over. I was looking for a new cause, a reason for being. And everyone had their own pet projects and none of them would grip the whole community.⁹²

If the Free Church's vocations had ended, what was he holding



Source:
Church in Metropolis

onto at the Free Church? In response to this question York answered candidly:

My salary and I was hoping I would find a new vocation for it and I was trying out Howard and Roberta's idea of what it should be. I was listening to all these different people to find the new Free Church. But I think all the blood baths at the end came because it had outlived its usefulness and should have been closed down a year before...And everybody got into a real panic when the reason for being isn't laid on you from an external political and social situation.⁹³

The task to figure out what to do next was largely York's. He felt this was a major problem and rooted in the fact that "everyone kept saying that the Free Church was Dick York."

The Board members kept saying this, Jock Brown, March all those people. That original Board was so loyal and it would do anything I wanted it to do. For they remembered the days when the Free Church was formed to hire a street minister. So they kept thinking that their purpose was to enable Dick in his ministry. So even the phrase that the Free Church was Dick York was heard at board meetings frequently.⁹⁴

York used this loyalty for his own purposes too. It was used too often, for it contributed to the Free Church's downfall. York used it to prevail over people who threatened his church; Nugent, Brown, now Howard. But with loyalty and control intact, the "Free Church" was dead. York realized this at the time. The only remaining issue was whether or not a new vocation for York's salary was to emerge. The summer months in 1972 were spent trying to pull together another staff. York almost succeeded. They held together long enough to convince the Board to vote itself out of existence. Now the Staff was the Board. But without stable funding the chance of survival was problematic. The only money source that was certain was the Jean Weaver grant earmarked for York's

salary. But the final blow came in September, 1972. York found "devocation," a sabbatical to write a book on his experiences in the Free Church. Without money, without York, the staff disbanded.

One project arose independently from the ashes of the Free Church. Utilizing the leftover office machinery and mail lists from Joel Brown's publication efforts a new religious journal was started, Radical Religion.⁹⁵ The journal, now in its fourth year of publishing also inherited the final evolutionary stage of the Free Church, a search for a left church. Radical Religion was established as a forum for religious people active in left oriented politics. York never wrote his book but he did write an article for the first issue of Radical Religion. The article documented the relationship between the collapse of his personal life, the Free Church and the Movement around him. It confirmed Haynes' observations about the underlying issues in the final days.

Dear Friends: What follows is a brief and somewhat personal attempt to send signals, for my benefit as much or more than for yours, from inside this hollow log. Is winter over yet? What does spring look like this year? I have been asked to write about "Spiritual Politics/The Free Church Movement/where did it go?/where is it going?" But if your hibernation has been anything like mine, you will understand why I prefer titles like "I Can't Believe I ate the Whole Thing", or (from a close friend in a loggy hibernaculum nearby) "Out to Lunch: My Life is in the Refrigerator if You're Hungry."

That last summer, which lasted a decade, was a hot one! They didn't tell us it would be like passing through fire (or did they?). The solitude and doubt which invade all of her existence began to be experienced as a depressing reality by many of us who were working in the Movement (secular and religious) in the late 60's. We do not need, except in our ceremonies, to rewrite again the litany of witness: assassinated, murdered, isolated, gassed, shot, imprisoned, maimed, beaten. All of us bear scars, on our bodies or in our souls, of lost vision, dashed

instant-revolution hopes, smashed stardom, soul poverty and powerlessness. It was all hotter and longer and stronger than we thought it would be. Anyway my "out to lunch" sign has been on the door for some time now.

But perhaps the hibernation metaphor was the wrong one, because in the meantime I sure as hell haven't been asleep! In some ways it feels like the fire has just begun, in this winter of our activism. Stripped of the hope to liberate a dying society overnight, naked and powerless, many of us were forced to begin dealing with our own evasions of truth, with our unliberated selves and relationships and sexuality. And once into it, that's not a revolution one sleeps through.⁹⁶

An adequate interpretation of the collapse of the Free Church, however, cannot ultimately or historically fall on the shoulders of Richard York. The forces of destruction were bigger than York, the Free Church and the Movement. The forces of broken hopes, dreams and bodies lay in the material and cultural contradictions of a global system experiencing its own total breakdown. But the forces of renewal and hope were also seen within this breakdown. The lesson to be learned from the history of the Free Church must also be positive. It points beyond the Free Church. It points to a new society, a new politics, a new religion. York concluded his article in Radical Religion on a positive note:

Good news! The media is off our backs. We are at the bottom. America continues to crumble, as the sick festering erupts at Watergate and elsewhere. And we are free to grow and gather strength in the sure hope of a revolution that is real and victorious. But above all we must maintain the essential modesty, humility, of these months. What we are to be developing is not more spiritual politics, but rather political spirituality, and there is no room in that for media-freakery, grandiose rhetoric, personality cult, undisciplined yipping, nor even for defeat.⁹⁷

Correction: The documents are no longer held at the CRRE Historical Archives, but as of 1995 are in the Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA

NOTES

NOTE: All sources listed as "CRRE Historical Archives" indicate the location of the Berkeley Free Church's historical records and the personal files of Richard York. CRRE is the Community for Religious Research and Education, Berkeley, California.

¹"Proposal for the Reorganization of the Berkeley Free Church, May 1971," CRRE Historical Archives.

²"Evaluation and Proposal for the South Campus Ministry, Inc., July 1972," CRRE Historical Archives, p. 6.

³Richard Boylan, interview, San Raphael, California, 18 November 1975.

⁴"Proposal for Reorganization."

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹CRRE Historical Archives.

¹⁰"Free Church Collective Handbook, January 1970," CRRE Historical Archives, p. 2.

¹¹"One of the Proposed Covenants for Free Church," 1971, CRRE Historical Archives.

¹²Ibid.

¹³"Minutes, 1971 Annual Meeting of the Membership of the South Campus Ministry Inc., (Berkeley Free Church) June 23, 1971," CRRE Historical Archives.

¹⁴Boylan, interview.

¹⁵"Manifesto of the Berkeley Switchboard Collective August, 1971," CRRE Historical Archives.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷ Jim Baumohl and Henry Miller, "Memo to Community Affairs Committee Members, Regarding Preliminary Results of A Survey of South Campus Street People," Berkeley, California, 12 September 1973. CRRE Archives. And Jim Baumohl, "Berkeley's South Campus, A Brief Overview and Analysis," (San Francisco, California: Golden Gate Chapter of National Association of Social Workers, 22 April 1972).

¹⁸ Baumohl and Miller, "Memo," p. 2. Roberta Jacobson, David Howard and Peter Haynes, "Project Report: Street People, Who Are You?" February 1972, CRRE Archives, p. 2.

¹⁹ Baumohl and Miller, "Memo," p. 3.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 2.

²³ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁴ Jacobson, Howard and Haynes, "Who Are You?" p. 4.

²⁵ "By-Laws of the South Campus Ministry Inc.," 23 June 1971. CRRE Archives, p. 2.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ "Quarterly Report January - September 1970," CRRE Historical Archives.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Carl Kakasuleff to Members of the Board of the Free Church, September 1971, CRRE Historical Archives.

