Counseling in the Classroom: A One-Semester Study with Senior Catholic High School Boys in an Unstructured Religion Class

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

COUNSELING IN THE CLASSROOM:
A ONE-SEMESTER STUDY WITH SENIOR CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL BOYS
IN AN UNSTRUCTURED RELIGION CLASS

ROB A. QUARLES

MASTERS THESIS
COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
MAY, 1968
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to orient myself as a Catholic and a counselor to problems most pertinent to the clergymen/counselor dilemma now prevalent in Catholic secondary schools; more specifically, to attain this understanding, to initiate and describe a semester of in-class counseling in an experimental Senior religion class.

The original intention (based on a previous semester's experience with Junior boys at this same parochial school in my counseling practicum) was to try to effect an attitudinal change toward their confessional experience through counseling, especially making clear delineation between counselor and clergymen.

As the class progressed, however, it became clear that the students had an ambivalent and confused attitude toward confession that was simply part of a larger picture: that of confusion, rejection, or indifference toward the whole system of religious attitudes and values.

This thesis is an inquiry into the relevance of the entire milieu of religious education for this group, and the effect of counseling dynamics upon the individual's perceptions of himself as a product of his Catholic cultural environment.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, AND RATIONALE

My cultural background as a Catholic effected a concern in me as a counselor to familiarize myself as a professional personnel worker with the Catholic high school milieu. My personal orientation covered a wide range: previous years in Catholic schools through college, my teaching years in two Catholic high schools in different cities, my "live-in" perusal of seminary life as a training ground for clerical professionals in religion, my marriage within the newly forming ecumenical spirit and liturgy, many of my friends. A further study of this specific culture during a time of change in a "changeless" church was, therefore, of natural interest to me.

Many confusions and dissatisfactions with implications in counseling were becoming significant in the light of the new Ecuménism, as the transition from Old Church (pre-Vatican II) to New seemed difficult for many. "Adjustment" as a counseling term was growing in my own awareness during my M.A. program and in my own life, and I had become sensitive to patterns of rigidity within my classmates and myself. "Openness," for instance, was a much easier concept to discuss than to "be." Finally, the parallel relationship between the confessional experience as a Sacrament and the small "s" sacrament of a genuine counseling experience

intrigued me.

Since I was already involved in Catholic secondary school education and in a counselor training program at a Catholic university, arranging to take my counseling practicum in a parochial high school setting also seemed natural—regardless of whether or not I eventually remained within a strictly Catholic milieu on a professional level. Learning to relate to others with problems centered around or tangential to the Catholic religious and educational culture was a part of me and thus a reservoir for future understanding as a teacher or counselor.

As a parallel and focus to my practicum semester, I was also enrolled in the "clergy only" section of a course entitled "Problems in Interviewing and Counseling I" (Psychology 368, Education 334), taught by Eugene C. Kennedy, M.M. Fr. Kennedy was something of a Loyola legend in that he seemed to have a key to helping others successfully bridge the culture gap between Old Church and New in their orientation as priest/counselors. The

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1 The regular section of Psychology 368 for which I had registered was cancelled, and lest I miss Fr. Kennedy altogether, I requested and received permission to enroll in the remaining "clergy only" section.

2 Eugene C. Kennedy, M.M., a native of Syracuse, N.Y., received both his Masters and Doctorate degrees from the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., and was co-founder there of the Institute in Catholic Pastoral Counseling. He is one of the few professionally prepared and licensed counseling psychologists attached full-time to an American Catholic seminary and is currently in practice at the Maryknoll Seminary, Glen Ellyn, Ill. He also serves as consultant to many dioceses and religious orders, and conducts Maryknoll's pre-seminary testing and counseling program. He is supervisor of priest/counselors for the Chicago Archdiocese and lecturer in Pastoral Counseling at Loyola University. He is author of several books and numerous articles in the field.
course was specifically geared to precipitate social and religious growth through counseling for both counselor and client. His approach was Rogerian and Thomistic—broadly, that to be an effective counselor, one must first be a healthy person, counseling with oneself in the sense of Thomistic prudence, and from this self-understanding and accepting base, serve to precipitate self-understanding, acceptance, and growth in others through the basic tenets of Carl Rogers. In Kennedy's own words, counseling "is an existential encounter between two persons and the outcome depends on how truly this encounter takes place."3

Fr. Kennedy's client-centered approach, with emphasis on phenomenology, proved to be extremely valuable as a basic counseling reference, and particularly for the contact afforded me through the class with religious.

The practicum (Spring semester, 1966) was served at an all-boy Catholic high school. It consisted of a basic core of 60 hours interviewing/counseling with Juniors, generally 45 minutes a person, with a private room to facilitate rapport. The initial purpose was for obtaining guidance information according to a general form (achievement, work experience, hobbies/extracurricular, physical status, occupational interest, personality characteristics, socio-economic background, and the catch-all "any particular problem"). From this I had the opportunity to detect counseling leads.

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1See further, p. 34, footnote 1.

2Rogers' six basic tenets are explored in detail pp. 10-13.

The student population came from north Chicago and the northern suburbs, generally middle class. The practicum involved a homeroom of 33 boys with whom I met, individually, for one period, three days a week. The practicum consisted of tapings, transcripts, written analyses of each interview experience, and frequent meetings with my supervisor over the period of one semester. Fortunately, my supervisor gave me the freedom to develop my own approach—whether strictly client-centered, strictly structured, or eclectic—enabling me to work in depth with some of the individuals as they or I saw need, and to pursue a few themes within the group.

My orientation as counselor became basically eclectic, depending on the nature of the relationship continuum with each individual, and ranged from the strictly informational to in-depth emotional involvement. Among other sources, the Boy and Pine Client-Centered Counseling in the Secondary School¹ and the Kennedy course helped me focus on the person rather than on the problem. My supervisor was of invaluable help, an excellent model through whom I could easily identify my own process of responsibility within the milieu of freedom which he afforded me.

Halfway through the semester I noticed a particular theme building in the area of student dissatisfaction with their own religious involvement and environment, both in school and at home.

¹Angelo V. Boy and Gerald J. Pine, Client-Centered Counseling in the Secondary School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1963). The authors were client-centered counselors at Muzzey Junior High School, Lexington, Mass., and they wrote from practical, first-hand experience of what has been done. The book was especially helpful in the section "Therapeutic Counseling for the 'Normal' Adolescent," pp. 221-224, providing basic attitudes.
Tracking it more carefully during interviews from then on, some summarized results are as follows:

### TABLE I
STUDENT RESPONSE TO RELIGIOUS INVOLVEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative Confession</th>
<th>Negative Other</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
<th>Non-Catholic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Of the thirteen who expressed "positive" or at least satisfied attitudes toward their Church experience, three were still operating on a grade-school level of religious understanding, while only three had what could be considered mature attitudes. The rest classed themselves without further reflection as "good" Catholics. Only one of the thirteen had anything good to say for the formal religious program at school. The "no comment" and "indifferent" responses carried a negative flavor for the most part, suggesting that Church had become something so painful to them that they "didn't want to talk about it," or had come to seem utterly non-relevant to the lives they were living.

Thus, roughly two-thirds were dissatisfied with one or more aspects of their religious milieu. What particularly caught my attention, however, was the tone of the negative responses to Confession plus the obvious confusion over the role of the priest in relation to counseling and Confession.

This response to the area of religion, by the way, was beyond the scope of the form I was following—the initial structure
of my first meeting with each student—yet usually cropped up, by the student's mention of it, during our first encounter.

The interviews showed that a prime cause for many of these high school boys' negative attitudes toward the confessional experience was an ambivalence of problem/solution of which they were often not themselves aware. That is, what they desired from the confessional experience was not to give formal and symbolic testimony to their faith by seeking forgiveness and purgation from sin, but rather deep and knowledgeable counseling aid for serious and disturbing problems of their lives that may or may not have been considered as "sinful" by them. Their ambivalence in this area added to that of the priest himself who was often totally unsuited to the role of counselor expected of him furthered the confusion. Thus an unfulfilled need; an unsatisfactory instead of a religiously rewarding experience; and, quite often, an abandonment of the Sacrament(s).

The students were looking for counseling in the confessional, and only rarely found it there. This in turn led to disillusionment with clergy, Church. The religion program itself did not seem to be satisfying the need for understanding, direction, or stimulation. Abandonment of formal Church participation and community spirit followed. Their religion did not seem to be com-

1For further elucidation of the importance of this symbolism, see Andrew M. Greeley, Strangers in the House: Catholic Youth in America (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), especially ch. 5, "The Demise of Ritual," pp. 55-64.

See also Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958).
municating with them. Much unrest in personal "core" involvement with self seemed tied in with non- or misunderstanding of the Church structure and the people in it. Rejection, indifference/non-relevancy, dissociation with their Church background through home, school, parish community became a more common, or at least more identifiable, pattern.

From my point of view as a counselor, there seemed to be a definite lack of communication that was worthy of investigation. Much of the confessional conflict arose because the priest had not been able to see (or seeing, was not able to function in) his dual role as one who must not only direct (authoritarian) but counsel (client-centered) as well. In a religious context Kennedy clarified that by saying that spiritual "direction treats spiritual problems and aims at supernatural integration while counseling treats emotional problems and aims at a natural integration."¹ These two roles are not necessarily opposed, or in conflict, but rather both can combine into one broader role.²

As to whether most priests are personally qualified to counsel, or more basically, capable, is another question altogether. The Psychology 368 class proved in painful terms that training alone would not be enough anyway--the predisposition required of a counselor seemed frequently in contradiction to the role the priest saw as his own, that of judge. The priest the student

¹Kennedy and D'Arcy, p. 102.

²See also Curran, Theology; Kennedy and D'Arcy; and George C. Christian, "The Possibility of Combining the Roles of Clergyman and Counselor," Insight, III (Winter, 1965), 27-31.
sought had to be not only a pair of willing, "confessional" ears, but hopefully a positive, dynamic, responding force, accepting the student with full, inspiring Christian embrace and an equally inspiring, insightful knowledge of scientific methodology for dealing with personal emotional problems. But "priest-counselor" is not a meaningful equation just because of the desire for it to be so. It simply does not apply to a priest who has potential to become a counselor, but who, through lack of psychological precepts and training, and despite a religious love, is not a counselor.

A personal, existential encounter (one to one) between priest and student is not enough simply because the priest wants to help and has the religious faculties of Confession, for the outcome depends on how truly this encounter takes place. The spiritual director's main resource is not his academic degree, the title on his office door, or any other claim to wisdom; it is what he is and who he is in his work with others.¹

The fact is, religious authorities cannot all be Curé d'Ars with the seemingly native gift of being a counselor as well. Many of my students witnessed the phenomenon where the priest to whom they confided, entrusted their self, responded in all sincerity by attempting an immediate solution to the problem, and, more often than not, his solution rather than their own. Sadly for the troubled adolescent, emotional problems do not always equate with exercises in Canon Law.

My own experience as a layman counseling with these Junior boys testified that this super-potential counseling opportunity

afforded in conjunction with the ritual of formal testimony for reorganization of the self in the Sacrament of Confession was all too frequently an opportunity for failure—a sacrament of fear by way of frightening or harangue, a sacrament of ennui by way of meaningless platitude, sterile formulae in place of advice, and perhaps worst of all, a sacrament of plague, whereby through direct, personal attack by the priest, or careless misunderstanding, the student was driven from giving to and receiving the Sacrament in the future, and to degrees of alienation from the Church. In the words of one of my students, a "good" Catholic but extremely frustrated, "I thought Confession was supposed to be a Sacrament of LOVE!" The implications for the priest/counselor in this area are obvious, but the glib directive, "Find a regular confessor who understands you," is difficult to carry out. The feeling often expressed by my student-clients was that if I were a priest, they would go to Confession to me. In other words, we communicated person to person...one to one.

Psychologist/priest Charles A. Curran has shown how Rogerian client-centered theory and Thomistic principles complement each other, and he makes a case for the application of client-centered persons to counseling needs. The troubled person who seeks counsel (rather than guidance) is rarely seeking factual information or

1Ibid., p. 107.

2See also Arbuckle, who promotes the "forward-looking, existential, client-centered concept of man as a free, self-evolving and self-actualizing being."
advice, for he frequently knows what to do regarding a conflict. The difficulty lies in integrating that knowledge with his daily life.

A starting point, even for the priest who is not personally oriented toward counseling, is the art of listening; the learning of what not to say while showing interest, reflecting feelings, and accepting and encouraging the troubled student is totally necessary. "No advice is better than wrong advice," and letting the client talk it out is a valuable catharsis. But this is a bare counseling beginning.¹

The priest who wishes to extend beyond this bare beginning must arm himself with the necessary background. This is presented with clarity in Dr. Carl Rogers' "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change."² These six basic conditions, if met in the counseling relationship and continued over a period of time, should precipitate psychotherapeutic personality changes to at least a minimal degree:

1. "THE TWO PERSONS ARE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTACT."

This is meaningful contact, personal one to one awareness

¹ George Hagmeier and Robert Gleason, Counselling the Catholic (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1959), p. 35.
² Carl R. Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," Journal of Consulting Psychology, XXI (April, 1957), 95-103. Rogers' tenets have been paraphrased except where directly quoted.

of involvement for growth in a healthy direction. Ordinarily our casual relationships or coffee break-type small talk typify physical or emotional contact without true psychological meaning.

2. "THE CLIENT IS IN A STATE OF INCONGRUENCE, BEING VULNERABLE OR ANXIOUS."

By incongruence is meant a discrepancy between the self-concept (who a person thinks he is) and the self-experience (who a person really is). Personal integration of these two concepts results in personality adjustment, integration of his ideals and the facts of his reality. For example, for a failing student to admit his failure (self-experience), he may first have to admit that he has not studied, or does not have sufficient intelligence—a direct affront to his self-concept that he is brilliant. Using a defense mechanism to preserve his self-concept, he may complain about poor teaching, texts, and so on. If the student is unaware of incongruence, he is still vulnerable: potentially open to awareness and thus anxiety, disorganization. As his awareness grows, a state of tension is produced known as anxiety which may be openly perceived for what it is, or only subconsciously perceived, fear of exposure operating below the level of consciousness.

3. "THE COUNSELOR IS CONGRUENT, INTEGRATED IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIMSELF."

This means that within the relationship he is freely and deeply himself, with his actual experience accurately represented by his awareness of himself. It is the opposite of presenting a facade, either knowingly or unknowingly.

Nothing the therapist experiences is defended against—he has an
open focus on his own emotional reactions; he is not a phony, not playing a role. He is genuine. If he is afraid, he may need to talk out his feelings, either to the client, a colleague, or supervisor, for he must not deceive the client. The counselor is challenged to be aware of, and transcend if possible, his own fears, dislikes, pettiness.

4. "THE COUNSELOR EXPERIENCES UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD (UPR) FOR THE CLIENT."

This means the counselor must experience a warm, personal, unconditional acceptance of his client. He is challenged to like as well as to love. There are no if's, and's, or but's; no "I like you only if you are thus-and-so." It means caring for the client as a separate person, with permission to have his own feelings, his own experiences. It is truly caring.

Curran clarifies this further:

Nor can one catch in simple description the most subtle and complex relationship that must exist between counselor and client, between therapist and patient. Here the necessity of mutual involvement in the human condition is most strikingly demonstrated. The therapist or counselor cannot stand apart in an objective, unfeeling, Cartesian way. He must be a complete person, psychosomatically committed to a deep, sensitive, and intense personal communion, a true giving of self. The counselor is first to give himself. Then, more slowly but just as surely, the person coming for help gains the confidence to make a genuine commitment of himself. Such a relationship seems to approximate what the ancients called amor benevolentiae—a relationship in which one gives of himself entirely and seeks no return from the other except the other's best fulfillment of himself.

5. "THE COUNSELOR EXPERIENCES AN EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE CLIENT'S INTERNAL FRAME OF REFERENCE, AND TRIES TO COMMUNICATE THIS EXPERIENCE TO THE CLIENT."

Both affective and cognitive spheres are involved here. The counselor experiences "as if" the client's private world were his own. Thus the necessary difference between empathy and sympathy, where the emotion and understanding are not separate and might not be controlled. (Empathy is the imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being; sympathy, the actual sharing of another's emotional state.) The counselor must make clear that he is well able or at least willing to understand the client's feelings. He makes remarks to fit the client's mood and content. He conveys by his tone of voice his ability to share the client's feelings. Again, the emphasis is on the actual relationship.

6. "THE COMMUNICATION TO THE CLIENT OF THE COUNSELOR'S EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING AND UPR IS TO A MINIMAL DEGREE ACHIEVED."

Thus, there must be at least some communication from the therapist of his UPR, empathetic understanding, acceptance, and definite reception of it by the client.

If all six conditions are present, then the greater the degree to which these conditions exist, the more marked will be the constructive personality change in the client. Rogers, although client-centered in his approach, is stating the conditions which apply to "any situation in which constructive personality change occurs." This includes successful group therapy.

* * *
The implications of the client-centered approach for enhancing meaningfulness and growth for those clergymen oriented toward counseling do not contradict the inherent nature of the priestly functions in the confessional relationship. The priest's "duty" is in essence the same as a counselor's: to fulfill the needs of those with whom he works. But now we must approach the student who, as was noted above, is not consciously aware that what he is seeking from the confessional experience often is, in fact, counseling; who does not usually even understand what counseling is, let alone the role of counselor—clergy or lay.

The outcome of the unfulfilled needs and ambivalent attitudes, as forcefully shown to me by this practicum experience, was often the student's complete break with the sacramental reality of Confession—thus creating two overlapping areas of conflict and guilt in his personal, core involvement with himself: his counseling needs were still not being met, and he further added to his psychological burdens the guilt feelings arising from his dissociation with the Church.

Since conducting this practicum and becoming interested as a counselor in the Confession-based clergymen/counselor dichotomy and other related responses to Church involvement, I have come across much specific evidence, some of which is detailed below, to show this as a universal area of concern. All age levels seem to be involved. The problems were not unique to my experience nor to the particular school in which I was working.

1. In "A Pilot Study of Masturbation and Confession Problems of Sixth Grade Boys,"1 an experimental approach was taken to determine anxiety level and defense mechanisms concerning pre-adolescent sexual experiences and resulting conflict with the Sacrament of Penance. The study provides some concrete evidence of alienation from Church, school, and family through unrealistic expectations of behavior plus strong implications of non-communication on the high school level.

2. Directly revolving around the confessional experience, and with strong implications for the clergy themselves, was a Confession questionnaire2 prepared by members of the second year Theology class, Immaculate Conception Seminary, Conception, Mo. Two hundred sixty Catholic seminary students (college freshmen to deacons), or 70% of the total enrollment, responded to this questionnaire. Ambivalent attitudes and practices were revealed concerning the relationship between seminarians and their confessors. Revision in the present form of Penance was desired by 69% of those who responded. There was no clear distinction in roles of confessor and spiritual director (in this instance, also counselor) by either the official seminary structure or on the part of the students. Two major hypotheses were established:


2Dennis Reed et al., "Confession Questionnaire" (unpublished questionnaire and results, privately distributed, Winter, 1966-67).
a. Lack of knowledge about the Sacrament was the biggest hindrance in the use and understanding of the Sacrament of Penance.

b. The lack of a clear distinction in the roles of confessor and counselor caused confusion among the seminarians as to the differences between spiritual advice and psychological counseling.

3. In a recent 152-question survey answered by 3,000 of the 3,500 students at Manhattan College, Riverdale, N.Y., a Catholic college staffed by the Christian Brothers, Bruce M. Ritter, O.F.M.Conv., noted as one of his conclusions that the much-discussed generation gap 'has already become, or is fast becoming, something of a major credibility gap between the faith of the college generation and the faith of their fathers.'

Some other pertinent factors involved were:

'The present college generation's growing appreciation of the need for a more personalist and humanly responsible theology.'

'The decreasing ability of the Church to communicate the substance and reason of its revealed morality.'

'The evident inability of many of the clergy to minister to the needs of this generation.'

Particularly relevant to my investigations was the ambivalence noted in the article:

And while only 22 percent accept a distinction between mortal and venial sin in theory, 72 percent won't receive Communion without confessing 'mortal sins.' They will confess mortal sins even though only 17 percent feel confession is necessary to receive forgiveness and 55 percent deny its necessity.

1The results of this survey were reported in an article in The National Catholic Reporter, Feb. 21, 1968, p. 5.
This indicates, according to Fr. Ritter, that the college student's 'religious confusion and insecurity blisters out of a deep-seated, if reluctant, loyalty to the Church. In summarizing the situation, Fr. Ritter said:

'It is beyond question that our present Catholic college population is deeply troubled at the tensions they experience in their love-hate relationships with the institutional church, and are almost religiously schizoid in their inability to cope with the split between their doctrinal convictions and their moral uncertainties.'

4. In another recent college survey, the question "Why are you a Catholic?" was asked, and some of the "fairly typical" answers are both sad and provoking. It is this kind of answer that I hoped to be able to understand and perhaps change through my classroom counseling:

'I cannot tell you why because the only thing I know is what I have been told through the 12 years of my Catholic education. But in all these years I have never been able to believe and have faith in God and His Church... I now feel that if I had been given a chance to think and form an opinion to these problems myself I would have found the meaning of faith in God and His Church.'

'I'm a Catholic because my parents had me baptized. I've been educated in Catholic schools and have felt at times I was brainwashed. Most of the time I learned only what the Church taught, not what I believed.'

'Because I want to get to heaven by a large margin... The Church offers the safest packaged deal....'

'I was born into this world by my parents who are Catholic -- that's why I have brown hair, too....'