³⁰ Phyllis Smith, interview, Berkeley, California, 13 May 1976.

³¹ Robert March, interview, Berkeley, California, 13 November 1975.

³² Ester Davis, interview, Berkeley, California, 6 November 1975.

³³ Isabel Weisman, interview, Berkeley, California, 6 November 1975.

³⁴ "Free Church Board Meeting August 3, 1971," CRRE Historical Archives.

³⁵ "Proposal for the Reconstitution of the Administrative Assistant Position, August 1971," CRRE Historical Archives.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Jim and Lynne Soderberg, tape recorded responses to written questions, Duluth, Minnesota, June 1976.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Richard York, "Blays After Blay Island," Search for the Sacred: The New Spiritual Quest, edited by Myron Bloy, Jr. (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 81.

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43 Soderberg, taped response.

44 "A Month's Letter from Berkeley: Free Church and Switchboard," October 1967, CRRE Historical Archives.

45 Soderberg, taped response.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Richard York, "Blay Island," 14 September 1971, CRRE Historical Archives.

54 "The Annual Report, August 1971," CRRE Historical Archives.

55 York, "Blay Island," pp. 87-88.

56 Richard York, "Blay Island," 1971, CRRE Historical Archives.

57 York, "Blay Island," p. 87.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Richard York, "Blay Island," California, 8 December 1971.

61 Ibid.

62. Peter Haynes, interview, Berkeley, California, 28 October 1975.
63. The hearing Haynes referred to actually took place in 1970.
64. Haynes, interview.
65. Raymond Jennings, "Four pages of article," Berkeley Daily Gazette, 1 - 4, November 1971.
66. Soderberg, taped response.
67. "Memo to Board of Trustees from the Staff Collective Regarding Resident Theologian Job and Pressed Publications, March 6, 1972," CRRE Historical Archives.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Haynes, interview.
70. York, interview, December 1974.
71. "Memo to Board from the Staff Collective."
72. Richard York, interview, Berkeley, California, 22 April 1974.
73. Richard York, "I Have a Problem with Litany," 1972, CRRE Historical Archives.
74. David Howard to Board of Trustees, 26 March 1972. CRRE Historical Archives.
75. "Proposal for the Abolition of the South Campus Ministry Inc. or Berkeley Free Church, to be based on Reality." March 1972, CRRE Historical Archives.
76. Berkeley Barb, 31 March 1972, p. 4.
77. David Howard to Editor of Berkeley Barb, 4 April 1972. CRRE Historical Archives.
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79. *Ibid.*
80. Lester Kirsolving, "For a Moment on Free Church," San Francisco Examiner, 4 April 1972.
81. "Not With Us, They're Not," Berkeley Barb, 7 - 14, April 1972.
82. *Ibid.*

⁸³Richard York to Department of Law and Urban Ministries, Diocese of California, April 1972, CRRE Historical Archives.

⁸⁴"Proposal for Reorganization," p. 4.

⁸⁵"You are the Rising Bread, A Manual for Doing the Work of the Church in America," June 1970, CRRE Historical Archives, p. 4.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁷"Proposal for Reorganization," p. 3.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹York, "Block Island," p. 90.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Haynes, interview.

⁹²York, interview, December 1975.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Radical Religion, P.O. Box 9163, Berkeley, California 94709.

⁹⁶Richard L. York, "I Can't Believe I Ate the Whole Thing, Some Reflections on the Times and Spiritual Politics," Radical Religion, 11.1. (Winter 1973), p. 23.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 25.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

I. Issues, Concerns and Questions

The Free Church ceased to exist in 1972; both its success and failures contributed to its disruption. The road on which the Free Church traveled from religion to nonreligion and from religious action to anti-religious political action was often well paved and engineered through the healthy countrysides. But the road was also one way, largely unmarked, filled with blind alleys, detours, one directional traffic circles and always under construction with a shortage of building materials. Once on the road there was no turning back, even when it detoured through blighted cities or collided with mountains.

The general questions that need to be addressed more systematically in this concluding chapter are: Why did the Free Church end up on this one way road? And why did this road spell an end to its attempt to build an alternative religious organization? In more specific terms, we have to address the question of why the Free Church too often in its history of alternative road building looked more like the super highways of the established society. These were super highways that demolished the countryside or displaced people for "progress" and "efficiency" in a machine society more oriented to techniques than to human values. The Free Church began as a protest against the established churches which had failed to meet the demands of the Christian faith by uncritically traveling the super highways, setting up churches along the roadside suburban exits.

The Free Church reasoned that the established churches, by their actions, had forfeited the independence of their transcendent message and had become little more than comfort stations on the super highways that transported people from decaying cities to false middle class success. The established churches had actually lost or been emptied of their religious dimension. This indictment, for different reasons, got turned back onto the Free Church at the end of its one way road. The Free Church ended up forfeiting its independent and critical religious dimension, not on the super highways (though they were often confused by super highway detours along the way), but along the alternative road of the oppositional youth culture of the sixties and early seventies.

The factors contributing to the Free Church's final form as little more than a political cult are the same factors that contributed to its failure as a viable alternative and helped produce its dissolution. The factors behind the Free Church's shift from religion to nonreligion are numerous and will be identified and treated below. However, the two factors already alluded to are especially crucial and should be highlighted. First, the extent to which the Free Church actually became an alternative to the established churches was prejudiced by the Free Church's inability to be sufficiently independent of the established churches. Second, the extent to which the religious agenda of the Free Church remained intact was prejudiced by the Free Church's role in the alternative road building project of the oppositional youth culture. The oppositional youth culture's road likewise was often not sufficiently independent of the established culture's nor the bearer of an integrated vision. The early sixties vision which integrated culture and politics eroded along the new road into the future. By 1972, the cultural radicals abandoned the road

building cadres to escape to the countryside or a "new religious consciousness." The Free Church gave up on its religious agenda for the sake of the alternative road, which in 1972 was being built by a hardened new left separated from its early cultural co-work crews.

The systematic understanding of the alternative-establishment orientation and the religious-political emphasis variables in the evolution of the Free Church from 1967 to 1972 allows us to penetrate more deeply the question of why the Free Church ceased to exist. Was the Free Church too uncritical of the oppositional youth culture to gain a sufficient perspective to allow its religious identity to stay intact? Was the Free Church's alliance with, and financial dependence on, church bureaucrats too compromising to gain a religious identity that could have been strong enough to hold its own in its identification with the oppositional youth culture? Our attempt to answer these specific questions must be built on a careful understanding of the evolution of the Free Church as it tried to come to grips with its self-understanding as an alternative religious organization. In this process it developed various organization and vocational models to deal with an evolving self-conception in the ever changing environment of the sixties' youth culture. How well it articulated the right models and had the resources to materialize them were consequential to the nature of its alternative-establishment and religious-political variables.

II. Competing Models in the Evolution of the Free Church

Regardless of the six organizational and vocational models I will identify below, there were two fundamental conceptions of the Free

Church's ministry that determined which model would gain ascendancy at at any given point in the Free Church's history. The Free Church was often either a reconciliation social service agency ministry or an advocacy alternative church ministry-----sometimes a mixture of the two. And even when it was an advocacy alternative church, developing at least four types of this self conception, the reconciliation social service agency conception played a role in determining which of the four variations of church was ascendent. The power behind the service ministry was a result of two crucial facts. First, the origin and notoriety (fostered by the press) of the Free Church as the South Campus Community Ministry (SCCM), a service ministry to the hippies, was always crucial to its identity. Second, the social service ministry was always present because most of the funding from local merchants, churches and denominational agencies was precisely to continue this work. Money was more easily justified to do "service work." Regardless of how the Free Church integrated this service work into its varying notions of being an alternative or experimental church, the service component, rooted in its origin and notoriety and reinforced by its funding, always remained.

However, in spite of the influence of its social service conception (or maybe because of it, with its financial base) the Free Church's self conception evolved more in the direction of being an alternative church, or at least a church with the agenda of helping to renew the established churches. Over the course of the Free Church's five year history there were at least six different models that expressed an organizational and vocational definition of the Free Church (see Diagram 5 on page 350). These six models can be seen in relationship to the two general variables discussed above. These were the same variables which provided the basis in Chapter VI for distinguishing the four currents in the Free Church at

Diagram 5

COMPETING MODELS
IN THE FREE CHURCH
1967-1972

ESTABLISHMENT
LEGITIMACY

ALTERNATIVE
LEGITIMACY

FREE CHURCH
[RADICAL CHURCH
MOVEMENT (RCM)]

	[1]	Vanguard to RCM [2]	Vanguard Within [3]	[c]	[e]
RELIGIOUS (Cultural) INTEGRITY INTACT	[2] New Religious Consciousness Back to the Country [Counter Culture]	[1] Left Church [York]	Confessing Church [Brown] Liberated Church [York]	Alternative Experimental Church [Morely] [Rautio]	Mission Church [Buteyn] [Myers]
	[6] Cults [4]	Radical-Underground [5]	[6]	[d]	[f]
RELIGIOUS (Cultural) DIMENSION FUSED OR DENIED [not intended]	[6] Socialism Marxist-leninism [New Left]	God= San Quentin Church [York] Community Control of Free Church [Howard]	Reconciliation Service Ministry [Buteyn-SCCM] Free Church Board-Boylan	Issue Oriented Community Organizing [Todd] [Grace]	Special Ministry Urban Dept [Turpin] [Gallagher] [Corse]

ESTABLISHED CHURCH

OPPOSITIONAL YOUTH CULTURE

its dissolution (see Diagram 4 on page 331). The two variables, alternative-establishment orientation and religious-political emphasis, are refined in Diagram 5 to provide a more precise way of accounting for most of the factors contributing to the Free Church's self conception over its five year history. Moreover, this refinement gives us a more graphic picture of the dependency dynamic, "wanting it both ways" that so often characterized the Free Church in the midst of its location between the oppositional youth culture and the established church.

In the "Competing Models Diagram" (#5) I have refined the religious-political emphasis variable to be "religious integrity intact -- religious dimension fused or denied." Along the other axis the alternative-establishment variables have been changed to indicate from which side of their environment they sought their "legitimacy." The diagram also indicates, by dotted lines, the extremes of the environments between which the Free Church was located, liberal church forces or the radical wing of the oppositional youth culture. The various self conceptions of these two extremes, which were influential on the Free Church at their respective sides of the diagram are also indicated. The implications of this location of the Free Church will be analyzed below in more detail. However, it is important here to get a better grasp of the various Free Church models, to better understand what they meant for the evolution of the Free Church.

The six models, relative to their proximity to either the established churches or the oppositional youth culture (besides the two structural axes of religious integrity and legitimacy) emphasized differing contents in regards to: 1) the nature of the critique of church and society, 2) the nature of the vision or consciousness of the alternative, 3) the appropriate strategy to go beyond the critique and realize

the vision and 4) the nature of the opposition within and outside the particular model stressed. These four content variables will be treated in detail below. It is important to mention them here in order to stress that the four models convey specific content, not just a structural relationship to the two axes. The content aspect of the six models also points up the fact that, internal to each of the models (except [1] and [6]), there were differing and competing conceptions based on content and not the structural features of the two axes. Therefore, for example, in model [2], "vanguard to the radical church movement," the Free Church manifested two different variations of this model: one more representative of John Fairman Brown's "confessing church" and the other more representative of Richard York's "liberated church."

I will be constantly referring to these six models and their variations in the analysis below, therefore, a full explanation of each here is not necessary. However, a more simplified listing, to reinforce the variations and some explanation of the exceptions, is needed here. As mentioned, model [1], the "left church" and model [6], the "reconciliation service ministry" do not have variations within them. The service ministry does, however, have two representatives of this model: Donald Buteyn, SCCM's founder, and the Free Church Board in general at certain points in the history of the organization. The left church, model [1], because it was largely a construction in the mind of York and never a reality, is indicated as a non variant model. One final exception is important to note at this point. The reconciliation service model is situated structurally as a model with its "religious dimension fused or denied." This is not totally true, for Buteyn was very aware of his religious motivations for beginning the service ministry to the hippies.

However, because the religious dimension was covert or not intended as a principle ingredient, it seems appropriate that [6], as represented by Buteyn, be situated at the bottom of the vertical axis. The six models and their variations, which have their "religious integrity intact" in their conception of "political spirituality," are:

<u>Models:</u>	<u>Variations:</u>	<u>Representatives:</u>
[1] Left Church	none	York (1971-72)
[2] Vanguard to the Radical Church Movement	Confessing Church Liberated Church	Brown (1970-72) York (1969)
[3] Vanguard within the established churches	Renewal church "Cutting Edge of Christianity"	Brown (1968 & 70) York (1970-71)

The models, variations, and representatives that often "denied or fused" the religious dimension or identity with the various political or secular movements and became "spiritual politics" or just politics were:

<u>Models:</u>	<u>Variations:</u>	<u>Representatives:</u>
[4] Cults	"God is San Quentin" "Community Control of Free Church"	York (1972)
[5] Radical or Underground Churches	"Peace and Freedom (incognito) Church" Submarine Church	Brown (1967-69) Nugent (1968-70)
[6] Reconciliation Service Ministries		Buteyn (1967-69) Free Church Board (67-72)

These various models and their variations emerged at different times for different reasons throughout the five year history of the Free Church. Sometimes they existed side by side in creative conflict, sometimes only one or two of them existed, or at other times almost all six were in tension, vying for ascendancy. Most often, however, there were one or two of the models which gained major acceptance for an extended period