The effects of Vatican II were becoming more noticeable through the increased recognition and usage of such terms as "ecumenism," "New Church," "religious revolution," "freedom and

---

responsibility"--a more person-oriented philosophy was evolving beyond that of the traditional authoritarian, objectively struc-
tured one.

The upheavals that many of these "new" ideas caused in the religious lives of traditionally educated (myself included) stu-
dents indicated that this was merely a facet of an even larger religious orientation/education problem.¹

5. Kennedy's Psychology 368 course itself existed as a means of dealing with the general non-communication problems for the benefit of clergymen making the transition to clergyman/coun­
selor, and the application to laymen was almost 100%. We were all involved. Kennedy himself was real in the sense that he encouraged us--he communicated! His more narrowly focused but applicable

¹The Greeley/Rossi Report (Andrew M. Greeley and Peter H. Rossi, The Education of Catholic Americans, Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1966) which came out in the Summer of 1966 com­pared adult Catholics from Catholic-school backgrounds with those from non-Catholic school backgrounds in five areas: religious prac­tice, religious knowledge, ethical behavior, religious divisiveness and secular achievement. The study was a historical one, dealing with persons attending school between 1930 and 1950 (with contin­u­ity in family background). Norman M. Bradburn, acting director of the National Opinion Research Center (out of which Greeley and Rossi operate) stated in the preface that "the authors do not come down firmly either for or against the Catholic school system." (p. ix) It does show clearly, however, that even the strongest rel­ationships in the study--those between religious education and religious behavior--were found in the case of teenagers, but that ever here religious education seemingly only works when there is con­stant reinforcement in the home. Only a slight positive association was noted between religious education and enlightened social atti­tudes.

In other words, although this was a major study of Catholic educational attitudes, it did not directly have bearing on my study.
article, "The Male Mystique," gave credence to his classroom dialogue, that

Priests and religious, like all normal persons, can grow only in the context of rich and real personal relationships. Fundamentally, the task for them is no different than it is for any other human being: they must learn to love others as persons, for their sake; and this love fails if it is exploitative and self-aggrandizing quite as much as when it is vacuum-packed and self-protective.¹

The students in Kennedy's class, while becoming increasingly aware of the dichotomy facing professional religious, were definitely split as to what to do about it. Approximately half (in a class of about 60) could be classified as closed, authoritarian, non-understanding persons who either could not or would not make the adjustments necessary to open up as persons and counselors—to non-judgmentally accept others as they were. Having lived a certain approach to life in good faith simply did not seem to lend itself to non-painful integration into more flexible terms. The age range of mid-20s to mid-50s had no bearing on the scatter.

6. On a more informal level, many persons were interested in my practicum work and growing conclusions. Kennedy himself encouraged me to look further into the area from my point of view as a layman counselor in the milieu of religious education and the secondary school.

My practicum supervisor, head of the guidance department at the high school, his staff, and the principal of the school encouraged me to carry out further investigations, as did authorities in several other Catholic schools—teachers, administrative

personnel, and counselors. In fact, nearly everyone with whom I spoke concerning the problems I seemed to have identified empathized with them, were involved themselves; e.g., "I know just what you mean...let me tell you about this (priest, nun, brother) and (school, church), etc..." There was much affective, emotional, personal response. I was becoming aware of a common problem, it seemed.

One person, very much involved in the field of religious education, suggested that I tape record actual confessional experiences and use the data to confirm the hypothesis that most priests are poorly equipped to handle persons as persons. Although I entertained this idea for a while, ethical and other considerations led me to drop it as unfeasible. 1

The suggestion that I secretly tape record actual confessional experiences as an honest, analyzable source of information giving support to the hypothesis that a great percentage of priests do not function in a needed, meaningful way as counselors in the confessional, was intriguing. The basic strategy would be to formulate a number of stock confessions, each one revolving around a core problem, and have the same person "confess" these to a sampling of priests, recording the experience without the priest's knowledge, and then tabulate the results according to a predetermined number of counseling pro's and con's.

However, along with being a rather vindictive approach, a religious sacrilege for a Catholic, a serious breach of professional ethics, and downright low, 1) neither my advisor nor Loyola would accept such as part of an M.A. thesis, 2) the Chicago Chancery Office would see to my excommunication, 3) I would be blackballed by the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) for violating confidentiality standards (see APGA, "Ethics for Counselors," 1966), and 5) I could be sued for scandal and defamation of character.

Other variations on the original idea grew rapidly more appalling than appealing. Yet, it certainly would have made an infinitely easier study than this one...
7. Loyola itself, as a Catholic, Jesuit college, had begun to respond to this area of student need. In May, 1966, George E. Von Kaenal, S.J., director of spiritual activities, announced a greatly expanded and largely student-directed Christian Renewal program for the coming school year. It was notable for its variety of emphasis on dialogue, new liturgy, and creative retreat/renewal options. More personnel were added to the university chaplain staff, and the role of the chaplain was being integrated with other programs in the university as part of a separation between strictly religious counseling and other Loyola guidance services.

Whereas in the past Loyola offered only closed or open retreats and Dialogue Renewal Days only on an experimental basis beginning in 1965, the Christian Renewal Program offered numerous options. Each full-time Catholic student could fulfill his retreat requirement by making a closed retreat of two or three days or by participating in two Christian Renewal days, of which there were seven alternatives, to be expanded to nine the following year. Student reaction to the innovations via unsigned evaluation sheets was 95% in favor of the new approaches.

If Fr. Von Kaenal's current popularity is any sign, he was and is communicating with Loyola students. He, too, encouraged me to look further into the secondary school religious education area as a counselor.

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1 Information regarding Fr. Von Kaenal's innovations in this area can be found in "The Religious Program in the University," the outline of a talk given at the Fourth Faculty Forum of 1965-66, May 18, 1966, and in several articles that appeared in the Loyola News, Sept. 20, 1966, pp. 1, 5.
CHAPTER II. GROUP COUNSELING

I had begun to think in terms of working in the area of religious conflicts with a group of some sort; a group guidance approach and yet keeping the channels of communication clear for one to one counseling as well. The idea of teaching a religion class as well as counseling in a school had occurred to me, despite the possible problem of role confusion/diffusion.

It was during this period that I was also taking a course in Techniques of Guidance, and it was in the "Group Work in Guidance" chapter of Traxler's Techniques of Guidance\(^1\) that I came upon three ideas which were to help me focus on a plan of action:

1. ....the basic procedure which seems to characterize such efforts [group therapy] is to stimulate free expression on the part of members of the group concerning a common problem, and to develop and nurture a permissive atmosphere which will encourage spontaneous verbalization and discussion freed as far as possible from inhibitions that might result from value judgments on the part of the guidance worker.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Arthur E. Traxler and Robert D. North, Techniques of Guidance (3d ed.; New York: Harper and Row, 1966). There were extensive and pertinent bibliographies at the ends of chapter 20, "Group Work in Guidance" (90 entries), and chapter 21, "Reading Resources for Guidance Workers" (255 entries).

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 327. Traxler further points out the need for the development of teacher/counselors in teacher-training institutions. (Stress in this quotation is mine.)
2. This was followed by the rather challenging statement that:

...there is only fragmentary research evidence that any type of counseling, or even a combination of group and individual counseling, is measurably better than no counseling at all.

3. ...we need much more evidence that our techniques contribute to self-understanding and self-reliance, help individuals solve their own problems, improve their ability to adjust to the rapidly changing environment of the modern world, and enhance their contributions to the welfare of their fellow men.2

Despite a lack of clarity in terminology in this area, the phrase, "group work in guidance," is the most inclusive and seemed pertinent to my specific interests, and "group counseling" within this framework was precisely what I hoped to achieve, as it "may be regarded as standing between classroom instruction and group therapy, as as sharing the purposes and procedures of both."3 And as in group therapy, group counseling includes the emphasis "upon providing members of the group with opportunities to explore their own feelings and attitudes, rather than upon the imparting of information."4

In general, a group counseling approach would save time, covering groundwork common to all, and as a somewhat freer kind of learning experience than the regular classroom situation, it could stress helping an individual discover himself and that he is not alone—that others have needs and problems similar to his. By

1ibid. 2ibid. 3ibid., p. 322. 4ibid.
focusing on goals of self-realization and resultant freedoms to self-actualization--to examine, to recognize, and to act upon person-centered behavior--this group work could function as a bridge to individual counseling.

The above reasons stress the expediency of substituting group for one to one relationships to help the counselor catch patterns of interaction and to help educate him to a more meaningful overview. But group activity can also justify itself in terms of precipitating a whole range of personality qualities and considerations by the very fact that an interrelationship is taking place--something creative forming that is larger than the individual mass. Traxler points out that according to many psychologists "the therapeutic character of discussion, of thinking and searching for values within a group of one's own peers" is a justifiable activity in its own right.

Here the focus is not upon information but upon attitudes, emotions, motivations, self-concepts, and the whole range of personality qualities. This is peculiarly the habitat and the happy experimental ground of group psychotherapy, sociometry, psychodrama, sociodrama, and group dynamics.

No one can be entirely sure what is coming forth of demonstrated value, but the vocabulary of this area is expansive and impressive, and the possibilities are intriguing...they hold out some promise that group work in guidance, expertly carried on, is not merely a short cut, a make-shift, a substitute for individual counseling, but a new thing, a self-justifying entity, a unique contribution, a complement to individual work.

I found further sources of insight regarding the area of group guidance in two unpublished papers by persons working on

1Ibid., p. 321. 2Ibid. 3Ibid.
their Master's degrees in counseling and guidance at Loyola:

1. "What Students Can Learn from Group Dynamics"\(^1\) caught the spirit of group workings for me as it elaborated on the opportunity for sensitivity to the feelings of other members of a group; group acceptance of and support for individuality and creativity (which "flourish when people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behavior and actions"\(^2\)); effective understanding and management of conflict; listening and communicating. ("Each person must restate the contribution of the person before him to that person's satisfaction before making his own comment."\(^3\))

2. "Some Principles of Group Functioning"\(^4\) provided a brief, overall schema of objectives; characteristics identifying well and poorly functioning groups; principles operating in group dynamic counseling; definition of the leader's role; and a meaningful, annotated bibliography.

A broad, basic reference was the "Guidance, Counseling, and Personnel Services" issue of the Review of Educational Research.\(^5\) While providing valuable summaries of research within the previous three years, the extensive, then up-to-date bibliographies at the end of chapters 6 and 7 were also helpful. Especial-

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\(^1\)Charles N. Seashore, "What Students Can Learn from Group Dynamics" (unpublished paper presented in Education 430, 1966).

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 2.  \(^3\)Ibid., p. 3.


ly meaningful to me was the focal point of chapter 7: "Is not insight and/or the ability to communicate one's feelings its own excuse for being?"¹

In the area of religious education, I had no formal training,² and wasn't sure of just what I would need. Becoming an actual religion teacher was not what I had in mind, nor was I willing at that point to invest the time or concentration of purpose in that direction. Although I never did actually resolve an approach to the many interdisciplinary areas involved--philosophy, psychology, education, history, religion--I did manage to find a satisfactory basic focus through an excellent text just published in the Summer of 1966, which considered the role of guidance in both public and Catholic schools. The basic intent of Lee and Pallone's Guidance and Counseling in Schools is to provide an original, integrated synthesis which offers both a sound rationale for guidance and efficient working models issuing from the rationale for the behavior of counselors, administrators, and teachers who, consciously or not, engage in the guidance enterprise. The roots of this synthesis lie in behavioral science and educational theory and tradition, set in the framework of revealed truth about the nature of man and his destiny.³

This was the only text at the time which treated counseling and guidance both in public and Catholic schools and considered...

¹Ibid., p. 285.
²Although I had 18 hours of college-level theology I did not feel that this qualified me for the type of class I intended.
their problems from a Christian dimension.

Sections on group work were almost overwhelming considering my limited experience, but such areas as communication dynamics, group procedures, personal and social development as a guidance focus were helpful in providing a ground. The most meaningful figure was the chapter on "Religious Development as a Guidance Focus" which brought me to the point at which I wanted to start with my group: topics on the nature of religious development; religious developmental guidance in Catholic schools; lay spirituality; differentiation among the school chaplain, the priest-counselor, and the school-priest. I received much professional encouragement from their assessment of the clergyman/counselor situation:

Most priests receive no professionally oriented psychological training in the seminary and so are lulled into the feeling that their theological background and pastoral theology are all-sufficient to counseling needs.¹

Lee and Pallone call for a new spirituality for the layman, noting that "most of contemporary Catholic spirituality originated in the medieval monasteries, geared to the spiritual growth of a monk in a monastic setting"² and that the functioning of religious development programs in the past have served to repel or alienate the "normal child and youth from developing religiously."³ To illustrate their meaning, and to give the reader some of the feeling the authors intend in their text, they quote Negro author James Baldwin:

¹Ibid., p. 469. ²Ibid., p. 455. ³Ibid., p. 457.
'Every artist is fundamentally religious. But I haven't been to Church in twenty years....I was raised in the Church but I have abandoned Christianity as an organized religion. The Church is the worst place to learn about Christianity. I have rejected it because the Christians have rejected Christianity. It is too pious, too hypocritical.'

This was the problem area in religious education that I wanted to come to understand as a lay counselor, and I wasn't at all sure just how to go about it. Continuing research was dispelling some of my fears of failure in a special project and I was getting more and more interested in building a plan within my rough idea framework of a group counseling "class."

The obvious benefits of group counseling with students in this particular kind of class situation were that it enlarges the student's perspective so that he can see that his is not an unshared/unsharable difficulty; it fulfills his intense desire to relate; it provides information to help attitudinal change; and it reaches those students who would neither seek nor be at first amenable to individual counseling. The student has the opportunity to seek out the answers for himself.

In the area of Confession specifically, these group counseling sessions could also serve as the airing grounds for clarifying--in terms comprehensible to the student's wary mentality--the need and place for formal testimony in the life of a Catholic. It would serve to free the Sacrament from the encumbrance of the individual confessor who might not be perfect, not oriented toward

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counseling; and it would demonstrate the historical symbolism, essential simplicity, innate meaningfulness, and psychological need for formal testimony.

Group counseling seemed to offer the ideal meeting place for the student to gather ideas and ideals to help further integrate his own personality.

Roughly, then, I saw the project as a "bridge" between religious concepts and practices of Senior high school students and the realities of life they would face after high school. The structure would consist of a class three times a week to be preceded and/or followed by two individual counseling periods, thus providing for follow-up immediately after class.

The class itself would be focused around dialogue, would be self-motivating once the purposes of the group were clear, and would be based on:

---personal responsibility after high school
---problems with authoritarianism in general, with reference to religious authoritarianism
---categorizing conflicts in Church milieu
---finding solutions in terms of current theology, psychology, personal counseling, introduction through in-class dialogue with personable priests and laymen, generally making the Church more real to the students
---study of the symbolism, simplicity, and meaningfulness of the particular Church Sacraments, and, in relation to Confession, the psychological need for formal testimony
---Rogers-Kennedy based approach to accepting self and others, respect for personal integrity, individual differences, Gardner's approach to self-renewal, and so on

At this point, even with the hope that the simple dynamics of the group would carry forward progress with it, I began to feel totally inadequate to the area, both as counselor and as teacher. The sheer bulk of current theological trends and their implications were oppressive and imposing to me. I began to lose my own focus as to what I really wanted to do, and why.

Talking helps, though, and in presenting some of the preliminary ideas as part of a university in-class discussion on group guidance, I met a young priest who was also interested in the area, and who for the past year had been trying his own group counseling experiment in his four high-school religion classes.

His experience, which he had written into a paper, had taken place the previous year (1965-66). His orientation as a priest teaching religion was that as long as I was intent on giving these students 'something' instead of 'someone,' my time in the classroom was truly a waste, if not actually harmful. By this I mean the necessity of giving them someone with whom they could form a personally meaningful relationship, and consequently through whom Christ Himself would become personally meaningful. To put it another way, if their Religion was to become an integrated aspect in the lives of these students, then they must be given an experience of it, not merely given facts about it.

Religion, in order to become a way of life to a person, must be experienced.¹

Fr. Tranel's psychological orientation was heavily client-centered and non-directive, and he utilized this in his approach, focusing on his students' needs rather than on his conceptions, feeling that they were truly responsible for their own learning and any value derived from the class would have to be through their own efforts. The students in turn were confused, being accustomed to having someone else take the responsibility for their learning. Although they were aware that the class might be conducted as a group discussion situation and that they weren't limited to strictly religious topics, Tranel reports that it took several months for the groups to reach a state of learning readiness—to take initiative, to listen, to absorb, to integrate. Their response to his acceptance of what they had to say, of how they felt, of his very personal focus on them was novel. They, in turn, came to understand him as a person, to see value in him as a teacher, as a discussion leader. Small group discussion finally evolved and became quite personal and was emphatically shared and accepted by other members of the group. With no formal counselling skills whatever, these students could enter into and share the problems and anxieties of one of their peer group in such an identifying way as to seem almost unbelievable. They could see each other's world in a way that to an adult would seem impossible. As one of them pointed out, this was not just talking about Christianity, this was practising it.¹

By the end of the year, definite moral, intellectual, and emotional growth was identified in the students, by the students. Student response was overwhelmingly positive. Reiterating his earlier position, Tranel feels that

¹Ibid., p. 8.
unless the one who professes to represent Christianity (the teacher) can somehow identify himself with the students, Religion becomes a mere exercise in intellectualism and it never moves out into the operational life of the person.¹

To attain this identity, to successfully present religion in the foregoing manner, Tranel felt the greatest challenge to the teacher's own personal integrity was "his ability to accept unconditionally the existential condition of the student, without allowing his own needs to get in the way."² Discipline seemed to be a matter of the students respecting another in direct proportion to respect given them. Attitudes of superiority or condescension were interpreted as deceitful.

The one lasting difficulty the students encountered after the year's experience was finding a like-minded group-sharing community through whom they could "stay alive."³

Tranel's experiment was exciting to me. Although after discussing it with him I felt that he had been overly non-directive that an orientation to the students from the beginning of what he was trying to do would have been more profitable instead of letting them come slowly onto it themselves (inductive) over a period of months. Perhaps, too, I was thinking in terms of my own project which, because of my own time limitations, could be carried on for only one semester.

He had successfully conducted what amounted to a group counseling religion class, and this was how I intended to orient myself to religion, teaching, and counseling in a Catholic school.

¹Ibid., p. 11. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 12.
As to whether or not I was qualified to attempt a parallel experimental class, I was not sure. This question of qualification was really three questions, succinctly posed by Blocher in "Can the Counselor Function as an Effective Agent of Change?".  

"1. Is the counselor qualified by training background and experience to be an effective agent of change?"  

I had a Catholic cultural background, two years teaching experience in English and speech, and the necessary hours to teach religion. I had taken my counseling practicum, had done recent research in the area of my concern, and, by the time I actually took over the class, had finished my course work for an M.A. in counseling and guidance.  

"2. Does the role of the counselor permit him to operate as an effective agent of change?"  

I hoped so. This was the point I was trying to make. Indications in the practicum and through Tranel's study were positive.

Blocher's statement that "the counselor's primary professional responsibility is to facilitate human development" seemed broad enough to encompass even my vaguest notions, despite the difficult odds involved where the individual, not the institution, was expected to make adjustments, and where the institution of education itself was a primary social offender. A recent reading of

1Donald Blocher, "Can the Counselor Function as An Effective Agent of Change?" The School Counselor, XIII (May, 1966), 202-205.

2Ibid., p. 204.  3Ibid.  4Ibid., p. 202.
Gardner's *Self-Renewal* gave my quavering spirits enough added incentive to follow through on my commitment. In mid-August, 1966, I met with the principal of the high school where I had done my practicum to see if the open door that had been extended to me then was still open.

It was, and in so being, answered Blocher's third question quite affirmatively:

"3. Is the counselor's position in the organization of the school such that he can become an effective agent of change?"  

I would be a member of the school staff, identified to the students as Assistant Senior Counselor. I would have my own Senior religion class and an office for counseling purposes. I foresaw no problem with the teaching staff. For the sake of a ragged continuity, some of the students already knew me from the practicum. The director of the counseling and guidance department under whom I had worked agreed that there was a problem in the school of the sort I had identified, "...religion not relevant..." but did not know what could be done about it. He did approve my basic plan, and recommended that I follow up on my earlier contributions to the school.

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1Gardner presents a challenge to the Thomistic virtue of "prudence," whereby a person "counsels" himself to a recognition of the value of self-realization and to actuate himself toward goals of existential worth as related to Christ's one Great Commandment. Fixed habits and comforts should not interfere with renewal (continuous). Man needs "margins of security" as a base for innovations.

The notes section (pp. 129-138) is very helpful, incorporating bibliography and commentary.

2Blocher, p. 204.
That the principal was interested in my rationale and basic plan for the group counseling class was a reflection of his own interests and efforts. He had recently written a paper entitled "Freedom and Responsibility." It bears mention in more detail here because it helped to set an official tone for my work within the school and was excellent in itself, giving more depth to my understanding and purpose to my original focus.

The principal cited many current theologians and commentators on the subject of freedom and responsibility, and noted that it is not a problem limited only to the Church. Taking his keynote from American historian Carl Becker's *American Way of Life*—

"Freedom unrestrained by responsibility becomes license; responsibility unchecked by freedom becomes mere arbitrary power."

—he sought to unite the two:

One of the problems of a private school system, especially one based on religious affiliation, is that it tends to be sheltered, selective, exclusive, protective, and ghetto-minded. And I think that there is abundant evidence from history that Catholic schools in the United States have been ghetto prone, and while we are a long way from separatist ideology that governed Catholic thought not too many years ago, there are still some traces of these practices left in our schools. Some of these traces deal directly with the area of freedom and responsibility. And these traces are as out of touch with Vatican II Catholicism as they are with American society. I refer here to the overprotective, don't get out of line, keep in your place, shelter the student from evil influences of the outside

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2 For example, Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Daniel Callaghan, Beatrice Avalos, Pierre Babin, Hans Kung, Gustave Weigel et al.