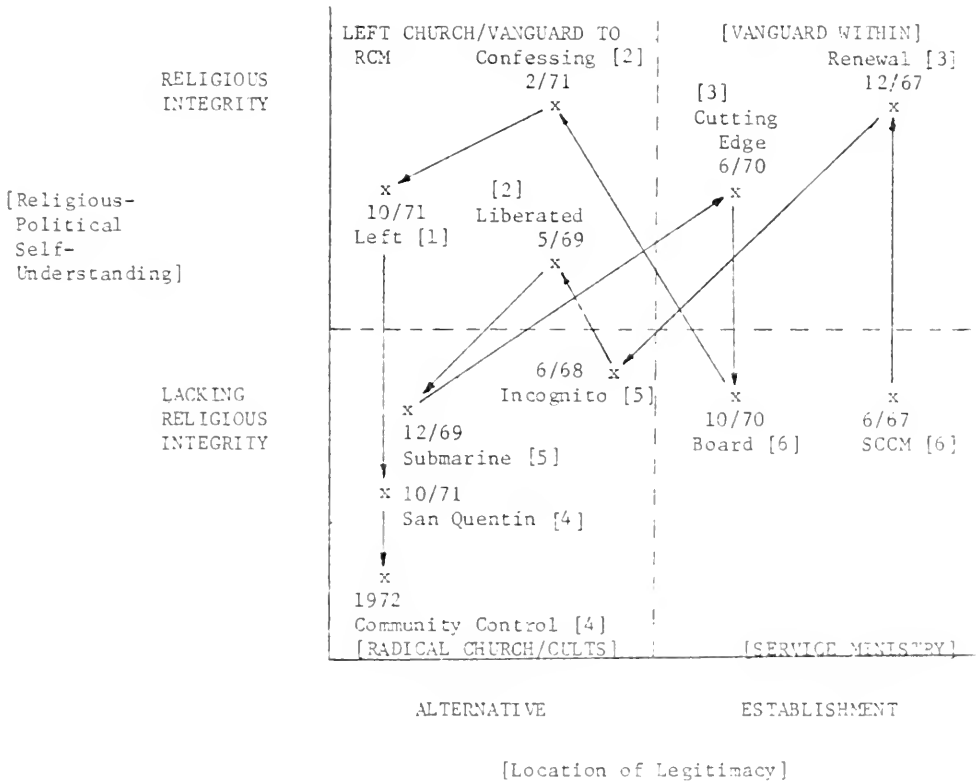
period of time. But there always existed a minor set of models, as an undercurrent which eventually emerged in the next stage as the major models. In the treatment below, these various major and minor themes will be discussed in detail. However, to give an overview of the evolution of the Free Church, relative to these models, another diagram is useful, with a brief explanation (see Diagram 6 on page 355).

This evolutionary overview is helpful to give a clearer picture of the seemingly abrupt reversal of the Free Church in 1970 from its attempt to move in the direction of an alternative church with less dependence on the established churches. As documented in the previous descriptive chapters, the Free Church took on organizational characteristics and thought patterns that were carryovers from its early emergence as a hierarchical service agency. The "Evolution of Ascendent Models" Diagram (#6) traces the sequence of the changes from one ascendent model to another over the history of the Free Church. Again, the two general variables from Diagram 5, religious integrity and location of legitimacy, provide the axes for the diagram.

The diagram is self explanatory in indicating the uneven development of the Free Church. The one way road from religious social activism to a nonreligious political cult was indeed marked by some detours, but once back on the alternative road it only went one way. With the competing models clear in mind we can deepen our analysis to seek the reasons for the nature of the one way road and the Free Church's seemingly inconsistent travel habits.

Diagram 6

EVOLUTION OF ASCENDENT
MODELS IN THE FREE CHURCH
1967-1972



III. Causal Factors,
Models and Outcome

The one way road to success or oblivion was not perceived as such when the youth culture builders began. But once on the road, the experience was either more rewarding or more satisfying than established society. Also the super highways of established society were always accessible; they could get off the project anytime. Some did; some only partially; many did not. Why was this so? And why did so many builders remain on the alternative road project, even to the point of personal destruction? The answers to these questions lie in the origin and evolution of alternative projects such as the Free Church, and their perception of their choices between a death culture and at least one possible way out.

At its origin the oppositional youth culture was built on very fragile foundations. These were foundations that were "made by history" and not by the youths' own choosing. In late industrial society, for better or worse, "youth" became a distinct social category and stage of life.¹ This was a prolonged period of time for "gaining identity" for adulthood. But it was also a vantage point from which to judge adult society and assess the world. Educational institutions, the wealth of society and a particular vanguard of privileged youth fostered the possibility for a critical assessment of the adult world.² In a simplified and condensed form, this assessment of the adult world turned out to be an indictment of it, a protest against it. But what did this new indictment mean for their own adulthood? In the very early days of youth protest, in the late fifties and the early sixties, this indictment took the form of an "intellectual" critique. A strategy of "psychological disaffiliation"³ or a psychic refusal of the adult world was developed. This was a strategy that sought to carve out

jobs in the real world that would provide individual psychic space from the indicted society. The model of the bohemian "hipster" was seen as applicable to whatever profession they might choose---usually these were located in universities.⁴ This strategy proved untenable. The psychic space strategy was not possible in the established culture. The universities were not as humane as the intellectually oriented vanguard of youth had imagined. The first stage of disillusionment set in, intellectual critique moved to direct action for new alternatives.

Direct action was easy to come by. There were enough evils in society to protest and confirm their intellectual critique of modern society: civil rights, the bomb, death penalty, free speech. But alternatives were more difficult to locate. In an adult world void of social protest, following the crushing defeat of and disillusionment over the socialist alternative by the cold war, youth had few guidelines. In this environment the youth chose everything "new." It was not socialism or liberal democracy, it was a "new politics," in between the cold war debates. They were going to develop their own, or "roll their own" alternatives by direct action in civil rights, university reform, etc. "Participatory democracy" was in many ways a "utopian leap in the dark,"⁵ a move to experimentation, continual disillusionment and greater radicalization. Even at this early stage of the youth culture, the road was being built narrow with little room for turning around, unless you got off. And there were still many possibilities for getting off. Youth, in a classic phrase of the sixties, "kept their options open." The established society was still relatively kind to its youth in the early sixties; it didn't send them off to war, yet. The promise of Kennedy's "New Frontier" was still there; and the Great Society was just around the corner. But these false liberal

hopes only fueled more disillusionment, resistance, radicalization and eventually, by 1968, wholesale delegitimization of American institutions, and not just by the youth but by the American people at large.

It was this constant interaction with the realities of modern society that produced an oppositional youth culture more radical and determined to continue building the alternative road at all costs. The exits to the super highways were still there but their attractiveness was lessening. The road was even more a matter of "life against death," in the new radical environment of the late sixties. However, with such fragile foundations and few guidelines for tenable and healthy alternatives, the oppositional youth culture, at times, became its own worst enemy. Experimentation was often reduced to whatever "felt good." The immediate gratification of the experimentation often overtook the long term end of a better world. The "sweeping desublimation"⁶ that was arrogantly attacked in "mass culture's" "boob tubes" and irrational consumption, found its way into the oppositional youth culture. Certain orientations to drugs, excessive life styles and "getting your kicks" in demonstrations proved that repressive desublimation or excessive release were not the monopoly of established culture. A new form of "wanting it both ways" of the early hipster's psychological disaffiliation seemed to be present in a youth culture that criticized the excesses of established society but failed to face up to its own excesses. The super highways were often mistaken for the "new" road, even by the most dedicated cadres on the road building crews. Dominant culture was sufficiently strong to often coopt or "buy off" the new alternative forces once they retreated or went to excess. Established society also had other resources to deal with those who remained dedicated to the new road. Beyond cooptation by repressive desubli-

mation, good old fashioned repression, subversion and overt force were employed during Kent State, Peoples Park and against the Black Panthers to name a few instances.