3 Carl Becker, *American Way of Life*, as quoted in Rost, p. 5.
world, tight discipline, rigid schedule, force the students to perform some action, uniformity type of psychology and methods generally practiced in Catholic high schools. My first premise says, therefore, that these things are holdovers from the ghetto-mentality of American Catholicism, and that if we are going to do any serious work in the area of freedom and responsibility with our students we must honestly evaluate what effect these have on our total school environment.¹

Any effort towards instilling in our students an ideology of freedom and responsibility depends upon an enlightened attitude of the administration and faculty of the school.²

Any program directed at the students must depend on a faculty which is keenly aware of the problem and ready to do something about it.³

With this background, many rule changes were under consideration. The following list of ideas and practices to be promoted by an attitude of freedom and responsibility helps one realize a further definition of educational ghetto:

1) No physical punishment of any kind.
2) Less and less punishments of the non-violent kind.
3) No authoritarianism. The attitude of 'do it because I say so' would go. The little dictator complex would go.
4) There would be less and less force used to get the students to study. The students would study because they realize their responsibility to themselves to get a good education, and they would get rid of the idea that they have a responsibility to the teacher.
5) The teacher would work harder to motivate the students rather than controlling their students' study habits by fear.
6) The teacher would emphasize self-discipline on the part of the students rather than forcing the students to be disciplined by reason of fear again or an authoritarian atmosphere.
7) Teachers and students would communicate with one another. The teacher would be friendly, easy to talk to, helpful, and understanding. The students would be respectful, open, interested, and cooperative.⁴

¹Rost, p. 5. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 6. ⁴Ibid., p. 8.
The outlook toward education in general was encouraging: "Learning is the outcome of personal responsiveness to the opportunities made available to the student by the teachers and the school... Learning is accomplished within the student." ¹

The basic goals of such an orientated school, therefore, would be to free the student to learn, to investigate, explore, discover, create, and analyze, not to remember, recite, recognize, imitate, digest. The child in such a school is a self-actualizer, a creator, an intelligent being; not a consumer, role player, and an object to be manipulated. The function of such a school is to challenge and stimulate the child's creative encounter with reality; not to get him to conform to reality by indoctrination.²

Freedom and responsibility would call for less domination by the teacher and more imagination by the students. It will call for more independent study, more emphasis on student achievement rather than attendance, more participation by the students in their efforts to learn rather than having the teacher hand things to them all neatly organized and wrapped up in an attractive package.³

On leadership:

Freedom and responsibility would give the students the opportunity to be real leaders. The faculty-dominated school is a fraud when it comes to leadership because we constantly impress upon the students that we want them to be leaders and then turn around and do not give them any real opportunity to exercise their leadership. And then we sit back at our faculty meetings and wonder why we are not producing leaders.⁴

I think that our school policy from the administration on down should be that when students ask for something they want to do, we ought to grant it unless there is some grave reason not to allow it.⁵

Is all this unrealistic? Is it so idealistic that it's way out--somewhere up there in the clouds? I don't think so. It is different, there is no doubt about that, but I don't think that it is impossible. Rather, it seems to me

¹Ibid. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., p. 9. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid.
that it is in touch with the really great movements of our time--Vatican II, the Freedom Movements of the civil rights struggle in the United States, anti-colonialism of the underdeveloped nations, and the democratic tendencies of our society. As such, I think that it holds great promise for producing the type of education that our students need.

It demands much on our part: first of all the courage to re-think our whole process of education and secondly, the guts to experiment with new ideas, policies, and practices. I think that we have the kind of faculty here at (-------) which can challenge the students to use their freedom and responsibility. The Administration is willing to try if you are.

Blocher asked two questions in relationship to counselor effectiveness in the school: One, will the counselor, in operating directly and consciously as an agent of change, be a threat for administrators and teachers? Two, is the school administrator really identifiable as an educational leader?

For the case of the administration, I think this paper answers these questions and more than fulfills Blocher's criteria.

* * *

There were a number of reasons other than my growing anxiety for not taking over a class immediately that Fall semester. With the freedom I envisioned for the group, it would be difficult for a regular teacher to cut back on this freedom for their final school semester. Primarily, however, the growing reality of the group counseling sessions as an experience, or "happening," was becoming more obvious--as my commitment and understanding

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1Ibid., p. 10. 2Ibid. 3Blocher, pp. 204-205.
grew, my uncertainty grew, and the semester became more amorphous. The actual plan was becoming more dependent upon my own interactions than upon the crutches I had hoped to set up through materials, questionnaires, etc. I had become naked instead of armed in Armageddon, as it were. The projected semester was emerging in concept as more and more a counseling experience and less a teaching one. I found that I had become more directive than I had originally intended, and that I needed to refocus, to come to an understanding of the students' needs rather than my projected conceptions. Needless to say, I was quite concerned that I be able to neatly write my M.A. thesis from a carefully controlled situation. I was rapidly losing that hope, but at the same time becoming more encouraged in what I really wanted to do.

In a panic of semi-professionalism, I even attempted to set up a brief experimental research proposal, but it did not satisfy me, and I realized even more fully that I would be involved in descriptive research.

That Fall semester, then, was a period of "elbow room" for me, a time to reflect, to gather my understanding, to become more totally myself. My basic resource in the coming existential encounter would be myself.

To this end I arranged to take Charles A. Curran's course, "Problems in Interviewing and Counseling II" (Psychology 468), reviewed the Kennedy course notes and implications concerning emotional learning, and in relation to my ongoing educational psycho-

1See Appendix A.
ology course, reviewed material on the affective domain.¹

I also realized that it was unrealistic for me to really attempt an in-depth study of current confessional theology, due both to my limited time commitments and to confusion in the area itself,² but that I could become more aware of current trends. For instance, my attention was captured by Brother Gabriel Moran, referred to by The National Catholic Reporter as "an optimistic Jeremiah of catechetics,"³ who stressed that

'We are working it [religion] to death by pushing too hard. We push students through a religion course every year. Doing this is taking time and building up unnecessary obstacles. And we are giving them answers when they are not ready, instead of giving them answers when they ask questions.'⁴

In a Fall, 1966, address on "The Crisis of Faith and Youth," delivered to a theological conference, he said:


²E.g., moral theologian Charles E. Curran believes that "traditional Roman Catholic moral theology is on its way out.... People will have to make their own decisions," based ultimately on Scripture, but immediately somewhat "situationalistic." From an interview of Fr. Curran reported in The National Catholic Reporter, September 21, 1966, p. 2.

Psychologist/priest Arthur F. LeBlanc believes that when the Catholic Church begins to seriously apply current developments in the behavioral sciences, "research on 'self-disclosure' will change the forms of confession." There is, he states, "an abundance of clinical evidence that our people are frightened of the one-to-one relationship demanded by current confessional practices, specifically, the use of the confessional box," leading to the possibility of group confession. From a profile of LeBlanc in The National Catholic Reporter, August 31, 1966, p. 2, with quotations from a speech he delivered Dec. 9, 1965, to the Liturgical Arts group of the Cincinnati diocese.


⁴Ibid.
'The more desperately religious salesmen try to answer all adolescent problems with Christian faith the more the young people are convinced that faith is hopelessly and ridiculously irrelevant.'

'They are being given the hard sell these days, which is for them the final reason that they should not buy. Their problems are deeply human, intensely physical, confusedly psychological; no cute system of immediate relief is even to be considered.'

If there is a solution to be found, Moran believes that it will come from men who can live with a deep conviction of faith together with uncertainty regarding many individual points of faith. These are the men who can hold out some real ideal for the struggling adolescent. Adolescence ought to be a time of conflict and struggle...it is not for adults to play it safe by trying to avoid all conflict.'

Another harbinger that I was, perhaps, on the right track after all appeared in a Time magazine article on "Selective Faith" which referred to the new, nothing-sacred, general questioning attitude of the "self-styled, growingly noninstitutional Catholic" and to the "uncatholicism in which large numbers of the faithful...live their religious lives apart from official Catholicism--not fully leaving the church, but not really participating in its life either." Following up on this idea of nonparticipation was Protestant theologian Harvey Cox with a cogent explanation for this attitude among all Christians, particularly the young:

The main complaint of most restless young Christians does not center principally on doctrine....they can take doctrine as symbolically as they please. Rather, their complaint focuses on the failure of the Church to live up to

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1Ibid.  2Ibid.  3Ibid.

its own stated ideals.... they feel it has abandoned its role as the conscience trouble and moral avant-garde of society.¹

I saw a need for coming to a better understanding, too, of existentialist and phenomenological philosophies,² and of integrating existentialism insights into counseling: the idea of confronting the human situation in its totality to ask what the basic conditions of human existence are and how man can establish his own meaning out of these conditions.

Over the course of this Fall semester of my "elbow room," then, these "best" ideas precipitated as feasible for the project:

The semester would be identified as a "bridge" project to help the students make meaningful relationships between their last semester in high school and post-secondary education, the service, a job, and/or marriage, etc. "Freedom and Responsibility" would

¹Harvey Cox, "Revolt in the Church," Playboy, XIV (January, 1967), 129ff.

²See also Mother M. Emmanuel Fontes, "Existentialism and its Implications for Counseling," Insight, III (Spring, 1965), 5-15, which lists seven general principles for integrating existential insights into counseling.

Donald F. Krill, "Existentialism: A Philosophy for Our Current Revolutions," Social Service Review, XL (September, 1966), 289-301. The revolutions Krill refers to are not political ones, but rather those in the fields of psychology, sociology, and religion.

Maurice Friedman (ed.), The Worlds of Existentialism: A Critical Reader (New York: Random House, 1964), "makes clear...the issue between those existentialists who see existence primarily in terms of the self and those who see the relations between selves as the fundamental reality....clarifies existential psychotherapy." (dust jacket)
provide an acceptable, though not altogether new, rationale for the semester, and it would help bring religion into perspective. As the teacher/director, I would define myself clearly to the class. I would present my reasons for initiating the project, and carefully delineate the roles of counselor, priest, guidance department. As the counselor I would be available two other periods in the day for one-to-one counseling or small group sessions. The students' role would simply to become involved—truly committed to their own best interests.

Group techniques would be employed to facilitate communication and discussion, student initiative would "run" the class, setting up categories for discussion, arranging groups, developing

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1My rationale for conducting a religion class from a counseling point of view found further justification in the following:


Adrian van Kaam, "Religious Anthropology--Religious Counseling," ibid, pp. 1-7, describes the need for a new "science of Religious Counseling."


reading lists. One or more tape recorders would be available for
use in or out of class with a small, selective tape library on cur-
rent events. ¹ Other materials of possible interest would also be
made freely available to the students. ²

I would set up a special Mass at Loyola, or utilize one
already available, that could be perceived as "real" liturgy to
them. I would arrange for outside speakers to visit the class who
could "tell it like it is"—young, "with it" people, both lay and
religious, who could really communicate with the students (rather
than being solely "authorities") in areas of vital interest to
them, such as marriage and sex orientation.

All of this would hopefully build rapport among us, and
after approximately one month we would be prepared for a meaningful
in-depth discussion of Confession and related woes. Ritual and
symbols would emerge as meaningful to life; I would have emerged
as a non-authority but great counselor; we would develop a wonde-
rous confession questionnaire for giving to the rest of the school.
Freedom and responsibility would prove to be workable—growth
being possible on a high school level without the usual negativism,

¹ Throughout that Fall I kept close track of forthcoming TV
or radio programs of the "talk" variety; i.e., Irv Kupcinet's "Kupe
Show," John Madigan's "At Random," William F. Buckley's "Firing
Line," Stuart Brent's "On Books," etc., and when something looked
as if it might prove pertinent and useful, I arranged to tape re-
cord it, and thus built up this tape library for class use.

² From the time I first began to consider the possibility
of taking over an experimental class, I was on the lookout for per-
tinent materials, and to that end kept an extensive filing system,
incorporating articles from a wide variety of publications—professional journals to Playboy; from books to news clippings.
Some areas were: "Adolescent Problems," "New Morality," "Changing
Church," "Ecumenism," "Sex," "Playboy Philosophy," "Existentialism"
infringements.

All in all, we would have deftly analyzed the world, come up with the right solutions for us, and gone on our merry ways.

So it can be seen why I was a little anxious, why I did not quite feel ready to take all of this on earlier in the Fall. What I did not see was that I had begun to lose the focus of my original group counseling theme, and was slowly forming a one-semester sermon--a self-negating principle--and was becoming a super-authoritarian person on my own. First principles had fogged over: what had happened to the idea of accepting the other person as he really is? What if they did not go along with me? I was getting defensive, and building a great wall. My needs, not theirs, were dominating.

Fortunately, emergence of some key themes helped me reevaluate my position before I invalidated my whole purpose in attempting the class in the first place:

In returning (reluctantly but wisely) to a relatively unstructured semester ideal, listening itself began to be a negotiable concept. Along with Rogers on Active Listening,¹ the Cutrar course was to stress dynamic, affective/cognitive listening as a counseling key.

As I began listening more to the world around me, to rely more heavily on my instinct to pick up meaningful, contemporary background, a television interview of the wife of the late Robert Flaherty, famous documentary film-maker of the 20s and 30s, pro-

vided my own bridge into the semester. The interviewer asked Mrs. Flaherty if she could provide some insight into the success of her husband's approach and, after some deliberation, she said simply, "Non-preconception."

Through my own interest in films I was aware that in making Nanook of the North, Man of Aran, and Moana, Flaherty had taken the novel approach of living on location until he felt the picture was ready to "make itself"; i.e., his understandings and people's feelings, the major elements of actual life itself made their own story. At this point, Flaherty, serving primarily as a catalyst for cooperation and technical coordination, simply filmed what was there. He brought as little preconception of his subjects as possible with him, preferring to come to understand and show them as they were.

I, too, hoped to come to understand the students "as they were," letting the semester be a bridge project for them--helping them close the perception/action gap between high school and the Summer and Fall afterward, thus building for the future realistically in terms of opportunity, in terms of self. An important element in building this bridge would be what we were to call "elbow room," the time and freedom and opportunity to think, to act, to be themselves. This elbow room would enable them, I hoped, to be open and to become truly involved in some area that interested them.

The semester would be working from at least one preconception, and that was spontaneous dynamics. There would be no defini-
texts. I would try to prime the pump with an identification of myself to them and an explanation of the key themes, and let them flow free. This is a record of that freedom: "This is what's happening, baby."
CHAPTER III. THE EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION CLASS

The day the semester began, I found out what was happening: 43 students in one room, with immovable desks, and that the only room available. They were from six different homerooms, and although they had been together the previous semester as a religion class, they did not all know one another. I had been informed that they were an average class, with a reputation for being clowns and rowdies—an active part of that year's Senior class image as a "strange" group, not really turned on by academics. An example of this was the fact that at this point over half of the class had yet to do anything formally concerning future plans. A good group, in other words, for my purposes.

But the first class WAS a class, all the way through. If for no other reason than its being different, their attention was undivided. My introduction of myself, the information that this would be a "different kind of religion class," that it would be a project in self-involvement, community, commitment, and that I would be the non-authoritarian director (I did not have all the answers but would try to meet their commitment with my own) was confusing to them but it held their interest. In an effort to get to know them as a teacher/counselor/person, I felt they had a right to know me, and gave them a brief identification of my education, teaching, seminary background; my various and sundry jobs as ranch hand, radio announcer, bartender; my current involvements as an
M. A. student, as Loyola's Upward Bound counselor/coordinator,¹ and in my marriage.

The rationale of the principal's "Freedom and Responsibility" paper (which signified to them administrative approval for this mad class) led into the bridge concept, that the semester would be a bridge for both of us to better understanding of ourselves and our relations to the "real" world. I wanted to learn from them—and vice versa. This meant talk, involvement, dialogue, openness, a re-evaluation of attitudes and values, a formalizing of thinking and reflecting. This self-discovery/renewal/commitment drive was to be more an implosion than an explosion. I was challenging them and myself, and was honest about the history of my being there, of my original Confession and thesis plans; but that I did not know what I would learn!

With an explanatory reference to Marshall McLuhan² to give them a basis for this "happening," non-linear-type of experience, our medium was to be primarily elbow room: that a person needed room, opportunity, space, time, freedom to think, to act, to grow. Ours would begin by having no definite text.³ Major stress was

¹Upward Bound is a federally funded (Office of Economic Opportunity) anti-poverty program designed to help low-achieving high school students with college ability reach their potential. Attitudes toward the education/instruction dichotomy were similar in both my class here and among the Upward Bound students. Both were at least educationally disadvantaged in that their "formal" learning was perceived as frustrating and unrealistic—the solution to which was commonly to "turn off."


³The text they had been using was a Christian Brothers
placed on my "getting to know you" and vice versa. There was no objection to the idea of a seating chart until I knew everyone.\(^1\)

With the announcement that class would be held only three times a week\(^2\)--with myself available in a private counseling room for the two periods following--the class was more than pleased,\(^3\) and in a receptive frame of mind for my wrap-up request: trust me! With the reiteration of our purposes of involvement, they would have to believe in me, have confidence in me. I hoped that I had already given them something of a model to work from.

The two other classes that first week were just as stimulating. Continuing with the theme of "trust me," and a recap of

\(^{\footnotesize 1}\) They were impressed that I actually did know them all by name within two or three weeks. A number of former teachers evidently had not bothered over the course of one semester--or even two!

\(^{\footnotesize 2}\) At a Department Chairmen meeting, Jan. 19, 1967, a member of the Religion Department recommended that Religion be taught "only three days a week for all four classes. Counseling should take place on the other days." As far as I know the suggestion was not carried out by any of the Religion classes except my own--and that had been planned in advance of this meeting.

\(^{\footnotesize 3}\) The greatest overall response I got from the group throughout the semester was 1) for the announcement that class would be held only three days a week, and 2) in wonderment at knowing someone with a beard. Two quotes from Steinbeck's Cannery Row helped alleviate the latter. "If a man ordered a beer milk shake, he thought, he'd better do it in a town where he wasn't known. But then, a man with a beard, ordering a beer milk shake in a town where he wasn't known--they might call the police." "A man with a beard was always a little suspect anyway. You couldn't say you wore a beard because you liked a beard. People didn't like you for telling the truth."
of the last class, I identified my "professional self" in terms of membership in counseling and guidance associations, teacher's certificates in several states, etc. I made sure to tie in the motivation that despite these various labels, the class was going to be an extension of who we all were as persons, that I had taken a thesis program to help my involvement as a counselor, that I asked of them that they learn to be as confused as I was, that they somehow try to commit themselves to a state of learning--without a fear of failure, too much work, or painful involvement and change. The school knew "what" they were in terms of grades, their overall scholastic history--but very little had been done in terms of "who" they were. This was to be a "who" project.

They were given a ditto on the counseling continuum which clearly and briefly explained the differences between an interview, advisement, counseling, and psychotherapy, and I passed out pamphlets explaining "The Role of the Secondary School Counselor" from the American School Counselor Association. ¹

As I had identified myself to them, I asked that they do likewise--handing in a brief, unstructured ID of themselves to help them testify/involve at this point. These would help me get to know them sooner. Initial interviews had begun the second day of class, so I could begin to identify names with personalities. I started them out with the first line from Dickens' David Copper-

field: "I am born."¹

To further identify myself as someone interested in them, I introduced the *Time* "Man of the Year"—themselves, the 25-and-under generation. Strangely, only one person had read the article, but it provided good fodder for discussion, and another good theme of challenge for the group.

For better or for worse, the world today is committed to accelerating change: radical, wrenching, erosive of both traditions and old values. Its inheritors have grown up with rapid change, are better prepared to accommodate it than any in history, indeed embrace change as a virtue in itself. With his skeptical yet humanistic outlook, his disdain for fanaticism and his scorn for the spurious, the Man of the Year suggests that he will infuse the future with a new sense of morality, a transcendent and contemporary ethic that could infinitely enrich the 'empty society.' If he succeeds (and he is prepared to) the Man of the Year will be a man indeed—and have a great deal of fun in the process.²

Most of their ID's had come in right away, although they had a choice as to whether to turn one in at all or not, and were very much to my purpose—brief sketches indicating interests and needs more than straight autobiographical history.³ They showed an interesting group with challenging needs.

A quote from one of the ID's served to start out the next class: "I am in a stage of self-realization which will end only when I reach adulthood. Who will I be then?" But I queried the


³See Appendix B.
class, "Who are you now?"

The Great Blizzard of '57 intervened at this point--after our first week together--but fortunately I felt that I had a solid anchor with the class. When class attendance was ragged that second week, I had an opportunity to concentrate on the initial identification interviews and get feedback on the first week. We were all enthused, and confused.

We did manage one full class, however, and two major ideas were broached. One was that I was expecting a "research" paper to prove and encourage their involvement. The other was the notification that the class retreat was about a week away rather than the month I had planned on.

We began a couple of themes that were to continue: an introduction to Kennedy, affective learning, and the difference between education and instruction. On the board, I put:

'The purpose of a liberal arts education is to expand to the limit the individual's capacity, and desire, for self-education, for seeking and finding meaning, truth, and enjoyment in everything he does.'

And, just to keep ourselves in perspective:

When building a triumphal arch to your hero, build it out of brick so you have something to throw at him as he marches through it.