Whether or not the alternative experiments were defeated, coopted or died due to their own fragile foundations and mistakes is difficult to sort out.

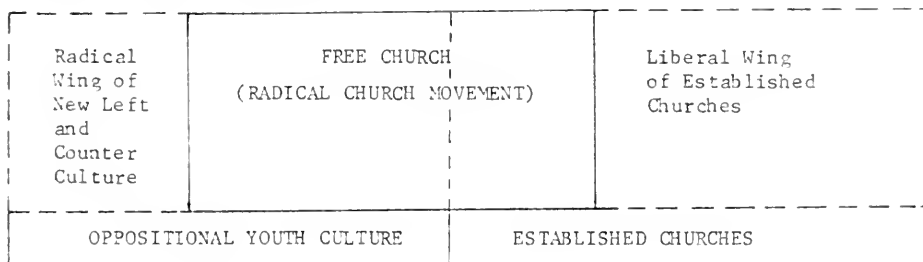
The dissolution of the oppositional youth culture was caused, no doubt, by a mixture of all these factors. It does seem certain that regardless of occasional side trips on the super highways, the youth culture did maintain steady work in the new road which did challenge established society and did warrant large forces of repression to be mobilized against it. At times these forces of death were assisted by the youth culture itself. When they were not, the need for overt repression did arise and was employed.

The Berkeley Free Church, in its own way, is a confirmation of the above scenario of youth protest, radicalization, challenge, defeat, excess and breakdown. Even when the Free Church detoured to the super highways in its reversal in 1970-71 (and at other times), the repressive forces within the established churches were sufficient to put the Free Church back on its one way road to building an alternative or die trying. It died trying, but the fight was important, even in its excess and false solutions.

It is important to trace the above scenario within the Free Church to understand its particular role in the sixties' alternative road building project. The location of the Free Church between, and coincidental with, the oppositional youth culture and the established churches determined the particular content that went into the various models adhered to in its

evolution. The Free Church's critique of society and church, its alternative consciousness and its strategy over against a growing opposition were determined by its interaction with the oppositional youth culture and established society--the latter being particularly mediated through the established churches.

Diagram 5 illustrates this situatedness of the Free Church, which also coincided with the larger radical church movement. In simplified form the location can be diagrammed:



The Free Church overlapped much of the oppositional youth culture and some of the established church with its various models. This interaction provided the basis for the Free Church's self-understanding. A radical church organization allying itself with these two forces often produced creativity. But this relationship also produced a neurosis that was to characterize other radical religious experiments in the sixties. Little comparative data is available; however, one study on the University Christian Movement (UCM) assessed the relationship this way:

The University Christian Movement has been described as the bastard child of the established church and the new left. As such it suffered from a serious Oedipal conflict, hating its father, the established church, and desirous of sleeping with its mother, the new left. The conflict made the child rather neurotic. He never really got himself together to decide what to do with himself, floundered around for a few years, and finally committed suicide.⁷ [Italics mine]

The Free Church, perhaps, went farther; it killed its father, the established church, to save its ongoing affair with its mother, the oppositional youth culture. Why did this happen? In its struggle to produce models that would either bring the established churches back to "real Christianity" or to develop a new alternative experiment of Christianity, the Free Church lost its religion. In its struggle, for what Marcuse calls the "medium for the LOGOS," where "the not yet" can interact with "the that which is,"⁸ the Free Church ended up with only a new "that which is," void of the expectation and transcendence of "the not yet." We have to look more closely at the content of the six models in their interaction with the oppositional youth culture and the established church to get a better idea of why this happened to the Free Church.

Renewal and Reconciliation Service Models

The Free Church emerged late in the history of the oppositional youth culture. However, its participants had, by 1967, passed through the early touchstones of psychological disaffiliation and the growing disillusionment of the early sixties. The renewal [3] and reconciliation service [6] models were the foundations upon which the Free Church was built in 1967 and most of 1968. There was much orientation to the established churches, despite the Free Church's critique of their practice. The religious integrity of the organization was largely maintained with a definite religious touch to all its activities, from the unintended "hippie church" consequence of its service ministry to its reconciling role in the French solidarity strikes in 1968. But there was a minor theme within this foundation period that emphasized either a liberated church model [2] or an "incognito" church model [5].

The liberated church model had a conscious religious self understanding that saw its base within (but not of) the oppositional youth culture, and distinct from the established church. The incognito church model, however, was ambivalent as to whether the Free Church was to be a separate church or whether the Free Church just needed to be active with the Spirit in the peace and freedom movements.

The interaction of these four models and their particular locations in either the established church or the oppositional youth culture determined the Free Church's self understanding and strategy for 1967 and 1968.

The Free Church was beginning to understand that the evils of society, or the Occupied Territory, as they called it, were not reformable. The new situation demanded a new commitment and involvement. The war in Viet Nam was escalating and young people were being drafted for an immoral war. A radical Jesus who made choices had to be the foundation for a new strategy of commitment in this situation. Where was the leadership for the involvement that was needed? In 1967 and 1968, the Free Church forged an alliance with sympathetic liberal clergy and church bureaucrats to develop a strategy of nonviolence, but standing clearly on the side of, if not yet part of, the oppositional youth forces. In reaction to this strategy and its deepening advocacy of the alternatives of the youth culture, the Free Church met the enemy in the form of police clubs and reactionary local congregations. What began as an "out on the brink" experience for York in seminary continued for the Free Church as its strategy of reconciliation proved untenable.

But what alternatives were they to rely on, when faced with their growing disillusionment with an established church that fired its radical professors or refused to side with the forces of justice? The Free Church simultaneously deepened its commitment to the radical Jesus and the peace

and freedom movements. The vagueness of the former and the beginning excesses and fragility of the latter worked together to undermine the integrity of the Free Church's religious agenda and led the Free Church to be too "desirous" of the new culture and politics. Also being unwilling to totally give up its financial base in the established churches, the Free Church began violating its own principles and sense of a correct alternative strategy. The ends of a new vision of the Liberated Zone did not justify, and were not furthered by, the means of taking money from a bankrupt church. However, in 1967 and 1968 the establishment churches had bureaucrats willing to play the same game which led to a reinforcing of new models within the Free Church. Diagram 5, on the established church side, indicates the models on which church bureaucrats such as Anthony Morely, Richard Rautio and William Grace, who were still very active in the churches, operated. They were literally trying to have the churches fund their own renewal. But they relied on an alliance with the oppositional youth culture for this task, not the rank and file of church laity, or even pastors (for they had given up on them).