A mention of my own involvement--attendance at the Kennedy annual Critic lecture and "The Male Mystique"--provided an intro-

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2 Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953).
duction to his "Characteristics of the Counselor" and the client-centered themes of responsibility, integrity, UPR, openness, acceptance (not acquiescence), and the implications of affective learning on their research. It was to be a formal testimony/commitment in terms of our "bridge"; the research was to be person-oriented rather than problem-oriented; they were to be involved on a psychological as well as cognitive level.

This extension of freedom and responsibility in the research paper was to be cleared with me on a one to one basis to avoid confusion, clear up doubts. Any area/subject matter of their own interest was valid, as long as they believed in it. This basic concept of doing something to provide growth within themselves was so unique to them that it took many weeks for some individuals to come to any understanding of just what was meant by this novel concept. A suggestion of doing something in the area of Confession appealed to no one, then or later. A May 1 deadline was given.

1Eugene C. Kennedy, "Characteristics of the Counselor," Insight, I (Winter, 1963), 42-44. These characteristics were very unreal to the students—they could not relate them to any persons they knew.

2See Appendix C for a general list of suggested topics that I dittod and passed out to the class. This was in no way the "preferred" list, but rather "starters" or jumping-off points for those who really did not understand the idea of doing a paper just because the topic was of real interest to them. There turned out to be little correlation between my list and their eventual topics.

3As an interesting sidelight, these high school Seniors, with the exception of about five, did not have library cards, or were kept from using the ones they did have by overdue books/back fines.
The class confusion was almost total, and, as was later proven, everyone initiated his project in terms of our one to one relationship.

Class response to offers of outside speakers to come into class, loans of materials from my tapes, library, ecumenism and "New Church" files was polite rejection. Church-oriented topics were not very well received in general, although the students were responding positively to one of the "purposes" of the semester: to help work out a better religious education program for the school.

The retreat notice drew mixed reactions—-from the very negative due to previous experiences to just being glad for an excuse to get away from classes. Most had only a vague idea as to the value of a retreat in ordinary religious terms—and were not the least interested in being enlightened. Even trying to provoke some reaction with "far out" ideas such as "drive-in Confession" got very little response.

What did get response was that I was actually going to make the retreat with them (as an observer). It seemed proof to them that I really was interested in them, really wanted to get to know them. Their ID's had all been given back by this time—-some with comments—and by the first day of the retreat I had seen everyone for at least the initial interview.

Even though our Confession/retreats discussion in class did not get any place before the retreat, we did agree on an evaluation of the retreat afterward.

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CHAPTER IV. THE RETREAT

The retreat was to be made at a retreat house about 50 miles west of Chicago. It was in the country and was definitely a welcome change of atmosphere from the city. The dittoed orientation we had seen several days earlier promised a change in retreat atmosphere, too: "The all-silence retreat has been changed in view of the need for dialogue and group discussion." Rules were reasonably permissive. The house itself was a huge chalet-type building, decorated in knotty pine, and featuring a comfortably furnished discussion room in the basement.

We were housed in a new dormitory annex, which more than suited our needs. The students volunteered for the various retreat tasks in every area (even KP) except one--assisting at Mass. At the last minute, we were able to talk several of the fellows into helping with the Masses, which were fairly successful, with about 75% attendance, good singing and guitar accompaniment.

The schedule itself began rigidly on time, but within a day had adjusted to the group.

I identified myself to the retreat director, who had helped build the house and who had, he said, given more than 400 retreats.

1This was to become a self-styled appeal to his authority in all discussions and which led to an overheard remark to the effect that he had not given 400 retreats, but rather one retreat 400 times.
The director proved to be sincere, dynamic, vague, and authoritarian, a person in change himself, but not willing to admit it. "I'm not here to preach at you...but for you to think about what we say." Yet he did preach, was unyielding much of the time, begged the question frequently, seemed especially unsure of himself with our group—they rattled him considerably—and was very obviously defensive when challenged by individuals.

In our orientation before Mass, the director tossed out the retreat as being a challenge to the "independent thinker," the goal being personal freedom. "We're here to talk about life and all its aspects." Testimony, group techniques, fellowship, communication—these were the stated goals. Yet, he was preaching, and clearly and negatively toned the retreat and himself when he became angry and flustered in response to this question from one of the students "Do we have the freedom to choose to go or not to go to Mass?" His answer was not clear, and I noted throughout the retreat and when talking to him that he himself was not clear on the threat this group represented to him. He may have given 400 retreats, but he was just beginning to emerge—and painfully—into New Church. He was truly confused and upset that someone would ask such a question and he became exceedingly overbearing, nipping in the bud, it seemed to me at the time, any atmosphere of freedom in which a student could truly ask the questions he wondered about. They were not going to be accepted as valid coming from an "independent thinker," nor as a part of the "freedom" he had just outlined as a basic operating principle.
Later in the evening after Mass and supper, a film was shown in the lower lounge with the purpose of eliciting discussion on emotional immaturity in the high school student. Unfortunately, it was stylized early 1950s. Before the discussion, the director gave the group the freedom to leave if they wished—even though this meant walking up an open set of creaking stairs in front of the room. His vague, overgeneralizing, authoritarian, preaching manner did not sit well with the group which, one by one, crept up the stairs. Asking me as an observer if I thought the discussion was personally relevant to the students, I had to admit I did not think so. This was step one in non-purposely setting myself up against the director.

A later talk that evening introduced us to the young priest assigned to our retreat who, although very serious, talked vague nonsense around Frankl's logotherapy without ever once mentioning his source nor checking with the students to see if his concepts were coming through. Again the students quietly creaked away.

Saving the evening, and probably the whole retreat, was a late night venture into group counseling in which students related their own self-concepts to the group, and persons in the group related their own impressions of the individual—the purpose being to elicit growth, understanding, and closeness among the participants. It was a great success for the 15 or so who participated—it had not been well organized, and got going too late in the evening, but lasted well into the night. As an observer, I was able to get an extremely good picture of some of the members of my class.
and found myself beginning to be engaged in meaningful counseling sessions--the students had begun to identify with me.

The morning session of the following day was based on "What is the basis of morality...why do we act the way we do?" After a dreary first hour run by the priest, who obviously was not skilled in working with groups, a student asked, "Do we decide because of Christian values or because of common sense?" and opened up the rest of the group. Another student came in with "Christianity is a parallel to self-realization," and the subsequent dialogue (at last) began to reveal that the students were not really involved with these concepts of God and Christ--yet when they asked a question, it was a good one. They felt more free with the priest, who was much more open than the director, but found much question-begging to the above questions and to "Why should we have confidence in the teaching authority of the Church?" "Who are the saved?" "Why are you a Catholic, Father?" "Isn't the Church a phony, not relating to youth?" "How is Jesus THE Catholic personal God?" "Who is Christ today?"

I felt, as a counselor, that I could phrase one question that really was in most of them, and did: "What place does the Church have for agnostics, or rebounders, who are serious about asking questions and getting meaningful answers for themselves?" In answering this I thought he did a good job, and also allied the students with him: "Keep the sacraments while searching honestly." They seemed to accept this.

So far, the group was very skeptical of the retreat, but
was compensated by the homey atmosphere, privacy, good food, opportunity to take walks on the spacious grounds and romp in the plentiful remains of the Great Snow. (We had an excellent snow-ball fight during which any possible image of me as an aloof teacher was forever obliterated. Unfortunately I missed the great pig riding debacles—the reason why many missed the late-night group session the first evening—both of which seemed to generate an enthusiastic group spirit... a glue.)

My own role had subtly shifted from that of observer to middleman between the students and those running the retreat, and by the afternoon of the second day, I had been cast as "good guy" against the "baddies." This was inevitable as I was in a position to intervene for them on countless small matters, and had talked to a number of individuals and small groups already—my room was in the dormitory and I was accessible.

The afternoon of the second day was planned as an orientation to a panel of seven girls from the area coming in that evening to just talk "as girls" to the retreatants. The plan had worked well in the past, and provided an opportunity for objective girl-boy reflections. Unfortunately for the director, and for the priest, the afternoon became a set-up from which they could not avoid being knocked down. The director waxed long and authoritatively on the nature of girls, citing himself as a master source. He very much alienated and irritated the group, since he did not give them the opportunity to express their own feelings on the subject. In addition, the treatment of masturbation was incompl
and both director and priest seemed embarrassed by it. The director, although honest within his own framework, showing some reflection and growth, was rather naive about sex. His views on "the pill," sexual maturity, marriage, pornography, etc., definitely became a monologue. One of the students asked me pointedly through the director what I thought, forcing me to "take sides" as I was considerably more liberal than they, and did not feel bound by strictly theological viewpoints. As I ended my monologue, the fellows cheered and clapped, making gritty my sincere question to the director and the priest that they explain their own vocations to celibacy and why their way of life was meaningful to them, a question they had avoided earlier. They fudged on this, too, whereas had they openly taken up the subject, they could have utilized the renewed student interest in their own retreat purposes. Thus step two in unsought progress for "my" side.

His views followed the Christian Brothers text that we had abandoned for the semester, especially chapter 11, "Man and Wife," which relied heavily on a 1961 article by Protestant theologian Harvey Cox, "Playboy's Doctrine of Male," Christianity and Crisis, XXI (April 17, 1961), 56-58, as a key to anti-female philosophy.

My rebuttal consisted of pointing out that Playboy had changed considerably since the article was published, so much so that Cox did an aboutface, giving a verbal rebuttal to himself in a television dialogue with Hugh Hefner, Timothy Leary, William F. Buckley, and Rabbi Richard Rubenstein on "Kup's Show," Jan. 7, 1967. In addition, he has contributed twice to Playboy magazine.

I got a particularly violent reaction against Playboy from both director and priest—that I happened to have several timely rebuttals and a positive attitude toward Playboy was just my good luck. It provided more controversy in the retreat, making me the "good guy" again.

In the future, a mention of Playboy was always good for strict attention—a contemporary bridge in itself.
Later that evening the discussion groups with the girls went very well, and the girls were frank, if not totally honest. The fellows thought it a terrific idea, of course, and as I sat in on all seven of the groups, I considered them profitable. Not many of the fellows had ever just talked to a girl and some, it turned out, had never even dated.

Over a beer with the priest that evening, at his invitation to show no hard feelings, I found that he was very much a conservative, rigidly bound priest, that he was non-understanding of the fellows, frustrated with his role as priest in the retreat but not sure he could function in any other--yet many of the fellows went to Confession to him. He was quiet, shy, and very much concerned at the signs of what he called the "middle-age syndrome" of non-elasticity within himself. I was more than pleased to be able to encourage him in getting more practice with groups through retreats, teaching, and explained my own role of experimenter in confusion.

A number of the students approached me that evening with the complaint that the retreat was a waste, that they had no freedom, that they were being force-fed, that there were in reality no small group discussions as had been promised. The surreptitious pig riding on a neighboring farm they referred to as their "elbow room" on the retreat, but after discussion they did consent to try to do something about their complaints. They asked the director for a student evaluation session of the retreat before they left the next night and he consented.
The morning of the last day was spent in a disastrous attempt by the priest to give a "real" sex orientation to the fellows. They were so embarrassed for him as his ineptness and naivete that they would not even talk to me about it, although I had been on hand myself until it became painfully unbearable.

The afternoon was a good example of the director's growing ambivalence. With all sincerity, with a verbalized statement that he was trying to be more open and meaningful with the students, he proceeded to wander through the psychology of "independence" in monologue form. He did not make his points clearly, not noticing or not wanting to notice that the fellows were not following him. His personal anecdotes became uncontrolled in their irrelevancy. His definition of a Christian, if not good, at least suited my purposes: "One who accepts the man for who he is, not what you want him to be." But then he constantly violated his definition, dealt more and more erratically on a non-personal level, and just seemed to be feeding his ego and own sense of independence.

Finally, the retreat evaluation was not run too well, but worse yet, after accepting the idea and promising to not interrupt the director continually did so, being overbearing and threatening in tone as he had been throughout the retreat, and squelching many comments and questions. The students in turn became exceedingly polite—they had, after all, enjoyed their "vacation" in spite of the director—and would not criticize him or the retreat set-up. My chief reaction was that they had insulted themselves by not being honest to the director.
All in all, it had been a very profitable retreat for me, and for each of the students in some way. The interactions of the group and the director identified to me many warnings for "do's" and "don't's" for my class, and had reiterated many of my themes. We were beginning to communicate!

* * *

With the experience of the retreat the students found many of our themes beginning to make sense. Non-preconception in relation to the retreat director's categorized outlook on them, and his inability to accept them for the way they were—for who they were—his non-openness: all were in favor of our communicating. The following week was devoted to retreat evaluation and applications to ourselves and the group. I was particularly curious about their lack of testimony during the retreat concerning their own needs, at obvious inconsistencies in presentation or logic, at misunderstandings of who they were—I felt that they had been too polite, dishonest, hypocritical. Their response to this was primarily that they really did not believe it would do any good to protest, that they could see that their questions would be given the runaround. I in turn could see that they had not developed habits of testimony, of speaking out—key terms throughout the semester—that they did not really believe in their own conception of life and themselves. Thus we came to a theme that I continually brought up and with which I got almost nowhere: "making trouble—tactfully." They had been too long instructed in the "mystery" surrounding Church-related spheres which precluded far-
mal testimony against same. In later discussions I would try to eradicate some of this aura with reference to Bakan's "mystery/mastery complex." ¹

The class perceived the retreat as an exercise in elbow room. As the week-long evaluation continued, and we truly functioned as a group for the first time, I kept track of their questions to use in a retreat evaluation questionnaire. We had decided to do an in-depth study of the retreat. There was no doubt that it had been a significant experience for everyone in the group, even if one perceived it negatively, as the retreat evaluation and questionnaire would later verify.

The evaluation form stated a specific area with six possible responses to that area from which the student was to indicate the one that most nearly described his feelings. The full form and the results follow:

I. ABOUT PARTICIPATING:

1. I felt like an observer..............................11
2. I was slightly involved..............................14
3. I entered the discussion primarily to convince others of my position..............2
4. I entered the discussion primarily to "work through" the concern with others....2
5. I felt involved trying to help others clarify their feelings just as I was trying to make clear my own feelings........5
6. No answer............................................0

II. ABOUT EXPRESSING MYSELF:

1. I was afraid to speak up for fear my ideas would appear feeble or irrelevant...6
2. At times I felt ignored or judged, as was defensive........................................6
3. I felt a part of the group but not free to be honest with myself and others...........7
4. I did express myself to some degree and was not afraid of what others would think... 16
5. I felt freer to express my real self because of the openness and expectant listening of the group members... 0
6. No answer........................................ 1

III. ABOUT VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

1. I interrupted others, interjecting irrelevant ideas........................................ 4
2. I felt I talked too much........................................ 3
3. I made an effort to curb my talking........................................ 5
4. I delayed sharing my feelings until I felt I had understood others' feelings........ 17
5. I felt a responsibility to encourage others to express their ideas also........ 1
6. No answer........................................ 6

IV. ABOUT ACCEPTING AND UNDERSTANDING OTHERS:

1. I was critical and caustic, disregarding the feelings of others.................. 1
2. I was frequently indifferent to what others were saying......................... 8
3. I listened to what others said, but was not aware of their real feelings..... 4
4. I tried to listen with openness and expectancy to others' feelings as well as to their ideas................................. 9
5. I felt I was able to accept and understand some of the reasons for others feeling as they do................................. 11
6. No answer........................................ 3

V. ABOUT NEGATIVE SUPPORT OF EACH OTHER:

1. All of us were immediately supportive and encouraging, which kept members from dealing with their real feelings.................. 4
2. Most of us were aware of the need to help others sense their true feelings, but our need to be supportive minimized this effort........................................ 6
3. Some of us tried to help others think through their deeper feelings, and tried not to let our need to be supportive thwart their efforts.................. 7
4. Some of us actually helped others face their true feelings, even though painful, rather than giving surface encouragement.

5. Most of us actually helped others to real self-discovery as we accepted them and their feelings.

6. No answer.

VI. ABOUT MY OWN SELF-DISCOVERY:

1. I felt no desire to express my real feelings and wanted to stay on the surface.

2. I would have liked to express my real feelings but didn't think anything would come from it.

3. I did attempt to express my real feelings but I was thwarted by the group's desire to make me feel better.

4. I expressed some real feelings and some of the group tried to help even though it was painful for all.

5. New discoveries came when my deep feelings were expressed, accepted, and understood by some.

6. No answer.

In Part II of the evaluation, the questions were to be answered simply yes, no, or no answer:

1. Did you feel you were given the freedom to do "independent thinking" as encouraged by the retreat master in the orientation meeting? YES NO ANSWER

2. Did you experience an increased, renewed fellowship with the other members of the group? YES NO ANSWER

3. Did you feel that you were "preached" at? YES NO ANSWER

4. Were you open to Christ becoming more real within yourself? YES NO ANSWER

5. Did you understand what the retreat was all about? YES NO ANSWER
6. Did you feel that the retreat director related well to your group?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Could/did you relate to the concept/question discussed that, "Do we decide because of Christian values or common sense?"  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Did you come to a better understanding of the following issues which were brought up by the group to the retreat director or priest? (Number 9 by director; number 10, rq.)

- "The Church is a phony...not relating to youth."  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "Christianity is a parallel to self-realization."  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "The Church is force-fed to us."  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "How is Jesus THE Catholic personal God?"  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "Who is Christ today?"  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "Why are you a Catholic, Father?"  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "Who are the saved?"  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. "A Christian accepts a man for WHO he is, not what you want him to be."  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. What place does the Church provide for sincere agnostics, rebounders, who are seeking for belief, answers, and who want to remain a part of the living community of the Church within the sacraments?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Do you go the Confession fairly regularly?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Do you have a particular confessor?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Do you feel guilty going to Mass and not receiving communion?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Do you go to Mass regularly on Sundays and holy days?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Do you feel guilty not going to Mass on Sundays or holy days?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Overall, was the retreat a worthwhile experience for you?  
28 3 5

17. Was the evaluation period at the end of the retreat worthwhile for you?  
16 17 3

18. Do you think a "religous" retreat for your group was a good idea?  
18 11 7

19. Do you think the retreat was worthwhile for the retreat master?  
29 3 4

20. Did the evaluation period accomplish its purpose?  
16 12 8

Part III asked the students to evaluate the retreat master and the priest according to several criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER: retreat master</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ANSWER: priest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OPEN MINDED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FRIENDLY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SINCERE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ORGANIZED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CONSISTENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>REALISTIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MEANINGFUL IN HIS DIALOGUE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>KNOWLEDGABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FOUND MYSELF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HE DIRECTED ME TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF MYSELF AND</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next question was to be answered yes or no but also specifically solicited a comment:

"Do you feel that the retreat master directed you toward anything definite during the retreat? If so, what?  
14 15 6

--Finding myself.

--He directed me toward a better understanding of myself and..."
also myself in relation with others. I feel I am a better person and a better Catholic because of it.

--Through my handwriting analysis, he made self-realization more evident to me. I left there with an open mind, compassion for different people, greater respect for my girl and myself. The retreat wasn't worth $23, it was worth $23,000. The guys that complained most about the retreat had a closed mind through the entire retreat. Every guy got out of it what he put into it.

--I think that he stopped a lot of definite thinking when he changed his answers....We couldn't get anything definite because if we kept talking to him we could get him to say almost anything.

--The retreat master tried to direct us toward Christ, but in going in a roundabout way, he directed us toward different things at different times. The direction I would be inclined to take is the one he paved for us toward a happy, mutually satisfying sexual relationship with my girl.

--To ask ourselves about ourselves.

--He directed me toward of repulsion of himself.

--Self-analysis.

--Thinking and evaluating other's thoughts and relating them to yourself.

--I had my handwriting analyzed. It was the most enlightening, the best thing any religious man has ever done for me. During the analysis, he offered suggestions. They were not forced on me. It was different, in some cases, very different from the rest of the retreat.

--To analyze myself for my future and to try to get the most out of my life and work.

--Catholicism.

--He tried to push too much the idea of the Church and the way it's supposed to be.

--Toward God was his purpose and he directed us toward morality.

On the final part of the objective retreat analysis, the students were asked to grade aspects of the retreat according to a five-
point scale: 1 = excellent; 2 = satisfactory; 3 = indifferent; 4 = unsatisfactory; 5 = intolerable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Evaluation period at the end of the retreat</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Arrangements for going to Confession</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do you think of the idea of mixed (boy/girl) retreats?</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Homework assignments due right after retreat.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How do you feel about:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls as a part of your dialogue/communication experience on the retreat.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing a film and discussing it afterward.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal confrontation/testimony sessions by the whole group.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal confrontation/testimony sessions by small groups.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to have the director analyze your handwriting.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The actual experience of this analysis by those who did.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The general group discussions.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The small group discussions.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The director</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The priest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The faculty member</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The general organization of retreat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The idea that a retreat has to be religious</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No mention of Lent beyond the opportunity to receive ashes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Physical accommodations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12345</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retreat house</td>
<td>30/2 0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel</td>
<td>19 8 3 0 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>1 13 5 7 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging: beds, rooms, heating</td>
<td>13 16 2 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost ($23)</td>
<td>6 8 10 3 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Closed&quot; retreat</td>
<td>15 6 9 2 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory Mass attendance</td>
<td>1 5 9 7 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory attendance at group activities</td>
<td>1 11 9 6 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible enough?</td>
<td>8 15 2 5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic format?</td>
<td>3 7 9 3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>4 14 7 5 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:20 Wed. to 7:15 Fri.</td>
<td>5 11 6 4 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Mass:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapel itself</td>
<td>17 9 6 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral (group) intentions</td>
<td>12 12 4 3 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Folk&quot; hymns</td>
<td>10 12 6 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guitar accompaniment</td>
<td>17 11 2 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion under bread and wine</td>
<td>22 5 2 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handshake of peace</td>
<td>3 9 8 7 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assigned seating</td>
<td>1 4 11 7 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermons</td>
<td>1 10 13 5 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you find the RETREAT MASTER:

- 20 authoritarian
- 8 clear
- 7 accepting
- 21 confident of self
- 14 personality
- 21 conservative

...and... 7 open
...and... 22 confusing
...and... 22 rejecting
...and... unsure
...and... CLOSED
...and... GROWING
...and... liberal
...and... synthesis (eclectic)

Did you find the PRIEST:

- 12 authoritarian
- 18 clear
- 23 accepting
- 11 confident of self
- 26 personality
- 17 conservative

...and... 19 open
...and... 12 confusing
...and... 6 rejecting
...and... unsure
...and... CLOSED
...and... GROWING
...and... liberal
...and... synthesis (eclectic)

The essay questions showed that the majority had not understood what a retreat was before they went on this one, and their pre-judgments were negatively toned. The retreat itself, in spite of its limitations, turned out to be a pleasant surprise for the students. Their ideas for future retreats stated that they should be basically like this one but more personal, with a more open retreat master, and more organized, and that they should not be compulsory. A majority of the students felt that the retreat director had not achieved what he had hoped with this group because he had wanted everything done "his way." They did feel, however, that he had covered most topics that were relevant to their lives at this point, voicing a desire only for smaller group discussions of these topics. On the question as to why they had not protested, or discussed, any aspect of retreat they felt could have been profitably changed, they almost unanimously replied that they felt it would do no good, that the retreat director was too set in his ways to change.
* * *

During this period of the retreat evaluation, we were also precipitating more ideas for research topics. Mention on my part of the current Ave Maria "Who is Christ?" series was ignored as far as I could tell, in spite of that having been an expressed concern during the retreat. Better response was accorded reviews by me of such films as Antonioni's Blow-Up and Pasolini's The Gospel According to St. Matthew. But the best response was to a casual mention on February 13 of love and St. Valentine's Day—they were aware of that!

Listening as a separate dynamic process came into focus, and notes were distributed. Listening for tone, level of involvement, emotional and cognitive content, such keys to "What is this guy REALLY saying" and "You can't respond if you don't understand," the challenge of involvement and the responsibility of response all came into play. I played a tape in class of the first in a series of Stuart Brent programs on "The Idea of God," as a historical overview of man's capacity to search internally for truth and the idea of God. I had also dittoed a tape transcript to aid their following along. All of which led to my discovery that

1 Anthony Padovano, "Who Is Christ?" series, Ave Maria, CV (Feb. 4 through March 25, 1967).
2 Rogers and Farson.
3 Stuart Brent on "The Idea of God," a series of four TV programs on channel 32, Feb. 16, 23, March 2, and 9, 1967. Independently, some of the students were using the Brent materials, but as a group experience it was fruitless.
1) the subject matter was beyond most of them, and 2) in spite of my pump-priming on listening, they did not relate to anything as static as tape. In fact, I was beginning to realize that the ordinary learning materials were irrelevant to them—reading, research, listening, speaking—they just did not communicate that way.¹ They were turned off, but polite about it—the mode of least resistance. Their curiosity was buried by indifference, apathy, and the instinct for non-involvement. Fortunately for my mental health, I knew we were communicating through the counseling sessions, but as a group, I was not sure.²

¹Throughout the semester, suggestions of "academic research"—by reference to books in their areas of interest, mention of book stores, outside readings, pertinent TV programs—fell on stony ground. These students were definitely not materials-oriented; nor were they in the habit of taking notes while in class.

²Along with the many personal contacts I made during the retreat, one that stood out was with the student who had asked the director if Mass were obligatory, thus bringing down the director's wrathful tone upon the group, and symbolizing the feeling they had toward authority, structure, and their own personalities. It was he, also, who spearheaded "doing something"—the evaluation at retreat's end—with the disgruntled faction, and even though it was not entirely successful, he had grown considerably through the testimony. During one of our talks I gave him the choice of independent study as far as the class was concerned, and the first morning back in class he took me up on it. He was the most obviously cynical and verbal person in the group, and my idea was to meet and work with him, rather than alienate him. He was very surprised that, first, I had offered him the opportunity; second, that I meant it. In explaining to the class, although not mentioning him by name, I offered the same alternative to anyone else who felt he could meet my expectations of the group in that way. I was willing to work out personal arrangements with any and all of them. Only one other person took me up on this—and he was surprised that he was only number two, for he too was extremely cynical. The fact was, the two of them were considerably more mature than most of the group, knew who they were and what they wanted, and gave ample evidence to me that they would profit more by being out of the group than in it.

Conversely, I learned a great deal through the two of them
I hoped to challenge them to speak out, but even the physical layout was a handicap to positive group interaction: the room was definitely overcrowded and small group work was severely hampered by the immobile desks. Other factors promoting their galloping apathy were the approach of Spring, the fact that these second semester Seniors were just plain tired of school, and that I was bucking anti-education/learning tendencies of long standing.¹

Toward the end of February, I handed out guidelines for the research involvement.² I left it open to the students to decide if they wanted to feedback to me in some manner other than writing.

The students picked up on the multi-media approach of McLuhan, and between my growing awareness of their individuality and their increasing bravery to try things their own way, the research evolved into a very subjectively structured project for each person. This seemed to give them more freedom and confidence to work through affective barriers to productive growth in a particular area, without having to worry about a formal written paper. It also provided us with a legitimate excuse to meet for counseling sessions, and I was finding myself very involved outside class.

--once they realized I was really interested in them with no strings attached, they talked freely to me, and over the semester thought seriously and long about their particular personalities and goals for renewal. The first student was overtly honest in his complaints--the only one out of 43 who was--the second was willing to put up with almost anything as long as he didn't get anyone "on his case" and cause him trouble. He considered himself a pragmatist, "marking time" and "opting out."

¹For how the class appeared to an outside observer, see Appendix D.
²See Appendix E.
CHAPTER V. THE TURNING POINT AND AFTER

Within the class, meanwhile, we had begun to slide downhill. I had begun to get preachy, overdoing explanation of the themes aspect, and tending to overkill the retreat evaluations— even though I did want some objective distance between us and the experience to avoid pure emotionalism. My own outside involvements, such as ecumenical evaluation with a group I belonged to, an extremely authoritarian Cana Conference attended with my wife, and activities in human relations groups, were maintaining my promise at the beginning of the semester that I intended to become involved, too. But the classroom itself, if not the class, was becoming intolerable to the students, equally intolerable and confusing to me.

Fortunately, in response to my daily request for comments as to how we could improve our lot, two students whom I had involved in outside group activities mentioned that they felt the class had been about a week overextended, that the motivation as a class group was drying up.

At this point I had seen more than half of the students for a second interview during the counseling periods and definitely knew I was communicating outside of class. Commitments were precipitating well in terms of involvement, our themes were being
reviewed with each student individually for his own mode of internalization, and so, on the basis of what I was observing and what insights the students themselves offered, I decided on a policy change. There would be no formal classes for a month—until the first day of class after Easter vacation. The room would still be available to use as a study room or a group work room. My counseling office hours would be the same. I would be available for individual or small group counseling.

The class was simply too large and unwieldy for a realistic goal of communication, of individuals knowing themselves better or working out their project commitments. The chances for successful group interaction should be better in a month after the individuals knew themselves and each other better, particularly since their commitment areas would be group information unless confidential for some reason.

The following pages are a transcript of the tape I made of this "turning point" class. Although lengthy, it is included here because I think it was the fulcrum to the entire semester.

I'm changing policy as of today because I think I know what to do...sensing from the group...and I think I've talked to enough of you...and I feel secure enough of you to suggest this: this is really a unique experience with me...operating quite idealistically...and the retreat experience was good...we had gotten to where we were repeating the same old things...We're past the point where I think we ought to change.

I think we've learned one thing, group discussion isn't going to work.

We won't be getting together as a group until the first day of class after Easter. The rationale involved is this...not involved, very simple thing...I've been trying to experience being a part of you...and I think I'm beginning to feel some of your identity as a group, as you've been getting to know me. I don't want to make this complicated,
and it's becoming a little more simple to me and I want you to get something out of it.

Therefore...some area of interest you are committing yourself to...you can relate that to small "r" religion if you want to, that's your business. Some of you have topics that are similar, for instance, if you really need religion today...some of you (not very many) have been doing some reading and thinking about this...I've received some feedback that might be worth those particular people's while to get together as their OWN group. So...before you leave class today, I'd like for you to put on a piece of paper a short statement of this area that you're going into. And I can only ask you to be honest...somebody else might want to talk to you about what you're going into.

I think it's significant that these are your interest areas, and I don't think I toned them at all...they come from you....

I've reached a point in class of "ad nauseum" I guess, because I hadn't really felt that all of you were willing to understand, to face this idea of education vs. instruction, reverence, etymology, this non-preconception business, the idea of doing some research in an area you are interested in and not me, etc....

What's the idea behind all this? Well, I'm becoming fully convinced, and I'm even beginning to feel...some of your frustrations of your groups and those I'm in...the point is, I think we've passed the point where we can communicate, therefore, I will still be showing up in this room, second period, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. I'll be available for just talking to small groups. I still want to see quite a few of you, to get to know you. I'll still be available the same hours for counseling...it doesn't have to be in the school...might even be better...

What's the whole idea again this semester? Again, a bridge project, a little openness, maybe giving you a little elbow room to maybe become yourself a little more realistically this summer. This all sounds very pious...and it may not work with you, but the main thing is it's working with a lot of you, as you've expressed to me at least privately. I don't take any of the credit for that...you were open, and once you become open, you start doing things. Even now...speaking to you as a group, I don't know if I'm communicating or not...I've been very perplexed the past couple weeks as to what to do...we all knew we were starting to waste time...well, we're changing approach as of today.

As far as the administration is concerned, there's no problem there. Just don't cause trouble in the halls.

Questions or comments?

Q: "What do you mean by groups?" A: Re: feedback...it would be a good thing for you to know what the others are doing...a lot of you really are getting involved. There's
a group making a film...maybe you can get together with them. A group working on the "Playboy Philosophy." The idea is maybe you'll be interested in one of the groups because you have a feeling for the topic...I don't assume that all of you are in communication with everybody else, but this will give you a little more of a chance.

Q: "Are you bringing in any of those speakers?"
A: We'll have to see. I'm not at all convinced that anybody's interested....I really don't know and I'm not bringing anyone in...their time is valuable...unless I know you're interested...let me know. If one or two are interested, that's enough. I'll bring somebody up, or we'll go down to the U of C for instance. I have seen a girl who's working on her doctorate at the U of C divinity school...she's a cool head....but I don't know if she knows what the hell's going on in religion.... It's a matter of questions today, and she knows a lot of the questions, and is involved with a lot of the people looking for answers.

But this is a curious thing with this group: I'm growing like crazy. Every time I come in here, even when it seems like we're wasting our time, you are having an effect on me that's far greater than I ever thought you could have. I started getting involved with all sorts of groups because of you guys. I've started to raise hell in groups like this retreat you were in, where you get man-handled by somebody who is well meaning but isn't communicating, and isn't listening to what you have to say...and I find this as tough as you guys...and I'm not just talking...I'm out every night to some sort of group meeting, and it's really doing something to me. Consequently, I think we ought to stop these groups here. Because, you know, I haven't got much to say to you. I can lecture, but that isn't what we're here for. And what we're here for in a sense is whatever you want to get out of it...and maybe that's something very insignificant in terms of what you've thought of...but only as I talked to one person who was very concerned that he wasn't accomplishing enough in terms of his research project--he was unsure of how to write a research paper--well, don't sweat that. I don't care how you write it...some of you aren't writing anything. That's all right. We had to start out with something definite to get some people an idea. But the idea I'm trying to develop is that if you've just opened your mind and really gotten interested in an area you've accomplished maybe as much as you're going to accomplish this semester. That's probably quite a lot. And if you really do learn anything at all in this group, just anything at all, I think maybe you're doing a lot and maybe more than you've done for a long time. I talked with a teacher last week who works with groups all the time, down at Loyola, and he said if he can communicate with 5% of the people in any of his classes, he's amazed. Well, something's
wrong, if somebody who's considered to be an excellent teacher, with people flocking to his course, if he's aware that he's hardly communicating with anybody, something's really wrong. And I think there is something wrong--I don't know what the answer is, I know that I'm not involved enough to find out yet, but I am finding out through you guys and some projects I'm getting into because of you and through some of your own projects. And believe me, people who've been in education 20-30 years don't have the answers...that's what's kind of amazing...and that's why I say you're going to have to cause trouble if you want to be who you are, because if people aren't going to listen to you when you need to be listened to, you're going to have to make them, tactfully. And it can be done....

A good question came up: Are we really going to have to write this thing out like a research paper? No. That was a point of departure...an unrealistic one I think in one sense...because it's limiting your openness. You're afraid to write a paper...you're too damn busy. But I do want to get something. I'll be seeing you individually...some of you I may "persuade" to write something...because I think you need it...but it's definitely a two-way thing; we must agree. You don't have to write something on paper to be aware. That's a cinch....

I'll be contacting you this month, so the whole group gets feedback. It may be we decide that we shouldn't get together for two months. When I talked about non-preconception I wasn't kidding...it's working in me, and it's working in some of you...it's an amazing sort of thing...I don't want to dictate what we're going to do...I don't even want to assume anything....And maybe I've got it all wrong, but we're still accomplishing something.

Q: "What's the value in recording this?" A: This is a testimony to me. I'm out on a long limb on this thing as far as I'm personally concerned. I'm a little afraid of doing something like this since I haven't done it before. And I want a record of this...because I'm going to be communicating things to people...because I'm in a position of a leader, you know, regardless of what kind of character I might be...I'm in a position of really communicating and influencing others leaders in the Chicago community, and a lot of people are not going to believe the things that go on in here, and they're going to ridicule me for the assumptions that we've got basic to our operation. That's all right, but I think this is a crucial class, the most crucial class of any that we've had at all, and I want it on tape....I really think we're doing something you know, I'm not sure exactly just what it is, but I know that this sort of thing isn't going on in very damn many places in the Chicago area...and this whole business between instruction and education--we're involved in education here.
I certainly wouldn't have any trouble at all convincing someone that you are learning. We're not just messing around.

Q: "What effect are we having on you?" A: The effect is both good and bad...good in the sense that I'm becoming more...(interrupted: Q: "How can you say good and bad?") I'm a very complex person just like all of you are...I don't see anything in black and white...I can't answer anything just yes or no. It's good in that I'm starting to communicate more with you, which some of you think is good. I'm getting more involved in community which narrows the credibility gap in terms of you seeing me--"Is he just shooting bull or is he with it?...getting involved like he wants us to get involved." I'm getting involved in ways I want to, and in some I don't want to because I'm afraid of it. But I'm doing the very same things I hope you're picking up pieces of.....But I don't like to stand in front of a group like this because I'm not the authority, I'm not the boss....you guys are the bosses...I should be doing what you want to, not what I want you to do. It's bad in the sense that I'm having trouble being as open as I would like to be, and I feel guilty about it...but I can only do so much. Does that give you some idea of an approach to your question? You know, counselors traditionally never answer questions: they're like politicians, they beat around the bush.

You know Curran last week said that very few people who ask questions really want answers. They ask a question because they want somebody to understand what the real curiosity appearing to themselves is...answering pat words just doesn't always do the trick.

If some of you want to hear some things I'll be giving down at Loyola on censorship and pornography...maybe we can get together in a small group here...what's going on in films today...there's quite a number of areas I've mentioned to you that I'm involved in. I would be glad, for instance, to give a lecture to a group in terms of this.is what's going on today in this area...related to you guys. But as a group you are too big, too varied interests....

In other words, I am a teacher in some areas...I lecture down at Loyola at various times...my approach is changing down there, too. I completely reorganized the things I'm doing this semester because of you. I'm trying a new approach....

Student response to this "turning point" was that of strict attention, some confusion, and definite pleasure at not having a formal class period. Actually class had never been "required," although attendance was usually about 90%. We did get
together the following day for a wrap-up to hand in the retreat evaluations (voluntary) and to pick up a dittoed "student involvement" sheet showing research areas to help individuals work in teams if they wished. This proved to be quite useful in setting up lines of communication between different "factions" within the class.

**RELIGION:**

-- Is God dead?
-- Evolution and revolution in Church thought
-- Contemporary short story treatment
-- Who or what is "God" for me?
-- A historical approach to our concept of God
-- What is it, what should it be, do I need it?
-- Birth control (2)
-- What is evil?

**PERSONAL INTEGRATION:**

-- Family problems and current peer attitudes toward religion
-- The search for success: failure and frustration
-- Playboy philosophy: relevance to my religion and life
-- Companionship/friendship/love relationships

**MAKING A FILM:** five working together. Theme: Proving the need for recreational facilities in their "turf"
-- Underground movies: film involvement as aesthetic experience

**EDUCATIONAL:**

-- Implications of application to the Air Force Academy
-- Engineering (2)
-- Physical education major and leadership implications
-- Medicine

**VOCATIONAL:**

-- Transportation management
-- Mortuary business

**OTHERS:**

-- Law/justice: Are the guilty better protected than the innocent?
The students were also informed that they all had "A's" for their mid-term grade because this was not actually a regular religion class, and I had determined that most students were already committed to a specific involvement area, and those who were still undecided had communicated this to me.

There was no one in the class of 43 who did not cooperate with me, who was "rowdy," or who required any form of disciplinary action whatsoever. The respect (our revereor) flowing from me was being fed back.

* * *

The month of no class worked out well. Only four students had been identified as not having a definite commitment, or at least not understanding that they had. Excursions into non-linear patterns were confusing for us all, and frequently an individual would be very much involved, but anxious that he was not doing "the assignment." This pattern proved to require individual help for insight, as group explanations invariably left many out in the cold, not all of whom felt open enough to broach it to me in class.

But curiosity was finally beginning to emerge as an identi-
fiable spirit—if not through the group, at least through growing individuals and small groups who had begun to make their own way. Closer relationships began developing among the students, and with the common ground of the class, the retreat, and the involvement project, plus our individual or small group counseling sessions, they began to know and even like one another.

The best example of this was the melding of two small, opposing factions that had developed in the class. Both were interested, and becoming more so, in the place of religion in modern society, and its relevance, if any, to their own lives. Here were the "ideal" students (all four of them) in terms of my originally formulated purposes for the semester. Each pair of the four had discovered one another as having much in common over the retreat, and they had been following up with their own research, discussions. In the process one pair became identified as the liberals the other as the conservatives, and their arguments/dialogues became near-violent at times. All four had identified themselves well in their original ID's, as I had ample opportunity to confirm during the retreat through their actions with the group and in individual talks with two of them. And each of these two brought his "partner" into the deal.

The opportunity for real communication and rapport was so apparent that it prompted me to invite these four students to my home to meet informally with another community/communication/community-oriented young couple and my wife and myself. The students were treated as equals, as persons, and much communication and
dialogue took place. They were amazed that the age gap wasn't a problem, amazed that we "just talked." "We said things we wouldn't ordinarily have said."

All felt they understood themselves and the others better through the encounter. Hostilities dissolved. Arrangements were made for them to enter into more discussions in several similar groups, on our own, in the future, and the students followed through with these.

Their own taped feedback at the end of the semester more than explained the process of their growth and involvement. Although these few were seemingly best equipped for demonstrating at length their involvement process, each student in the class definitely became involved, providing a great deal of excitement for me. The semester was proving to be a non-preconceived success.

Throughout the semester the Psychology 468 course I was concurrently taking was providing me with new ideas, strengthening some of those I already had, precipitating a more critical evaluation of my involvement, introducing me to persons involved in parallel areas. Most of all it verified daily to me that I was truly involved in an essential counseling experience. Much of it I tried to pass on to my student/clients verbally and through my actions.

Fr. Curran's basic approach was expressed in his paper, "Some Research on Crucial Counselor Responses,"¹ which stresses cognitive response to the language of affect and maintaining

warmth while matching the emotional tone of the client. In so doing, the client becomes cognizant of his own language of affect. But even more real and meaningful for me were Fr. Curran's class lectures, which contained a wealth of counseling wisdom, frequently in quotable form. The core and summary of the course he succinctly stated as: "We need to restore the mystery, the sense of uniqueness of one another." He was a constant reinforcement to "wonderment at the mystery of each person," stressing that we always remember we were "dealing with people first, problems second."

Other ideas that gave me encouragement/reinforcement/support at times when group-ness of the class seemed to be disintegrating were:

If you are willing to listen, people are willing to see you under almost any conditions.

You help people the most in relation to how you LIKE them.

Learning is persons; the essence of learning is 1) community, 2) communication, 3) communion.

Reality may have nothing to do with how the person really sees things....follow things as they happen.  

Related to affective learning, he hit upon a key as to why the group had so shied away from involvement during the first part of the semester: "Persons are insecure about learning new things. Hostility, guilt, defensiveness all play a part."  

1 Charles A. Curran, Psychology 468 class notes.

in with this is the concept of the "mystery/mastery": selling a person on an idea that is mysterious (non-understood) gives one mastery over that person. This idea is especially relevant in the area of religion, and to the effect that clergy often have on people.

The point that I am trying to make is that the Curran experience was very much an integral part of my counseling/class experience with the high school group, and was an extension of the Kennedy course which had paralleled my counseling practicum. My commentary on the "Mystery/Mastery Complex" written for Curran showed the extent of my commitment/involvement/integration.

All of these principles continued to operate within me as the class formally met after Easter. Interaction was much improved, but the class was still a mass of individuals or small groups--what they had in common, a commitment, was proving divisive in terms of a class. The room itself and the large number therein contributed to their sense of impatience to "get on with it."