Liberated and Radical-Submarine Church Models

The ascendancy of the liberated [2] and radical [5] church models in 1969, the real creative center of the Free Church as a developing alternative, was a mixed blessing. The sub plots of competing models and variations within models were uncontrollable, and proved to undermine the emerging alternative liberated church.

However, the liberated church and the two radical church versions in model [5] did express a deepening analysis and critique of the evils of modern society. The causes of oppression in American society were not due to generational conflict according to York, the main exponent of the liberated church. The causes were the "war, the draft, racism,

police exploitation, injustice and corruption in high offices, exploitation and manipulation of personal freedom."⁹ Fighting these evils in direct action in 1968 and more so in 1969 with Peoples Park, the Free Church analysis and critique now had to be specific. But this analysis was still a far cry from the systemic analysis necessary to understand that the "causes" York catalogued were still symptoms.

The emerging conflict over models in 1969, with the eventual ousting of Nugent and the return to a more renewal [3] and reconciliation [6] model late in 1970, in spite of the deepening analysis, brings us into touch with some crucial factors dictating the development of the Free Church. What was at stake in 1969 in the Free Church was also at stake in the oppositional youth culture in general and the new left in particular. The stake was an attempt to come to grips with competing alternatives, not just youth vs. establishment or new left vs. the enemy, but which youth and which enemy. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the University Christian Movement (UCM) were having organizational debates over what were the deeper causes, what was a real "non liberal" alternative vision and strategy. Within the oppositional culture, an internal debate between the counter culture and new left surfaced, between cultural radicals and "politicos." The Women's Movement also began to add its voice to these internal debates in 1969. The question for the Free Church in this context of debate was: was it a religious organization or was it a "Movement" organization with little need for a religious identity, if the Spirit really was in the peace and freedom movements? Unfortunately, the early notion of the incognito church was too ambiguous on this point, and actually helped to foster a fused mentality lacking in religious integrity. Therefore, over identification with the secular alternatives resulted. But even though the incognito

church had an element of a healthy strategy, that is, becoming a real alternative, this element was glorified by the Submarine Church variation in the context of debates and a growing revolutionary consciousness in the youth culture. For example, was the Free Church to be an organic organization that went to the people to be part of them for their/our own liberation, or was it to be an organization that would bring from the outside the vision and strategy to the people? Within SDS, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) was accused of being too Leninist in its notion of a revolution "from the outside." SDS's Radical Youth Movement wing wanted to have an organic people's revolution. UCM, in 1969, decided that if it was to be revolutionary, it would have to disband as a religious organization and join the struggle. ("The struggle" often just meaning SDS to UCM). It was within the context of these debates that the Free Church also tried to decide which alternative method and consciousness it would choose. It chose to be more self consciously the church by eliminating Nugent from the organization. However, in order to do this, the power and influences of its established church models had to be mobilized. The consequence of maintaining a religious integrity was a temporary forfeit of its growing alternative legitimacy. Therefore, a reversal to its renewal [3] model, with the attempt to use and hold onto its funding for its own survival, was the result. But at the same time, the Free Church worked at trying to gain alternative legitimacy in its reversal period, by playing up its relationship to the Black Panther Party (BPP) and its past role in the People's Park struggle. Thus the Free Church fell into the false dichotomy between revolutionary vanguards (for the BPP in 1969-70 represented itself as a "from the outside" revolutionary force) and revolutionary alternatives springing up organically from within the "people's struggles."

As in the past, and as a portent for the future, the Free Church could not have it both ways. Its analysis or radical Jesus consciousness and the vague vision of a Liberated Zone were not sufficient to develop a strategy that would avoid, on the one hand, a reversal to the womb of bureaucratic church funding or, on the other hand, a splintering into two organizations with Nugent's ousting. As much as Nugent represented a position which had given up its independent religious perspective, the new religious perspective of the Free Church was hardly one that could be called an alternative to the established churches. The Free Church was prejudiced by its relationship to bureaucratic liberals who also wanted it both ways, "having the Church fund its own revolution." If the Submarine Church was too uncritical of the oppositional youth culture and put its faith in secular movements for a new society, the return to the renewal model was too uncritical of its own duplicity. The Free Church spoke about being an alternative but it acted more like a hierarchical establishment service organization.

The enemy within was not sufficiently recognized in this era of the Free Church. Therefore, as much as the repressive climate of the period helped to defeat and subvert the creative center of the Free Church's alternative, its own fragility and return to a false financial security allowed the Free Church to be coopted or bought off, for it failed to be a real alternative.

Renewal-Reconciliation Service Models vs. Cult Models
and The Hope of a Left Church

As soon as the reversal to the renewal church [3] and reconciliation service [6] models became ascendent, with the financial base again

secure for the moment, the postponed agenda of 1969 and 1970 re-emerged. What was to be the nature of the alternative? This agenda was still going strong in the oppositional youth culture, with internal splintering and new forces beginning to dominate. Within the new left the alternative had to be anti-capitalist or some form of socialism---Marxist, Maoist, etc. Within the counter culture, back to the land or new religious consciousness forces emerged---the latter even spawning religious fervor within Christianity as great as those of the Free Church's social activism origins, the Jesus movement. The situation was polarized in the oppositional youth culture. The Women's movement, now much stronger, helped provide fuel (though it was necessary) for the polarization by attacking the male-oriented new left and in turn being attacked for "cultural politics." The situation was likewise polarized in the established churches. The old alliances forged with liberal bureaucrats were breaking down due to pressure from both sides of the Free Church's identity. The backlash in the churches ousted many of the bureaucrats who were sympathetic to the Free Church. The new left---the mother of whom the Free Church, like UCM, became more desirous --- separated from the counter culture and became more explicitly anti-religious, not just anti-church.

A viable alternative church in this context would demand a miracle. It was not forthcoming. At moments there were new rays of hope, but there were too many competing models with too few resources to gather the rays of hope into one spotlight bright enough to light the way. The result was a competition that emerged, covering the whole spectrum of the six models and most of their variations. The polarization of the renewal-reconciliatic service wing and the growing cult orientations by York and David Howard did not leave open the option to be any kind of a church. Brown was developing a self-conscious confessing church [2] as was York with a left church [1], but

neither could be legitimated by the new polarized situation of church reaction or new left anti-religion. The Free Church did end up in its mother's, the new left's, bed in 1972, and promptly committed suicide.

The Free Church's analysis of the causes of modern society's evils deepened with that of the new left. The causes were not the war, or police exploitation, etc., but one grand cause: advanced capitalism. What kind of religious alternative should be built on this analysis? Unfortunately, as in the past, this position did not represent a real analysis. The focus on capitalism as the evil force was, more often than not, just an indictment (though significant), with little understanding of how capitalism actually worked to create all the evil symptoms that were attributed to it. This indictment did have a potential for a deeper critique but it too quickly degenerated into arrogance in the polarized setting. It was an arrogance that insisted that either you were against capitalism or you were for capitalism, "either part of the solution or part of the problem." The "cause" superseded "truth" or deeper understandings, you were for the cause or against it. The debates of 1969-70 may have been misplaced but at least they were debates. In 1972 it was more a matter of with which labels you identified yourself. Brown's label in 1972 was a confessing church [2]. This label did not fit the anti-religious environment of the new left, nor did Brown's "liberal" politics fit the revolutionary labels. Brown had to go.