During this period, however, several experiences proved valuable. In a further attempt to meaningfully relate New Church to them, I discussed my involvement with the newly formed Catholic Commission of Laymen; exposed them to some of the national magazine coverage of the emerging Church, especially the advances in the Dutch church; presented an article on "Adolescents and Today's..."
Crisis of Faith," which momentarily caught their interest, particularly the quote that "adolescents can no longer believe in the God of the system."¹

The pattern that was emerging more clearly was their lack of faith in the way they saw things. In the face of criticism by "authorities"--their families, teachers, Church officials--they felt themselves a minority powerless to anything but "drop out."

That they did have something to say, that their criticisms of the Church and other bureaucratic systems were being voiced by people all over the country, that they could be an operational force in the movement to modernize the Church required my constant encouragement. These ingrained negative or indifferent dispositions, combined with their expressed non-acceptance of the usual means of educating beyond oneself ("Books are boring.") made meaningful perceptual change a challenge to one's patience and preconceptions--and a perfect ground for counseling.

This then was a topic of considerable concern in our individual counseling sessions, and the introduction of the "mystery/mastery" concept in class at this time provoked several good group discussions revolving about the students' reasons for not testifying more openly about who they were.

In deference to rumblings in my "professional self," I did administer the Mooney Problem Check List to try to ascertain if I had documentable "evidence" to back up my observations and instincts about the class. The students themselves were given a clear orientation to the Mooney, but were not told exactly why I was giving it to them other than as a personal problem check list. They were free to take it or not, and did not have to use their names (although all those who took it did sign them). Thirty-eight of the forty-three did take it and of those, approximately 25% asked me to follow through in counseling sessions. (The Mooney was definitely worth my while.)

Of the eleven areas of concern on the Mooney, I was stubbornly interested in terms of the "Morals and Religion" section. As can be seen in Tables 2 and 3 below, items stressed in this area appear often and with regularity among a large percentage of the students. In fact, the highest single item of concern among the 330 items on the Mooney (indicated by 27% of the students) was in this area: "Confused on some of my religious beliefs." None of

1Ross L. Mooney and Leonard V. Gordon, The Mooney Problem Check List (Form H; New York: The Psychological Corporation, 1950). I did not administer the Mooney a second time to check my progress in eradicating any of their expressed concerns because the class was of the "permissive" variety which might (according to the Check List manual, p. 11) create an atmosphere for the second marking wherein "the students may be more emotionally free to express their problems, with the result that there is an apparent increase in problems!...The specific corrective measure may actually reduce the real problems but the changed atmosphere may lead to an increase in expressed problems."
TABLE 2
TABULATION OF ITEMS OVER A 15% "WORRY MARK" ON THE MOONEY PROBLEM CHECK LIST, PART 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>circled</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>%age</th>
<th>number and item</th>
<th>area of concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35. Confused on some of my religious beliefs</td>
<td>MR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>78. Worrying how I impress people</td>
<td>SPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>266. Don't like to study</td>
<td>ASW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22. Hurting people's feelings</td>
<td>SPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>84. Being lazy</td>
<td>PPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43. Needing to know my vocational abilities</td>
<td>FVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>196. Can't forget some mistakes I've made</td>
<td>MR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>103. Vocabulary too limited</td>
<td>ASW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17. Awkward in making a date</td>
<td>CSM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>209. Afraid I won't be admitted to college</td>
<td>FVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50. Not spending enough time in study</td>
<td>ASW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>159. Can't keep mind on studies</td>
<td>ASW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34. Doubting some religious things I'm told</td>
<td>MR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27. Taking some things too seriously</td>
<td>PPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>118. Needing money for education after h.s.</td>
<td>FVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>250. Lacking self-confidence</td>
<td>PPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>76. Wanting a more pleasing personality</td>
<td>SPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>157. Not liking school</td>
<td>ASW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33. Puzzled about the meaning of God</td>
<td>MR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>126. Disappointed in a love affair</td>
<td>CSM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>285. Disliking my present job</td>
<td>FLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>301. Too many personal problems</td>
<td>PPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>61. Too few nice clothes</td>
<td>FLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>237. Afraid of losing the one I love</td>
<td>CSM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates the area of my particular interest.
the items in any other area was registered as a concern by more than 20% of the students. The items of concern in the "Morals and Religion" section that cropped up repeatedly just confirmed what I had observed during the class, on the retreat, and from the individual counseling sessions.

* * *

A second retreat was made at the retreat house April 9-11, this time by the six from my class who because of athletic commitments had not been able to go with the regular group. They were well-primed by this time to make a meaningful retreat, at least in terms of involvement, but found themselves under a different director—another brother who had been an observer with me at the first retreat and who had an M.A. in counseling and guidance in addition to being a high school principal. The students found him to be considerably more open, accepting, non-overbearing, and they
reported good dialogue sessions. The priest, who was the same as at the first retreat, seemed more relaxed, confident of himself, stating his position much more clearly, and the fellows liked him very much. I was most happy to hear this, as the priest and I had compared notes after our first retreat, and at that time he had seemed to be on his way to avoiding that "middle-age syndrome." He also held some follow-up counseling sessions at our high school and was well received there.

The spirit of the second retreat was reported as "great," and their Mass experience was also real to them. Their late-evening intra-group testimony to one another was also successful and oriented them toward community.

In general, although all six felt the experience worth their while, none felt that he was any more or less Catholic or "religion"-oriented because of the retreat. All did feel that religion had been force-fed and disliked it very much.

As I had experienced an authoritarian-structured retreat with the main group and felt the enthusiasm of the smaller group about their more open one, I availed myself of an offer from a classmate of mine in Psychology 468 to observe his next retreat, which was to be client-centered in approach.

This retreat was a dialogue from the beginning--the group of 29 Junior boys from an Inner City Christian Brothers school

¹He was a Servite deacon who was to be ordained at the beginning of Summer. He was of similar counseling orientation to me, but with considerable experience in giving retreats, and we had often discussed my project.
were met with the question, "Why do you have to come on a retreat?" thus channeling their evident hostility into their own purposes and determining from the start that about half the group was serious, about half was there for a two-day vacation—a purpose more respected than scoffed at by the group. They soon identified themselves as having been together for three years, took pride in being difficult to work with, adding such comments as, "The leader in this group is the guy who gets the most laughs," and "nobody gives a shit what anybody else thinks." The counselor, working from the "trust me" theme and the Beatles' then-current hit, "We Can Work It Out," effectively built a group rapport and curiosity by never seeming to take offense, by being open and accepting of each person in the group, by his sense of humor, and by such questions as, "How can some other man give you advice unless he lives your experiences?" and "I'm not looking for the answers you think I want to hear." He convinced them that he was interested in them—that he respected them for who they were. He was real to them, and they communicated.

This tone of mutual cooperation was particularly of interest to me when later in the day (the retreat had begun in early morning) the students were given a historical approach to Confession, ending with a discussion of sin in terms of irresponsibility to a group or society, affecting others overtly and through self; that there was a psychological need for dialogue and testimony; that the only penance for those going to Confession would be to pray for one another. No pressure was put on the group to go to
Confession. Those not going (about one-third) took part in a discussion, which turned out to be on Confession. As a prelude to an intimate, folk-hymn Mass, it was a success, as was the rest of the retreat.

The students were treated realistically as persons, and they responded in kind.

After hearing my feedback on this second retreat, about ten of my students were interested in making another retreat there and under those non-authoritarian conditions. Unfortunately, for reasons of money and time, they were not able to follow through—but this response was nonetheless illuminating.

With both the retreat evaluations and the mooney, and with my understanding of the semester thus far, with Spring and graduation in the air, and with not much further to be gained by the entire group in terms of their involvement projects, the class and I mutually agreed to disband as a class for the one month of school remaining. Again, they could use the classroom for study if they wished, and I would be available during regular class periods, but primarily the time was their own. I was definitely involved with all the students at this point and was not worried about "losing" any of them. I was also interested in how they would use the time, if there would be any school disturbance (there wasn't—Seniors do not want any trouble their last month)—in other words, how the increased freedom would affect their sense of responsibility. The students were mixed in their reactions because some found it difficult to operate solely on their own. Part of
that difficulty, I found, was in accepting the concept of that kind of freedom, in disciplining themselves to make good use of it, and in fear that they would not get a good grade in terms of their commitment project and the semester.

Yet, before the class disbanded for the second time, we did review our reason for being, our themes, our goals. The individual perception was still quite linear, however, and I made it a point to contact each individual and assure him that he had already earned an "A" for the semester. In the process, with most students, the commitments picked up rather than slacked off, as they became assured that I understood who they were and were becoming, and what it was they were trying to do.

The last month precipitated much informal counseling, as we took walks, smoked and talked outside the school, met for discussions or events.

The elbow room, the consideration by me of them as responsible persons, the encouragement to be themselves and grow, the lack of outside pressure—these things were continually perceived as positive, strengthening bonds. During a counseling session a comment was made by a student with whom I thought I was having communication problems that was especially heartening: "You learn more in other classes that means less."

The student-faculty boycott at the Catholic University of America as a declaration of independence in the Catholic teaching of philosophy and theology—thus equating with freedom of inquiry

in other academic subjects—was meaningful to the students, 70% of whom would go on to some form of higher education.

Many students were reporting harmonious progress in dealing with the generation gap at home, no small feat considering adolescent problems in general added to the seemingly ever-growing ecumenical gap. This was worriedly considered in an article, "How Do We Cope With the Council's Effects on Teen-Agers?"¹ Written by two Chicago housewives and mothers (who "admit that they are bewildered by the breakdown of moral fiber at the high-school level") the article is representative of the concern, and bears mention here. The following questions are part of a survey taken by the authors:

1. Have your children's basic religious attitudes changed in the last two years?
   *If so, in what way?
   --reception of the sacraments
   --attendance at Mass
   --generally, less respect and reverence or more so?
   *If so, why?
   --exposure to challenging questions?
   --general unrest

2. Do you feel able to cope with these changes?
   *How?
   --enforce religious practices?
   --consult a priest?
   --leave alone?

Almost 100 people were covered in the survey and one fact was overwhelmingly established. In every instance parents answered a unanimous 'yes' to the first question. Again in every case except one, the parents were running from downright scared to all-out panicky.²

¹Joan Dillon and Jean Delaney, "How Do We Cope With the Council's Effects on Teen-Agers," Ave Maria, CV (April 15, 1967).
²Ibid., p. 24.
Although parents were apprehensive, suspecting divisiveness from their clergy and teachers,

One comforting conclusion drawn from the survey was that although there were new attitudes, only about five percent of the children actually displayed any loss of faith or serious rejection of religious practices, the other 95% were talking more than acting.¹

One not very comforting, although expected, conclusion was that parents do not know what to do about their apprehensiveness, and my experience with some of the parents of my students and with parents in Church- and ecumenically-oriented groups verified this. Although the teacher, as the article pointed out, "must realize that what looks good as a challenging question in a religion class may be shattering to a particular child"² (especially, I thought, after he brings it home), the implication to the parents is to "get with it" or be shattered as well. Perhaps a bearing on the problem can be found in the authors' consistent referral to teenagers as "children."

The semester was coming to a close, and the student involvements were coming in, in various forms: tape recordings, formal and informal oral reports, formal and informal papers. Those students involved primarily in self-integration through the counseling sessions assessed their progress and current situation.

As expected, some students who had done considerable work on their involvement area were not aware of it, were apprehensive, required further attempts at communication concerning 1) what they were doing, 2) why, and 3) what they were gaining by it. Emotional

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
involvement was common, and emotional blind spots and confusion were still a pattern. Many students had not previously experienced learning for themselves for the sake of learning.

A few of the involvements themselves had changed, but basically all were in the same general area as indicated earlier in the semester.

Some projects of particular interest:

1. The "Is God Dead?" research by a person trying to make a decision on a religious vocation.

2. A study of evil by a student who:
   -- compared dictionary definitions
   -- interviewed fellow students, contrasted and compared their answers with their personalities. Among the answers, "inferiority complex," "worry," "boredom," "no interest in people," "not trying to understand others," and a completely gobbledgook definition from a teacher.
   -- conducted his own survey of 20 persons in all walks of life, getting their opinions as to good and evil of a list of contemporary persons, events, attitudes.
   -- categorized evil as he found it.

Although his conclusions were confusing to both of us, he did come to an understanding that "evil is not in complete contrast to goodness," that there is objective and subjective evil, that he had met some very interesting people, and gotten to know his own classmates better.

3. A religious attitudes and practices survey conducted by two students who felt they needed proof that other teenagers felt the same way they did. In the process they initiated negotiations with administrations of two other schools, became involved in classes and discussions outside the school, convinced their parents of their sincerity and reasons for being their own persons and learned to interview tactfully, particularly church officials. These same two met the upcoming retreat director, found to their amazement that he was a human being, and worked with him on ideas for new retreat policies formulated through our retreat evaluations and their own ideas. (See Appendix G.)
4. A film-making group of five students who were definitely committed to showing the police and officials in their community that recreational facilities were needed in their "turf." They actually organized and produced some footage—necessitating business arrangements for filming sites and police permission—but the project terminated when all of their footage was overexposed by an irresponsible, or overzealous, cameraman during a staged carousing that became more real than intended.

These are examples of the obvious, more externalized involvements. Others were just as dramatic, or more so, but took place privately, or within the individual, within the counseling office, or at home.

All of the students saw their involvement in "bridge" terms—implications for the Summer or the following Fall. Each student was seen personally by me at least once the last few weeks to ensure realistic perceptual integration concerning the purposes of the semester, the role he played, and my own testimony to him concerning his effect on me—what I had learned from him. In every case, the student expressed surprise that he had given anything to me, unaware usually that our give and take was mutual.

At this time also the student was given a brief "Evaluation Guideline" so he could, at his convenience, testify briefly on paper, tape, or through final counseling session to me in these areas:

1) Elbow room as media
2) Individual involvement
3) The class itself, the teacher/counselor, feedback and evaluation
4) Suggestions for improving religion classes at school
5) Other comments.

I tried to convince each student again that he did have something to say, that his criticism would be appreciated.
Our final two meetings as a group were somewhat inconclusive and definitely anti-climactic. Our relationships had really been on a one to one or small group basis, and the students were uncomfortable, not wanting a melodramatic end to the semester. Yet I felt that I had a responsibility to let them see who I had become through knowing them, to feedback to them as a group what my general involvement, my commitment through them had been, to follow up on the operation of the themes within myself as I had done all along, to challenge them in terms of themselves.

In response to my wonderment at their "problems" as perceived by me throughout the semester—the almost universal hang-up at comprehending my grading; their lack of protesting, tactfully; their lack of curiosity; their slow growth in community sense—the first student to comment still wanted to know what I was going to do about grades. Oh well....
CHAPTER VI. FOCUS: EVALUATIONS

The final evaluation of the semester by the students was to be voluntary, as usual, written if possible, and handed in on their own. The feedback was overwhelming, certainly not preconceived by me, and speaks, far better than I can, just what the semester was to the students. This is what's happening!

1. Elbow room as media:

Elbow room is interpreted as the life space available to the students in time and freedom whereby they could commit themselves within their own style and interest areas. This is a sampling of the individual perception and response to that individually directed opportunity.

--Freedom...time...thought...better grades.

--It is necessary for the student to develop as an individual.

--I have been using the time usually spent in 'religion class' as my main source of time for research. Topic is my own choice so I find it much more interesting because I am personally interested in this. This 'elbow room' has made the big difference in my involvement.

--Ideally good, however, in reality I think it leads to a little laziness and laxity, at least in my case. Whether this is good or bad I don't know. I do know it has helped put in the relaxed atmosphere I think classes should be conducted under.

--'Elbow room,' or as I interpret it, 'room to breathe,' is an excellent idea. A student has to have a certain amount of freedom to make him feel like he has the right to decisions.
--The idea of not having to go to class is idealistically nice but not at all practical. A lot of guys, including myself, took advantage of this and never showed up. As far as elbow room goes, I think it is the best thing that ever hit our religion class.

--New and different experience for me. I had never had any independent study courses before, and in the beginning it was quite strange. Now...after five months...great idea.

--Would be great if everyone wanted it and knew how to handle it, but this is not the case.

--Should be used by all classes, not just religion...many students discouraged at low marks...mental blocks. Elbow room probably wouldn't work right away because of the history of the typical student...rigid. The educational system is not built to bring out a desire to learn.

--People like to move about, do something exciting, have a change. I think I got this opportunity through this class...I was given really an extra study period. For most people an extra study period is a class that is cut. I guess that is true. But for guys who use them usefully it means a lot...To experience elbow room is something else...being free from the daily worry of grades...simply giving an "A" is unique, and great because with this world always pushing you in, you are a slave to grades.

--Elbow room and the "bridge" have helped narrow the gap between high school and next year's college life...I had the opportunity and the time to find out pertinent things, which would have been impossible with a rigid religion class schedule.

--I got the most elbow room I have ever had in any class in twelve years...atmosphere of freedom and involvement...whereas other classes have no freedom and you are forced to involve or fail. Rewarding experience to me even though it did throw a curve into my plans for the future by changing my mind.

--Elbow room in the classroom is a media that gives us the freedom to regulate our religion classes. You go when you want to go. I believe this to be the best method for conducting religion. This would probably not work with underclassmen because they wouldn't have the responsible nature to still participate in a religion class without forced attendance. I believe after 3½ years of regular attendance at religion classes, this is the escape we need in order to step out and look at ourselves.
--This 'elbow room' we have is the time we use to think and thus our surroundings and friends grow on us and we learn new things.

--It was worth my while...working on my own....It pushes you in a way...makes you work by yourself. You find out you have to work from the inside.

--I've got five study periods and just had too much freedom.

--By not forcing the students to attend classes every day and not assigning a great deal of homework, a more relaxed atmosphere is achieved. Our "bridge building project" does not seem so much an assignment as a hobby. This arrangement naturally allows many students a free ride, an extra study period and an automatic "A." But those who are really interested will pursue the work anyway. I feel that this type of approach is okay for a senior or maybe even a junior religion class, but I do not think it would work as regards other subjects. I feel people need a motivating force to do their work, and despite its imperfections the grading system now used is the best. The abolition of grades or the giving of only a passing or failing mark as urged by some, would result in less work being done by most people and would be unfair to those who work hard because they would receive no recognition.

--In this opportunity for elbow room, I feel that I have learned a great deal about myself and just how much I can do if I put my mind to it. I have learned not to try to take advantage of that elbow room. It was certainly partly responsible for giving me a definite foresight into the future of my life and the questioning of myself of whether I am getting the most out of my education. There are still questions unanswered and problems new and different, but these are the hurdles of the future and if I have thought out a good foundation for my life, then this elbow room has been profitable. Next year I will meet a new world, but with a lot of confidence and a little room to breathe, that world might not be as foreign.

2. Individual involvement:

These are a sampling of specific individual focus within the medium of elbow room, often showing that the students were far more involved than they thought they were.

--My ideas have changed somewhat since I started on the Playboy Philosophy....more evaluating now of ideals,
pointing out my own ideas on sex, finding out how I really act and why...I'm not saying I agree entirely with these ideas.

--This class motivated my thinking on just what I'm going to do after I graduate.

--It is broadening my perspective on life and people, and even one or two of the teachers are becoming tolerable to me.

--Usually my religion classes were very boring...with you it has been very interesting experience...You have exposed me to things that are going on that I never knew about. I didn't think a teacher could get so wrapped up in his students and everything. The retreat was a unique experience because I never knew how honest people could be with each other.

--I think this class has enabled me to think or develop nothing. But this nothing attitude has enabled me to start or try to figure myself out.

--I have learned nothing. I have learned no answers to the questions I have. I have discovered that in dealing with these questions and people you must have an open mind.

--I would like to explain how this class works for me. Usually a 'religion' teacher tries to cram all sorts of pious trash down your throat so that you can regurgitate it on tests. Well, in this class, nothing like that happens. There's a sort of vacuum created causing me at least to take in some ideas. I'm still very confused, but I'm better off because of it. Some of the new ideas on Church philosophy are very interesting and even acceptable, for a change.

--Sometimes I was lost through the teacher's words, maybe because it was over my head. I have gained some things through this class, such as self-discovery in the sense that I am becoming aware of what I am doing.

--I did not participate that much but I did learn that you have to keep an 'open mind.'

--I think I did pretty good...helped me in doubts I had, for instance, ideas about the Catholic Church...ideas about college in the sense that I had quite a bit of time to think about it.

--Almost nil with the group...didn't know most of the people, felt rather uncomfortable....The retreat served
as a precipitate. I did get interested in myself...got to know myself better...reading which interested me....I think I have grown quite a bit.

--My research paper has been very enjoyable and informative. The class has enabled me to learn more about a field in which I am interested.

--Easy to get involved because the course was interesting.

--Not too much, but I listened; I got a lot out of the other guys.

--Didn't get very involved...too much elbow room...I admit because of the fact that I am irresponsible I hurt myself ....A person with ambition and an open mind could have picked up very much....However, one quote which you said on the first day of class I will never forget:

   When building a triumphal arch to your hero
   Build it out of brick
   So you have something to throw at him
   As he passes through it.

That quote made me think more than any other quote I have heard throughout my life....I hope someday to tell that same exact quote to some kids and hope they get as much out of it as I did.

--I think I really blew it. I regard myself as a fink because I didn't take advantage of this....I was all enthused in the beginning about bridging and personal involvement and self-searching...but I took advantage of the lax class rules. I finked out on the movie--lack of funds and equipment, not time or interest. However, we actually did a lot of work on it, organizing and planning. By and large I think I got more out of this course per minute in the class or discussion than in any other religion class I took.

--Not too much in the sense of telling things, but my involvement in listening helped me a lot.

--Didn't get as involved as I should have been, but just from going to class occasionally I have learned a great deal about being able to become involved.

--I'm 'wishy-washy' when given free time...that's why 'regular' class is better for me.....I prefer to take an apathetic attitude on religion all together. I would rather not be forced to either reject it nor accept. I hold on to the old statement, better safe than sorry.

--I didn't vocally participate in the class, but mentally
I did. I don't think a person has to say something in a class to benefit from it.

--Hasn't been too good...don't know why because I'm always involving myself in other evaluations and conversations throughout the day....Last semester we all used to communicate with the teacher, but the class always ended up in a big question of the teacher's reasoning. But this semester, it has taken on a different idea, for the better.

--Became more involved/interested in myself. I examined myself...trying to improve. At least now I know myself a little better.

--The only thing I have gotten out of this semester's religion class is a personal attempt at trying to find out why and what I am. The question hit me and I have just forgotten about the course and thought or tried to figure out my self.

--I can't honestly answer these questions. In the mood I'm in anything I would write down would be unreal because the questions, the paper they're written on, and (in this case) you are part of an educational system which in turn is part of a machine society that I reject and don't consider myself a part of. If it were for any other class I wouldn't give a second thought (thanks to an acquired instinct) to bullshitting my way through, but in this case, just this simple statement may be more valuable. All this may sound bitter but it's not meant to be--I enjoy life and beauty but at the same time the duality of it is always adding up to zero and its pointlessness is depressing. Maybe beauty is enough or maybe something else is also needed for satisfaction. Which comes to the reason I don't consider myself a part of this society...because it hampers my search for some kind of happiness and because often it's an enemy of the individual who I respect more than anything else. Because the person is the most important thing to me, it doesn't make any difference to me if he finds his happiness in this or any other kind of society so long as he doesn't force his reality on anyone else, including me...which is my definition of freedom...which may not be exactly parallel to the established tradition.

--This course brought out more clearly the basis of education, and that is self-learning with the teacher acting as mediator....I found that it isn't enough to do the assigned homework...that is not the way to learn, though...it might be the way to earn good grades.

I started to speak more openly with my parents, friends and relatives concerning religion, learned that my views were typical of a lot of people. I began to read magazines
and newspapers more than I ever did, finding out there is a lot to learn, and by your lectures learned some sources of interesting information such as the TV media, and I started watching documentaries on channel 11.

--This class has given me a chance to understand myself and my friends a little more...I have gotten to know people by being more fair-minded.

--My personal regret is that I wish I would have made it to more "come if you want to" classes...but I feel that I greatly gained by the extra hour a day. My subjects have improved because of this extra time.

--I do not consider that I ever offered very much...when I started the course I had a general idea of what I was going to try and make myself and as a result participated in class a little. It dwindled off as my future plans changed and as of right now, I am undecided and cannot participate until I find myself. This course made me start to think more about life and as a result changed my aim in life so that now I am undecided what I want to be and thus am trying to find myself.

--My individual involvement is living and working for my car and guitar. I live on more of a day to day basis and only plan those things that are required to be planned. Working is second nature to me and much more important than school. I've supported myself for a long time now and I feel I could leave the shelter of homelife. I believe that one of the most important things to happen in my life was that retreat...I obtained for myself a lot of insight into myself and the world around me. If another retreat is set up, and I'm available, I would like to go.

--Maybe this interest about my future helps me to really see myself as I really am. This would probably all be delayed if it weren't for this free time during school which allows more time at home to think.

--It is amazing what common ground can be found among different people....The thrill of discovering other people with the same interest is one of the greatest in the world.

The purpose of this semester, as I see it, is to give the student a chance to think and attempt to understand himself and others without the pressure of worrying about grades. My involvement originated as an attempt to determine the effect of the mass media and such groups as the Better Government Association, and the Independent Voters Of Illinois, on the voting pattern of the precinct I work, and draw some relevant conclusions on why people vote as
they do. This quickly extended into my seeking out and talking to acquaintances of mine, and people I did not know of different political and, to an extent, religious coloration, in an attempt to understand why they hold these beliefs. I have also attempted to examine my own beliefs and why I hold them, though I feel I am not probably qualified as well as another person to judge myself.

--(from a non-Catholic): This course has been something new to me. In the 12 years I have gone to school, this truly was something I couldn’t believe. This course has brought hope to the other members of the class, that living religion is more important than knowing a lot of passages out of the Bible. For the most part, it has awakened many eyes to what is happening.

--My ideas at present are not well defined about religion...still looking to see if I can improve it.

3. Evaluation/feedback of the class and the teacher/counselor:

These are a sampling of voluntary criticism of the project and the director.

--This type of class is much better than most religion classes where you do nothing more than memorize theological definitions. However, I would like to get a little more realistic, for instance, sex education.

--Current semester has been sort of 'vague.' Should get on one topic which everyone shares an interest in. As for me, I find that the topics we talk about are interesting but we never fully explain what we really want to know.

--Perplexed at first...Began to like it more and more...a drastic but likeable change. I see it as a bridge to college.

There are too many people in the class. The teacher is good, interesting, different. I wish we could have had class for a whole semester.

--Most motivating class I have ever been in...most freedom of responsibility. I think this religion class is the best class I have ever been in in my four years of high school. Not because we never meet and never have any homework, but because there is a lot of thinking going on which is a lot more tension than sitting down and writing some homework.
--Welcome change....The primary reason is the teacher...he's a 'cool' guy. Easier to understand/communicate the ideas of religion. We haven't had a lot of classes, but the ones we have had have been very enlightening. The high point was the senior retreat...find yourself...really fine way. I think that this is the best class I've have had the pleasure to take in my career here.

--The class is okay, but NO class is a hell of a lot better. This semester has given me more elbow room than I thought a school could have. The class was run really well, and I got more out of not going than any other religion class I have ever been in. Obviously I was not involved in class, but being out of class I had more of an opportunity to communicate with people, get to know them better, occasionally do some homework. All classes could not be handled this way...people too immature. The idea behind it is great, but modification is necessary.

--He let the individual student develop by himself.

--I got some good ideas from a few members of the class in my area....I did research on questions of others as well as my own. However, I did not receive ideas from our class discussions when everyone was present.

Personal interviews with the teacher were excellent...the most motivating factor toward my personal involvement. Easy to talk to you and I was free to express myself...mainly because you listened to my ideas instead of telling me yours....You showed a personal interest in me as well as the rest of the class.

--Religion class during the second semester has become one of the high points of my 12 years of education. During the last 4 months attending class has become more of an enjoyable experience because it seems to be on a more informal basis. Meeting every other day helpful...allows me to accomplish homework and study for other classes...to think about material talked about during religion class the day before...to discuss it with my fellow students.

--Can't get involved anymore...have a problem...keeps me occupied most of the time....Also it is spring and I can't wait until summer.

This project has opened a door to me in which I can find myself....I found what I wanted to get out of my topic while doing research on it. I wanted to explore for the sake of accomplishment. Of doing something on my own and calling it my own. I don't care if I find what I'm looking for in my exploration quest, just as long as I get out and try.
--A little bit drawn out and not too well organized, but it came to the point.

--Whole thing bull-shit... You got what you put into it and wanted, nothing more. This class works fine for seniors... but you should have grades, it's a way of keeping score.

--Didn't attend much, but when I did I benefitted from it. The teacher was a little too lenient with the class, but it's hard to come in at the semester and begin teaching religion to seniors... I feel you did a great job of helping me to learn about myself... just through writing this paper I learned more about myself than I did before I started writing. Another excellent thing about the class was your open mind. It was easy to talk to you about anything. I hope you continue to teach.

--Small groups instead of class groups is great... we really communicate. Class feedback and evaluation great. This is the first class I have ever been in where you could communicate your ideas to the teacher without sweating your grade or his personal opinions. Also this is the first class where a teacher could frankly tell us what he thinks and we respected and listened to what he said... most honest communications a class can have with a teacher. I hope I get into more classes with it.

--I think your semester was great, I got a lot out of it and I hope from reading the feedback of the guys who went through it, you conclude that this is a new concept in teaching that should be integrated into the daily school schedule.

--Good... breathing room. I didn't learn much from the class, but I haven't learned much from any religion class. I don't think the purpose was to learn facts but just to realize the thoughts and opinions of others and evaluate them. I'm glad I had the class because of the elbow room, non-preconception, and especially the semester A.

--Nothing, bull.

--Very informative, enjoyable... should have met more often. Feedback helped a great deal because it allowed us to go over the things that we did in class as well as outside of class... This semester religion class has been one of the best of my high school career. Why? Because it was something different.

--There is a general 'I don't care' attitude. Most people consider it an easy class, more like a study period than
anything else. I don't believe people really know what you're driving at; nor do they really care. You overstressed the essence of the feedback...evaluation...and thus confused people. I think people are tired of expressing their complaints against the Church. But this type of religion class is much better than most religion classes where you do nothing more than memorize theological definitions.

--This semester of religion, if that's what you want to call it, has been very rewarding for me. When we first had class all you did was talk on how we must get to know ourselves...thought it would be very boring...Monday/Wednesday/Friday changed all that. For the first week of 3 classes I started to get more involved in the class. You would always ask for our opinions. This is when for the first time in my years here that a teacher had an open mind and was willing to listen and respect the ideas of a student. Previously...maybe they would listen but then sort of laugh inside at you saying to himself 'What's this kid know?'...I've gone through college, etc. We may be just dumb kids 17 years and over...that's why we are fighting in Vietnam and working on community projects. The teens now will be the leaders of 10 or 15 years and must prepare themselves for tomorrow by shaping their ideas

--Semester like this, to close out a senior's year in high school, is a very good preparation for college. You should have definite objectives set beforehand, instead of learn as you go along.

I don't know what your particular plans are for next year, but I feel that you're a definite asset to this school, and a course like this a necessity for seniors.

--Everyone benefitted from the class experience.

--I consider the course I am taking now to be the best (religion?) course I have had in 12 years of my religious life. Before this we were always spoon-fed religion which we had to consume, but this year it is different. You have given us the right to protest, question, and find out what our religion really is like. You have given me a new and different outlook on life, seems the world is more of a reality to me now, moreso than it has been before.

--This semester on a whole has been a bunch of nothing. Every time we have class we come in and listen to you talk about some guys whom we've never heard of. You mention that these guys are bringing new ideas to this era. You said we should get involved in certain areas that interest us. I myself am involved.... I wish that you would bring in the guest speakers who you were talking about. I think
most of the class would find this worthwhile also. The class so far has been something of a change of pace. It's better than listening to some brother give you talks on your faith. I consider you as a guy who is really far out. I think that you certainly are intellectually inclined, and I've got quite a bit of respect for you.

--As the new semester began, I was expecting our previous teacher to start off with one of his usually boring classes but as a surprise to me you started off the second semester and showed us how we should be treated as to our needs and also helped us see the limits we were supposed to endure. We were allowed to attend class as we felt and could go study or go out for a smoke for the first time in our school career. This makes one think why he is given this privilege. I've found that I sincerely need this time to help think out other problems that may concern other school courses, or better, I have time to think about what happens to me after school or in the army. This is elbow room.

--Class too large to do much with...to hold meaningful discussions. Easier to draw people out, including myself, in smaller groups.

--My ideas at the present time are not well defined about religion...I am still looking to see if I can improve it, and a class like this gives me a little better insight, than having a perfectly well defined religion class, and having a grade as such. Grades aren't spontaneous...you shouldn't be graded on what you believe...you judge how strongly you believe about things like this.

But I think you deserve some feedback; if it had been mandatory then it wouldn't have been something like true thought questions one gets without being asked.

--We weren't a group at all...well, the whole year...first semester was like that. We went to class every day but we weren't a group. I mean senior religion doesn't mean anything unless you're really going to get involved in theology...like a college text, where a priest came in, it would have been interesting and you would have wanted to do a lot of research and it would have been interesting, too.

Maybe nobody really ever gave us a chance to exist as a group....How can you be a group when you haven't got a group leader?

--At last, the school year is coming to an end, and this is what the whole problem was in the lack of communication in the class. As seniors, we were bored to death to come to classes this last year.
Going back to the beginning of the semester, when the class had just met you, we were enthused by the novelty of a new teacher, and this was no ordinary teacher, for he had a beard. This may seem funny, but many of us have never known somebody with a beard, let alone a teacher with one. So we were fascinated to see what you wanted to tell us and to try to understand what you were trying to tell us. Many of us were lost, and then the retreat came, and this helped us find ourselves better, which was your philosophy in the first place.

As a teacher I feel that you have been the only teacher in my life that has been open to his students in such a way as to converse freely, and to talk openly on any subject we wanted, helping us along the way. The students haven't encountered this before so we were shocked. Now the problem arose that the class was getting uninterested in what you had to say. This is not your fault, but I believe that we have quite a number of clowns in the room that goof around and make it difficult for the rest.

Another factor is the lack of response of our group; the answer is simple, 1) we are lazy because we are tired of school, 2) we are afraid to listen to you because we might learn something, and that takes some effort.

You have given it a good try; the best yet that I have encountered. And I think that you have helped many of us, even if we know it or not to realize we really exist. You have probed our minds and stirred up questions to make us conscious of ourselves. You did a fine job.

--If I wanted to put down everything that has been happening to me this semester, I would be writing for two weeks. So since I haven't the time, and to spare the sore hand, I can only say a few things.

I see this semester as a starting point. The retreat made me examine my reasons for acting. In many cases I found I was naive (I hope it's spelled right) in my thinking. I was failing to see the other guy's point of view. Seeing the other side of matters has had an effect on my relationships with my parents, other teenagers, and come to think of it, everyone.

I have become aware of things I previously never thought of and that I now feel are important. Because of this awareness, I have become involved (how much I don't know) in the church, as one example.

I think the time has come for me to act a little more than I have been doing. Certain things irk me and I want to do something about them. I feel that I now have the energy and interest.

I also want to get others involved. I find this the hardest thing to do. Why? I don't know. I'm still looking for an answer.

This all may sound like work. To me it is not. It is
fun in a way and I can't escape it (not that I want to try). In conclusion, I have become involved with others and in doing so have learned about myself. Life is starting to take on some meaning for me now that I have become involved.

P.S. This paper was very difficult to write.

4. Student suggestions for improving religion classes:

These are a sampling of voluntary student criticism and feeling tone.

--Drop religion classes. Start a program like this with counseling.

--There shouldn't be any. All teachers should be counselors or lead discussion groups on certain subjects.

--Personal involvement should start in the junior year and not wait until the senior year. The first two should be devoted to Christian doctrine...should be more personal discussions and interviews in the first two years of high school.

--Classes should be more independent...more open on the part of the student as well as teacher. For seniors, optional. Reunion to maintain continuity. After eleven years of religion class, the twelfth year is just plain torture.

I think the class was great in the way everything and everybody got along, especially on retreat...I only wish more religion classes could be taught this way.

--Definitely think a change should be made...don't know exactly what...no classes every day though.

--No suggestions because no one will listen. I only would wish it to be like yours.

--Well, religion is a farce which you showed me but I realized when I was in the seminary. I know it was a farce but it should be dropped from all schools and Catholic schools should be closed.

--Seniors should have an excellent marriage course--with husbands and wives doing most of the teaching. Sophomores and juniors shouldn't have too much stress of religion placed on them. For myself at that age I began to shun religion merely because I was fed up with too much of it. Class should meet only twice a week, and you should be able to talk with an open-minded person about problems.
facing today's teens. This person should be able to discuss these either through class discussion or privately... so a person can learn his true identity. For if a person doesn't know himself how can he truly learn about anyone else, let alone God? As Freshmen, students should be taught the real Christ, the God-Man.

--Could be greatly improved...Freshman devoted to "Bible teaching," and Christ's life, and all that pious stuff. After that religion classes should be based on psychology and philosophy, and just plain 'modern living' courses. Senior year should be wound up with a good class like the present one.

Hold classes only three times a week at most...all religion teachers should be young or at least think young enough to communicate with high school students. Tell the teachers not to "preach" to students and tell them they must do this and that, but just to tell them to show the way by example and indirect means. All religion teachers should let the guys tell it like it is instead of telling them how it should be.

--Elbow room and non-preconception are important in senior year.

--Voluntary religion wouldn't work. Fourth year should consist of deep research and debate on controversial subjects such as birth control, capital punishment, war, etc. This is important...after high school the individual is going to be directly exposed to these things...he needs practical knowledge to make decisions. Most people will not seek this knowledge independently...it must be learned in school.

--The idea of a religion book in high school is the stupidest thing I've heard of in my life.

--I don't think they have helped us this way. Facing reality one of the main things in life, and we're not getting it in education.

--I've been brainwashed...ten years of Catholic education. The Church is not personal enough.

--The religion classes suffer from a lack of balance. One year a student may have a teacher who spends the entire year tearing down the Church and her position on the issues of the day. The next year the same student is liable to have a teacher who will spend the year exclusively in defending the Church. This understandably leads to confusion. As I understand it, a teacher's job is to present differing views on matters and allow a student to make up his
own mind. Unfortunately many teachers attempt to indoctrinate their students with their own personal views.

--You come when you want to, leave when you want to (practically). Religion classes should be run like this, they shouldn't be mandatory, except freshman and sophomore level.

--All religion classes should model themselves after yours ...has been easy for us to express our feelings about problems and get better understanding of ourselves...helps with grades in other classes, too.

I wish that the religion classes and teachers would have been this way all the years I was here so that by the time I was a senior I could have found out or know more about my personal, individual self.

--Freshman: should be different than grade school, should be a preparation stage for a change in religion. Sophomore: no teaching of religion, but discussion groups. Junior: "bridge project" year...help in finding themselves. Required counseling so counselor can help student find himself. Senior: Discussion--world, religion problems. Attendance: decreasing.

--Grammar school was the basic problem concerning religion classes...they glorified the church which made young Catholics feel that the church is not for them. They found out that the church makes mistakes...parents believe in church policy...but that it is all perfect and cannot make mistakes. When we argue with our parents they say, "Why the hell did we send you to a Catholic school?" Do not accomplish goals by brainwashing...more and more young people drop out of the church because they could not handle the problem that the church sins, makes mistakes as well as us.

--Others should be like this one. Previous 11 years--striving for "church doctrine." This however was the first class that did not say "The church says this and that and therefore we have to follow it." We were able to make our own opinions and not be corrected or put down.

--Underclassmen couldn't fully accept religion classes of our type. I wouldn't advise a "freedom-religion class." I believe that religion classes should be improved. Should have more involvement with life in the modern world instead of studying about Christ and that stuff. Religion classes for the most part have become a subject you work for a "worthless" grade.

--Religion class only 2, 3 days at most because I feel we
I want to think about our lives and our involvement with others. We really start to want freedom to think and do as we please with our lives within reason. We are older and different things have come to be part of our lives. I started to feel this way at the beginning of my junior year. We should also feel free to discuss anything among ourselves.

--College theology would be better. Because they don't really tell you the first three years, it's more or less just like 8th grade religion...it's just the same thing you've heard over and over. I guess by the time you're a senior then it should be in your mind that there is a God and you're not supposed to do this, or do that...it's still on an 8th grade level.

--I believe that the whole religion department in the school should be improved, and this elbow room concept should be carried into all grades and all religion classes in the high schools. I would change the policy now in use to have freshmen meet semi-formally (by this I mean in a room with no desks, only the chairs arranged for a discussion) only 3 days a week, sophomores could meet like this say 2 days a week, juniors once a week, and the senior classes could be run as they are now with our room.

Of course if this were done the teachers would have to be more than teachers. They would have to be somewhat like a qualified counselor as in your case, but the reward would be great, I think. There would be a closer relation between these counselors and the students, and the students with problems could get help other than during a study period which they may have only one of.

--I believe in God and the Catholic Church but I do not know how to go about being a member of the church and a human being (a tough mix). I do not get anything out of Confession, but I get scared to think of giving up my religion or going to hell. I am trying to be as Catholic as I can be without missing the valuable things in life, even if they may be temptations to sin or jeopardize my values because I have to find my faith and true way of life. This is basically what I got out of my elbow room. I see the necessity of a large scale bridge project like the one we had this semester. If there could be some sort of religion which would give the student a religion that he can see and does not have to be a holy joe to believe in. He should be able to talk freely about Playboy Philosophy and Hugh Hefner, LSD and Timothy Leary, and also whatever no-church practices which face them.

Summing up the best overall sense of the semester is the
following transcript of a tape submitted by two students who, working together, came to an excellent sense of commitment and production.

I'm going to go by your outline, your guideline here, because I'm too lazy to think up my own, and I think this is a pretty good one.

Now the first point you've got is elbow room, and I put down it's excellent, but I really don't know why... it's probably because I don't like to get pressured in anything -- I don't think most kids do-- so, therefore, the type of class you were trying to do, I think you did succeed, that you have to have elbow room... you can't force kids to do too much.

Well, the individual involvement. Well, you probably know how much I'm involved, but in case you don't, I'll try to tell you here. I could see that before the semester I really wasn't involved in it... I was doing all sorts of other stuff, but I wasn't really involved in it. During the semester I began to get involved, and I guess it tended to go into the area of religion, but it expanded into other areas, you know, the family, teenagers, about everything else. After the semester, it's going to continue, because I don't think I could stop it if I wanted to, and I really don't want to, so I don't think there's any problem there. The survey I got involved in... I don't know how that's going to work out, but I'm trying...

The third point is the class and feedback, etc. The class was supposed to be a bridge project and I think for me it was a bridge project...