It was difficult to develop strategies based on an analysis that was often little more than an indictment. Again, as the oppositional youth culture had done in the past, this indictment did expose and challenge the established society. It was a more serious indictment than previous ones, even if it was undeveloped, often misused, and degenerated into arrogance and excess.

The potential for further development was there, as was the potential for better alliances, if the indictment of capitalism had become a full analysis. It did not in 1972.

Therefore, in the context of this constant partiality of the oppositional youth culture's alternative road, the established society countered with a repressive force that was tolerated by the majority of the American people because of the alternative movement's own arrogance and excess. The Free Church met the same forces when its funding was denied without much of a struggle by previous allies. The Free Church was no better than Lester Kinsolving's establishment-oriented arrogance in its final hour. The enemy was surely within as the Free Church once again tried to develop an alternative church but not at the expense of its financial survival.

The one way road from religious social action to non religious political cultism was partly paved with an "asphalt church" that failed to maintain its independent religious consciousness at the expense of either its radical legitimacy or establishment funding. It could not have it both ways; it was suicide. But what was its alternative? Death without a struggle?

In summary, can we give a conclusive answer to the following question. Why did the Free Church fail to develop an alternative church? Why did the Free Church fail to maintain its religious identity and cease to exist? The above analysis helps us to see two basic factors at work. First, the Free Church was too allied and dependent on the established churches, over against which it was trying to create an alternative. Therefore, it was prone to mirror the very relationship of the established churches to established society in its own relationship to the oppositional youth culture, that is, the forfeiting of a religious content. Second, the Free Church was too allied

with and dependent on the oppositional youth culture for the content of its alternative church form, which in and of itself was too often hostile to religious concerns. This combination of a fragile foundation in a bankrupt religious context and a fragile foundation in a political environment hostile to religion was too overwhelming to the Free Church for it to maintain its religious integrity. It was unfortunate, for the Free Church's religious identity could have been the very source of its ability to remain viable and contribute to the alternative road building project. And, likewise, the alternative road building project was marked by too many similar dynamics. The new politics of the new left grew up in a bankrupt political environment. An independent political perspective of participatory democracy got lost as it tried to forge an alternative that in the end became too reliant on models not adequate to maintain its original vision.

This conclusion, however, still begs a number of questions. What produced this situation where alternatives actually turned back on themselves? What were the outside forces that contributed to these shattered attempts at alternatives? If we say that the Free Church mirrored the established churches fusion of religion and politics, and looked much like them in the end, why were they not embraced by them as new allies in the religious establishment? Or if we say that the Free Church became a political cult, why did this mean an end to its organizational life? Why could it not continue as a secular organization?

Answers to these questions do partially reside in the above analysis. But in order to go to a deeper level of analysis, we have to be clear why the Free Church's new non-religious ally, the new left, was not accepted by the established churches and in fact was considered a challenge

by them, and not just because they represented "anarchy" or secular groups. The established churches have long supported a type of anarchy by their support of the market mechanism and profit motive in American monopoly capitalism. Also the established churches have always supported certain secular organizations. It should be clear by this point that what was at stake---which is the reason the alternative road builders kept building, even after the supplies ran out---was a choice between two competing world views. The failure of the alternative world view cannot be solely attributed to its own breakdown. It was not allowed to develop. This factor influenced the oppositional youth culture's and Free Church's outcome just as much as their own fragility and partiality.

A deeper analysis would have to come to grips with these dual factors, internal breakdown and external opposition, producing the demise of the Free Church. In my foregoing analysis I have emphasized more of the internal breakdown factors. A more complete analysis would have to penetrate the very nature of the domination of society that turns alternatives back on themselves and often treats them as one more commodity to be packaged and sold for consumption. This society seeks to manage every sphere of life, even the religious, much as it tries to manage the economy. Managed religion was only partially challenged by the Free Church and, in its partiality to it, was marketed as another sensation in the press or displayed as a feather in the cap of the established churches. However, at moments it did at least call managed religion into question. Therefore, there are seeds of a more fruitful future and lessons available within the history and evolution of the Free Church, on which to build a more complete alternative.

IV. Lessons and the Future
Left Church

What can we learn from the history of the Free Church that could help us forge a more viable political spirituality? What are the contours of a left church that would avoid the one way road of the late sixties' and early seventies' alternative religious experiments? More specifically, how can we avoid the inadequacy of a "consciousness revolution" that tries to will the future?¹⁰ And further, how do we avoid a counter culture without an adequate political analysis? Or how do we avoid a new left politics that becomes isolated from its own visionary "ends" and too often emphasizes just "means" or "tactics"? How can we avoid the split and separation that contributed to the downfall of the oppositional youth culture, a split between its "cultural radicals" and its "political radicals"? What is the role of a left church in a new alternative road building project, beyond youth protest? What is the role of a left church in helping to maintain the creative relationship between vision and politics? What would be the ingredients of such a left church, its analysis, vision, strategy and identification of the enemy? Needless to say, complete answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this study of the Free Church. However, it is possible to sketch the broad contours of a left church. The next five pages are written particularly for those who, like the author, share many of the basic assumptions of the sixties radical church movement.

To begin with, a better analysis of the fundamental nature of modern society is needed. The movements of the sixties and seventies have given us large amounts of raw data on which to build this analysis. However, it must be an integrated analysis. That is to say, it must be an analysis that both identifies the source of the evils of modern society and the relationship of alterna-

tive movements to the dynamics that produce those evils. For example, the youth culture was a creature of late capitalism. This fact was little recognized, and when it was, its implications were not pursued. For the agenda of political spirituality, the analysis of the managed accumulation process of late capitalism¹¹ and the analysis of managed religion must be integrated so that their relationship is better understood. Likewise, any alternative to this managed religion must understand its own relationship to managed religion. For example, the radical church movement failed to see itself as a creature of the established church's projects of "managed renewal." Without this clear analysis the break was often not made. Or when it was, it was made in the form of another managed religion only by different forces, or as a "bizarre hippie radical" experiment that could be managed or marketed to the alternative culture. Needless to say, the occasional marketing of the Free Church was a portent of the marketing of the bizarre religions of today.

There must also be a clear sense of the alternative vision, the end to which the alternatives are building. This alternative vision or consciousness must maintain its own integrity. It must be an integrity based on its distinctiveness from managed religion (aided by a better analysis) and from the non religious forces with which it must seek alliances. These alliances with secular forces must be forged with those complementary to the vision and consciousness of the alternative religious forces. However, an alliance does not mean total identification with. The "church" and the "party" must be separate. And where the party or movement is hostile to religion, it must be educated to either realize the importance of the religious dimension or at least respect the religious identity of its allies on the alternative road building project. Out of this alliance, there should emerge a more viable politics and a more viable re-

religious alternative rooted in a historical process and worthy of its vision. What may emerge from this alliance could be a return to the "religious ground bass"¹² of the original American political experiment (our nation's founding) or a new political and religious current with new symbols for a new experiment.

In order for this return to the best of our past or the grasping of a new current for the future to happen, the vision for our politics will have to be rooted in a historical process for change. An alternative process that, while making a "break" from the established death culture, is able to acknowledge the best in it and build upon it---as well as its own past struggles in the sixties. All past human history cannot be invalidated, nor can all the American people. The break must not be an arrogant break. The new consciousness must not neglect, and must try to fulfill the best in the civil religious current of the past. America's past symbolism as a New Jerusalem, though twisted to legitimate establishment arrogance and imperialism, must at least be mined for resources. These will have to be resources that help to avoid a new arrogance about the new experiments or to return to the non arrogant vision embodied in the original intent of the American experiment---prior to and upon its founding. As this new or renewed symbolism emerges, the role of a left church that seeks to contribute to this process must take the form of a separate organization. But it must not be an isolated organization. There is a "church-state separation" in this country. But that separation is not to be a mask for an isolated religion, cultivating its own sphere of influence, often reduced to the back pasture of inaction or anachronisms in modern society.

In order to avoid a new arrogance or self destruction the nature of the enemy must be carefully established. The enemy is not the American people, it is not all those who fail to join the revolutionary cadres.

Discipline and appropriate action in line with a better analysis and a carefully formulated vision is important to build strength, avoid errors and self destruction, but it is no excuse for intimidation or new imperialisms. If someone is not part of the solution today it does not mean that they will not be tomorrow. This openness to people's ability to change is, of course, not intended as a wholesale alibi for the managers and technocrats who reap the benefits and privileges from the mass of the American people and willfully maintain the death forces in modern society. The enemy in these individuals is clear. But just seeing the enemy outside ourselves or within the "system" will not do. We have been part of the death system too long to be able to make a clean break. Self criticism, not self-deprecation or self-hate, is essential to be aware of the enemy that resides within. The left churches' theology should be developed enough to help the alternative road builders improve and maintain the secular insight of self criticism by complementary notions of "guilt," "confession" and "sin." These are not concepts that are "ends" in themselves nor are they concepts that should be used to immobilize people from action or excuse wrongdoing---they are "means," to new life, rebirth and continued struggle.

But as much as the enemy must be challenged from within, the alternative road builders must be strong enough to challenge and withstand enemy attacks from the outside. The oppositional youth culture and the Free Church were not strong enough largely due to their failure to recognize the enemy within. But even with a better cultivation of this insight, helped by a better analysis, by a staunchly adhered-to vision and better alliances, immunization of alternative movements from defeat is not automatic. A nonviolent vision and nonviolent strategy are not complete antidotes to violent counter attacks. However, a nonviolent

struggle, up to the point of violent opposition by subversion or outright slaughter, will help to insure that the side of justice will be clear to those not directly engaged in the conflict. In this polarized situation the left church must take sides, even take up arms, on the side of justice. Also, a nonviolent initial struggle will help to avoid, or at least postpone, destructive counter violence by its efficacious actions. The Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), the symbolic apex of new left suicide, began violently and could not establish its credibility as a harbinger of justice. When counter violence arrived, it was tolerated by the public and the SLA died violently.

Also, the new society will not be ushered in overnight by visionary will power, by political violence, nor even by a properly founded nonviolent-visionary-historically-rooted political process. The "cause" must not replace the "truth" of our analysis (the situation may not be ready), of our nonviolent vision, of our strategy or of our struggle with the powers of the enemy---regardless of the objective need for such an alternative before established society destroys itself and us with it. The truth, if it is the truth, is a self-validating force that will win in spite of time, momentary disruptions or even the one-dimensional society that makes most "alternatives" into commodities for its own managed survival.

An alternative built on the proper foundations of commitment and involvement will win. A left church has an indispensable role in building this alternative to the managed society of late capitalism. But if any portion of this foundation is overly fragile or partial, as it was for the oppositional youth culture and the Free Church, the alternative is destined to self-destruct or to be destroyed. It was a credit to the youth culture and the Free Church that they went as far as they did with so little, providing us with much from which to learn. Therefore, today we are not con-

tinuing the alternative road building project from scratch. Nor do we have to wait until an alternative can be built "whole cloth" (if this were possible). We can recommence the struggle if we have not continued or already started to. The "continuous-critique-in-action"¹³ and the notion of an evolving revolutionary consciousness, begun in the late fifties and early sixties (and no doubt before) is still valid for today---and with a greater prospect of success, if we learn from the past mistakes.

We are not continuing or beginning in the vacuum of the late fifties or early sixties. We are no longer just a youth movement protesting the world created for us---we have helped to shape the present reality and are no longer youth. The left church no longer needs to fall prey to an easy identification or fusion of religion and politics; this mistake of the past is still vivid and painful. Also the alternative projects of today do not need to be shot in the street or beat on the head to realize how sick modern society is, or how delegitimized its institutions are. These are proven facts today. Hopefully the lessons of the sixties and seventies are clear enough in mind for the alternative road building project to have surmounted the mountain it struck head on. And at the top, a new perspective and new wisdom was gained. At least the left church participants (if the others who made it to the top, or those still bent on tunnelling through in the dark, did not hear the message) must come down from the mountain and help engineer a new road into the future. We have nothing to lose but our lack of commitment and involvement.



Correction: The documents are no longer held at the CRRE Historical Archives, but as of 1995 are in the Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley, CA.

NOTES

¹Kenneth Keniston, Young Radicals, Notes on Committed Youth. (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1968) pp. 264-272.

²Richard Flacks, Youth and Social Change. (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1971) pp. 49-60.

³Flacks, Youth. p. 57.

⁴Morris Dickstein, Gates of Eden, American Culture in the Sixties. (New York: Basic Books, 1977) p. 53. Flacks, Youth. p. 57.

⁵Dickstein, Gates of Eden. p. 62. Flacks, Youth. pp. 73-90.

⁶Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man, Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) pp. 56-83.

⁷William G. Roy, "The University Christian Movement: No Fish in the Sea." (Unpublished manuscript, 1972) p. 17.

⁸Marcuse, One Dimensional Man. p. 66.

⁹See page 192 of this manuscript.

¹⁰Dickstein, Gates of Eden.

¹¹Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, The Degradation of Work in The Twentieth Century. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974)

¹²Robert Bellah, The Broken Covenant (New York: Seabury, 1975) and "The Five Religions of Italy." (Berkeley, California, Unpublished manuscript) p. 4. and John Pairman Brown, Planet on Strike (New York: Westminster, 1970) pp. 1-12.

¹³Dick Howard and Karl Klare, The Unknown Dimension, European Marxism Since Lenin. (New York: Basic Books, 1972) pp. 8-14. and Bruce Brown, Marx, Freud and the Critique of Everyday Life, Toward a Permanent Cultural Revolution. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973) pp. 174-197.

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