The two basic concepts you wanted to get across were non-preconception and openmindedness. I think I'm working on the openmindedness, and I think if you get that the non-preconception sort of comes with it... it's hard, but I'm trying.

The class, when we did meet, and when you gave your few talks and that, was a good opportunity for me to hear about different ideas and people that I had not known about, and I think it was good for the rest of the kids, too, if they were interested. Nobody else ever brought up these people to them that they could go out on their own, outside the school and try to look into that a little more.

Also you made me realize, and I guess a lot of other guys in the class, too, that they had a right to object to something if we didn't like it. And there's a lot of stuff like school and family that we were just putting up with... like we didn't like it in Mass, but we didn't think there was anything you could do about it. Well, now we know.

As for yourself, you said you'd operate, try and operate
under openmindedness and non-preconception. I think you've done a good job because you haven't forced anything on me, I don't think on any of the other kids either, and gave me a little support when I needed it, because when I first started out it was pretty hard, and I needed somebody to push... I don't like to use the word push, but it was something like that in a way.

Let's see, suggestions for improving religion classes at the school.... Well, I think in high school you shouldn't have structured religion class in which you teach the history of the church or anything like that. I think it should be more of an involvement class. For that reason, you couldn't very well have unqualified teachers, you more or less have to have a counselor, so if you go by that fact I guess a lot of the brothers at school couldn't teach it. In other words, if some brothers came in the order and they couldn't put him in as a cook or a garbage man or anything, they'd have to put him as a religion teacher--which they're doing now, you know. They wouldn't be able to do this with my involvement class. I don't know if it's practical, but I think it'd be better than the system they have now because after 8 years the kids are indoctrinated enough.... They've got enough history background of the church to keep them going I think.

Any other comments.... I think, the whole thing boils down to openmindedness. If you're openminded, it relieves a lot of stuff, you look at the other guy's point of view, it avoids arguments, carries over; you can't limit it to one area like religion.... it will carry over into your everyday life. I think it helps... well, it helped me... I can't say if it helps other people or not... but I can really see it work in my life, and it helps me.

I'm going to get back to my bridge now. I hope you won't laugh too hard on this now.... I'll start on the letter "B"--I think B I'm going to let stand for Body, because it got my body involved in something, and it made it more than just a body... there's something else to it. I guess it wasn't before the semester, you know I was just a robot in a lot of ways.

"R"--The R I guess goes for religion.... Tom's sitting here about dying, rolling on the floor, holding his sides laughing, but it doesn't bother me because I'm openminded, and because I'm starting to get involved and that, trying to find out what religion is....

"I"--The I stands for involvement.

"D"--The D well, I'm not sure exactly what it stands for yet... the D stands for damnitall, I don't know why, I just thought I'd put a little swear word in to show I'm a teenager here...

"G"--The G stands for good that I met ya, because if I hadn't met you, where would I be today? I wouldn't realize that I'm really a jerk, that I'm closed minded, and that
I hadn't been working under non-preconception, and so, good that I met ya.

"E"--The E...you won't believe this one either, the E stands for exuberant. Now, Tom told me some meaning for this, but I don't know if it's true or not, but I thought I'd add the scholarly word since I've used gutter language and everything else in here, I thought I'd add the scholarly mind to this...if you want to call it that, to show you that I'm not really all bad or anything. I am pretty smart. So exuberant, if you find out what it means would you let me know? That's all I have to say...I'd like to thank you for sitting through and listening to this. Hope it hasn't been too boring or anything like that...

It's a good testimony, as you like to call it, to my own involvement and everything...and I'm really glad I did this.

* * *

Well, we're supposed to make this tape for you...actually, we're just supposed to make feedback, give feedback to you rather, so I thought I'd do a tape. Well, first of all, I'm going to pretty much follow your guideline here.

And the first point on it is elbow room as media. Well, moving around...letting students move around in a specific area, like religion, is the way to do it. Along with elbow room there has to be quite a bit of interest, because without interest, there's really going to be no learning at all. So I think the teacher has to start this interest in the students, or else there's going to be no learning. And I thought this out, and the only time I really learn is when I have an interest, started not necessarily by myself, but for the most part it has been, or things I'm interested in...I guess yes, started by myself. And I think the students will be able to learn quite a bit better using this elbow room as a media of learning.

Now, my personal involvement, I think you pretty much know most of this, I'm going to try to review it. I think ever since the retreat, because you showed us that you can make people aware of things that are happening or not happening, that you can do something about it, then we became interested in this, because previous to the retreat I really didn't think you could do anything about it, but I was interested...but I didn't really have an interest to do anything, a working interest, so that when on the retreat I started some working interests, it really went.

Like I said, it was started at the retreat, and ever since then I've been trying to do something about this...You know, talking to people like the priest we went out to see at St. Mary of the Lake. Well, that really flopped because we didn't present it correctly, and I think now, because we've talked to other people, and we've heard.
like the tape we made at your house. And now I have this tape recorder, so I can hear myself quite a bit now, and we can hear ourselves again, and analyzing, or at least hearing, what you sound like and how you present things to other people. Then on this paper you gave us, on this listening, I do that now and I'm quite surprised, quite surprised, how it really works, that you listen how they say things, and what he says, and what he might mean....Like I know Terry pretty well, I think, and I listen now more the way he says things than what he says, and I can pretty much put myself in his shoes, hear myself saying things, and seeing how good or how bad they actually sound, and I think part of that is listening; that you put yourself in the other person's shoes, as you'd be saying this, as often times you do say similar things if not exactly the same, so that when you do hear these things you actually listen to the person more, you actually have more of an involvement with the person, and you're more emotionally involved too.

I really think this is quite good, to be emotionally involved with a person and with things, like myself and Terry are quite involved on this...I don't know whereas its religion so much, but we're communicating more and better with people now...because these basic things which are...religion, I guess. Most of the basics are religion, I think right now that if you understand the basics very well, like we're trying to, then I think other things come, like talking to people, understanding people, being understood by these people...that it just kind of falls in if you start this way, and I think because of our conditioning we had to go completely reversed, go completely back like to the first grade, and learn this stuff all over again, and like right now we're trying to correct this so people won't have to go back, they'll have started what we've started now.

I've written to this nun at ---- Institute in Indiana about this religion book, Come to the Father, and she wrote to the Paulist fathers and they're going to send me more information on it. Once I think I find out quite a bit more about this, what they're doing now, it'll be easier for me to see what they're doing, and for me to suggest and possibly change things in the teaching of religion...though I really don't think that religion is that important. I know at ---- high school--I've heard this from the girls, not from any of the nuns there--I don't know if they admit it or if it's true, but it doesn't seem too wrong....They take teachers from other subjects who have an extra free period where there's a "deficiency" in religion...I mean like a religion course could be put in there, and they take off from there, and say, "All right, we're going to have a religion course, and we'll
give you the necessary materials to set this thing up, but you know, you'll be the teacher." And you know, I don't think they really want all this (well, I think they do, kind of because it makes them feel better because they can teach religion), but I don't think they're qualified at all. Like a person, to teach religion, has to be a psychologist, and a counselor...a counselor that...like...the only counselor I know really is you you. And a counselor really listens to people, doesn't stop them at all. He can ask certain questions to make them think, to solve their own problems completely on their own, like you do. You kind of present things, and we kind of see things a little differently, although you don't push them on us or anything, you just ask us a very good question and it starts us rolling even more, getting more involved. And the psychologist part, how they think, and why they think--I don't really know much about psychology--but it seems to me that's the way it is, you know, the reasoning behind things...although all the time there isn't reasoning. I really think they should have definite religion teachers that don't teach you all this history and everything, although they have to have a certain amount of that, I think. I really can't think why exactly, but I really didn't think it was too bad....

Okay, on to the next point: RQ/class involvement/evaluation, etc....Well, you want an evaluation of yourself. Well, first thing I saw you, which was last year, I saw you walking around here, I really didn't know what to think...a guy with this beard walking around...it's kind of odd. And then this year, you were still getting this thing off, and you were in the front of the room and I was in the back of the room, and it really wasn't too much of anything at all, communication-like, I guess not really because there was no personal communication. Then the retreat, when I came up to you, I think it was the first night, and said something to the effect, "What can we do about this whole thing?" and I started talking to you, and then, I don't know why, but all of a sudden I just...I don't know, I can't really describe it, I just felt...I wanted to talk to you, and when I didn't have anything to say, I still wanted to be there, I don't really know why. Everybody thought I was going to be a kind of brownie, and I hadn't that in mind at all, but I just thought that you had something that I wanted and that I guess I needed. I don't know about that yet, but I just felt that I should be there. So then I finally found out more about you and you found out more about me too, and, I don't know, this age gap really doesn't seem to be there at all....

There's two things Terry and myself talked about, about you personally, and first of all, you know when you're at school...when you laugh, it sounds kind of dumb I guess, but it kind of seems put on, because you only laugh for a
second and it doesn't seem natural...I don't know why. And then that night we came up to your apartment and we were sitting there talking to you, boy I don't know...maybe because you were in the clothes you wanted to be in and everything, the situation you wanted to be in, the place you wanted to be in, that just about everything seemed to be natural....

Okay on the class....well, I don't know if you can call it a class. Well, I wouldn't, not really a class...it's an involvement, like Terry said, where you get involved in something, not necessarily religion. But I think if all the guys had the opportunity to talk like we've talked, I think they would get involved in this too....

And then on this feedback, I think it's good because I think you'll get some points you hadn't thought of before, and see things a little different, because, when I'm talking to people, it's not to have a question answered or anything, it's to try to get a new...another viewpoint besides my own, to see how other people think of things, and I guess that's psychology, trying to figure out how other people think....

Then, suggestions for improving the religion classes at school. Well, the freshmen I don't think should be changed too much at all because they're freshmen....Well, like seniors, I think you could do this with just about any senior class. I think they should be put together as a whole senior class, not divided up, and I think they should do this, because this is great I think, for me, because I can get going on things I wanted to do. This involvement has not only just gotten me going on religion, but I'm more involved with people now, and things that I want to do....

It's great, it really is, and it's changing me really drastically, I think. Not necessarily my whole outlook on things, but this whole deal about non-preconception and listening and...when you PREjudge something, I found out, I guess it's related to non-preconception, but...like I just started going out with this girl. She asked me out on this blind date. She asked me out on this blind date. I figured I don't know how I'm going to work this, I don't know what she's like or anything....I won't draw any conclusions yet, although I started to immediately because I've done it all my life. Conditioning, I guess. Well, I wasn't going to draw any conclusions until I knew more about her...so I didn't. And when I went out with her...I rather enjoyed the whole thing, so I figured she's pretty neat, so I'll ask her out again to see how she is when I ask her out rather than she asks me. And I wasn't going to preconceive on that either. And I got talking about this preconception and everything and she was very interested, and so we talked just about that whole night on non-preconception and everything, and she said she is starting to get involved, and in other things
also, and...I'm taking her to the prom...I don't know how it's going to work out, but...we'll see.

And have you got any other comments? Well, first I'm very glad I got into this. I have absolutely no regrets. In fact, if I didn't get into this, I really feel I'd have missed quite a bit....
APPENDIX A. SAMPLE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A STUDY OF IN-CLASS COUNSELING (AS OPPOSED TO FORMAL DOGMATIC RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION) IN INFLUENCING THE ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF CATHOLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL BOYS TOWARD CONFESSION

PROBLEM: There exist strongly negative attitudes toward the confessional experience among a large number of Roman Catholic boys attending Catholic high schools, and with Catholic grade-school background. Interviews with samples of this population have shown that these negative attitudes (which can lead to rejection of Confession and often the total ritual of the Church, and consequent stressful guilt problems) have been caused by unsatisfactory responses from the confessor rather than by any disagreement with the theory behind the ritual of Confession. It was universally apparent (in these sample interviews) that the primary cause of the anti-Confession attitudes was a misunderstanding of the function of Confession and the confessor: the students had gone seeking counseling (whether consciously or not) and had not, in the majority of cases, received it.

HYPOTHESIS: It is the purpose of this thesis to discover if counseling in a religion class situation will effect a positive change in the existing negative attitudes toward the confessional experience that the present dogmatic religious instruction does not.

EXPERIMENTER: Rob A. Quarles, functioning as counselor rather than as a strictly academic teacher.

POPULATION: Catholic senior boys whose education has been totally Catholic and who are attending a Catholic boys' high school.

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP: One senior religion homeroom.

CONTROL GROUP: The remainder of the senior religion homerooms.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: Counseling in a religious context rather than dogmatic religious instruction.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Change from negative to positive attitude (or at least understanding and insight) toward the function of Confession and role of the confessor.
METHOD: Attitudes and values questionnaires and religiously oriented problems check lists will be administered to the whole population at the beginning and end of the semester to see if there has been any significant change in the attitudes of the experimental group that could be attributed to the independent variable. The experimenter will administer the tests; he will conduct his counseling/religion class for the period of one semester.
APPENDIX B. STUDENT IDENTIFICATIONS

The group identified itself as individuals, with interests ranging from horse trainer to car jockey. Some had future goals, some did not. This is a sample of who they were. Later experience verified that they were not "putting me on."

--I don't believe in teachers.

--Politics are my all-consuming interest.

--Since my enrollment in high school, every day has been a challenge and an experience.

--What is my purpose in life? I really don't know, except for existing, and trying to achieve some goal in life. I am undecisive towards which goal I will pursue, and what means I will use to get there. Life is a big puzzle to me. My ultimate goal is simple: Heaven. But how to get there and why is the big problem.

--I want to make myself more likable to me.... Do I really need religion?

--Trying to find myself, into what category do I fit.... I feel by now I should be able to make relatively important decisions for my future: I know that I am depending less and less on my parents and more on myself. This is a sign of freedom.

Life to me seems to be one continuous cycle with no boundaries, always the aggressor.

--My family is pure Greek from centuries back. I followed in like manner and had a happy childhood. I love baseball but had to give it up for part-time work when my father sickened.

--I consider myself an independent person...not leader, not follower. I don't really care what other people think of me as long as the people I like, like me. I usually conform to the society around me because I find it makes living easier.

--I am honestly not looking forward to adulthood.

--I used to think I was the Supreme Cheese, but now I realize I'm just an individual like anyone else.
--I want to finish high school with the best grades possible on the minimum amount of work...believe it or not, I do love and/or like my family. I like jazz. I occasionally smoke, drink, and I like pro wrestling.

--I had a disagreement with the coach and quit the team two weeks before the season ended.

--I don't go to Confession because I don't understand it. My prejudices are hillbillies, snobs, and teen gangs.

--I am basically a young man who tries to do everything, but does not do anything well. I do not do anything that I do not enjoy so I am a pretty happy young man.

--I never really started living until I became a freshman. My rock and roll combo is the main thing I live for. I eat, sleep and drink the band. This has been the main force dominating my life, and it will be for more years to come. Because of my record at St. George, I am told no college will accept me.

--I do like girls and in all my spare time this is what I fill it with.

I have been accepted at the University of Illinois, Indiana University, Penn State. I am interested in a good swimming team and medical degree facilities.

--Parents pressuring me to go away for college...where I dread the work. Also, I have very bad grammar.

--I think everyone is shooting for love, affection, companionship.

--My parents thought I was mentally disturbed, but the whole thing was hate. I hated the world and everything in it...liquor and girls the most. I joined the seminary to get away from reality but it didn't work...I don't hate anymore, I just feel sorry for myself every once in a while. Now that I have a girl I can trust I've made great advances. Probably in a few years I'll be a new man.

--I take my faith seriously and with much interest. As I enter this final semester of high school I am rather confused about just how I am supposed to live my faith and follow Christ...I sincerely hope that this last semester will help me to find myself and the role that my faith is supposed to play in my life.

--I am trying to find out what is good about me, and what is bad about me, how people think, what, why...be good at many things, expert at a few...to be as athletic as I can.
I like architecture, beauty in buildings. I like electricity, have a sound system in my bedroom, used to be with a rock band, play guitar.

--Am interested in the Morshim College of Mortuary Science on the south side of Chicago. My hobbies are music and slot cars. Our team took first place in the time trials at the annual Ford Motor Company race at the amphitheater last winter. I work at Kroger.

--I am a person caught between adolescence and manhood. My values are no longer the carefree ones of a boy, but still far from those of a man. I have a girl, with whom I find mysterious, contented happiness I have never experienced before. I am beginning to see the real value of education; I no longer go to school because I have to. Religionwise, I am a Catholic in name alone. Too many of the Church's teachings have no meaning to me, and I can't go on blind faith alone.

I am being sucked into the emptiness of capital gain.

Note: Whatever they told me of themselves on the identifications was what they wanted me to know. It was completely unstructured in form, content, length.
APPENDIX C. RANDOM IDEAS FOR RESEARCH

1. Compendium of current phrases, words, gestures pertinent to your peer group and yourself...I'm talking about the supposedly obscene ones, "dirty" as well as the cool ones. Discuss each. Etymology. History. See Dictionary of Slang. Philosophy of epithets, cuss words. Some people, including myself, think teen argot is a valid language form, even if somewhat disturbing to others.

2. The car: A necessity for satisfactory social life in the Chicago area, etc.

3. The car as an extension of personality.


5. Sex education--where it should begin.

6. Sports cars, motorcycles...do they speak a "language"?

7. General male-female relationships on your level:
   --pre-marital relations
   --birth control
   --venereal disease
   --sex and the college student
   --are sex mores changing?

8. Alcoholism.


10. Contemporary Catholicism--what are its problems, where is it going, does it mean anything to anybody?


12. Censorship, pornography: films, literature, TV, advertising, magazines, history, law, philosophy for/against. Psychology. Relation to youth, etc.

13. Hugh Hefner's PLAYBOY PHILOSOPHY (I have this in published form if interested).

14. Aggression in man: evil or good. Environmental (Konrad Lorenz' On Aggression), hereditary (Robert Ardrey, African Genesis,
15. The Cinema: Is it related to Movies?

16. An examination of TV in Chicago—where is the worth? How is programming changing? Why?


18. Pro/con: my background in Catholicism.

19. Time magazine’s "Man of the Year"...the under-25 generation... any relation to you?

20. Rock and roll, folk rock, folk music, jazz—where’s the message?

21. Do I NEED religion?

22. Hot rod magazines as literature.

23. A guide to reference works in the area of my interest(s)—many books out which help limit research in any area, annotated guides to pertinent reference works, a must for college efficiency (English, History, Philosophy).

24. Browsings in the Chicago area major bookstores—Kroch's, Stuart Brent, Main Street, Cokesbury, St. Benet's, etc.

These are simply suggestions for those of you who are nursing a blank...rq
APPENDIX D. CLASS VISITATION SHEET

Name of teacher: Mr. Robert Quarles  Subject: Senior religion, level 5

Period: Second  Date: February 15, 1967

Time spent in class: thirty-five minutes

Appearance of the room: didn’t notice, except that every seat was taken, that it was a pretty large class.

Ventilation: didn’t notice.

Commendable points in the teaching: There was an excellent atmosphere of discipline, cooperation, respect for the teacher. He kept mentioning the value of being open. The work he is requiring seems valuable. Warning them or alerting them about the movie down at the Bryn Mawr, if I’m not mistaken, "Gospel According to St. Matthew," seems to be commendable and optimistic. Marveled that the evaluation comments he drew from the seniors didn’t seem exaggerated, stilted, immature. Used blackboard much.

Improvements to be made: Better mention once or twice more what you mean by saying "this is not a religion class anymore," and especially WHY you are handling things this way.

Delivery and voice of the teacher: Very good.

Attention of the students in the class: Very good, except for students X and Y, who were allowed to sleep on, or maybe were not noticed; they were definitely asleep during most of the class, especially student X.

General observations: I thought "What lucky seniors!" Good atmosphere.

ADD FURTHER COMMENTS HERE: If his followup of their retreat is indicative of his professionalism, then he is going to be quite a valuable teacher. I just hope a little religion gets taught, whatever that means.

Signed: Brother G. (head of the religion department)
APPENDIX E. RESEARCH GUIDELINES

1. Due May 1st.

2. Minimum 4-5 pp., no maximum.

3. "Research" your areas--who/what/where/why/how/when do others think, feel. Encyclopedias, general reference books, periodicals, books, interviews, tapes, TV programs, radio, records. References should be contemporary, including 1966, 1967. (Class notes OK.)

4. Typewritten.

5. Substantiate major ideas, facts not your own via reference to footnotes, bibliography. LETTER your footnotes on a separate page, and refer to them that way. NUMBER the items in your bibliography, and refer to them the same way. Perhaps this seems complicated, but actually it simplifies organization and typing effort for you, and also simplifies my following exactly what you are saying, while affording me a clear opportunity to check your accuracy. Be sure to include the page references when citing a source. Use whatever guideline you wish, but be sure that all footnotes and bibliographic entries are COMPLETE: This means title, author, publisher and date, pages of articles, etc.

IDEA: RELEVANCE TO SELF with research and thought showing connection (bridge) between them--the "I" portion of the I-Thou.

6. 2 or 3 may work on a project together.

7. A topic is not authorized until cleared through me.

**** 8. DUE: EXPANDED OUTLINE--2 weeks AFTER receiving approval from me...BE SURE I CHECK YOU ON MY MASTER LIST!!

ANY area that you are interested in, or want to become more involved in is suitable fodder for this semi-formal excursion into objective/subjective researching. I will be more than curious concerning your efforts, and as I hope you know by now, will be available to discuss, direct, clarify, LISTEN to your ideas. This "paper" is an opportunity for a TESTIMONIAL investment of your SELF; writing tends to be a more secure anchor of ideas than talk.

I would like to challenge you to BE YOURSELF!! I've noticed people like to bitch and brag about how things "are" or "should be." I've
also noticed that we all seem to hedge when it comes to really BEING ourselves. Please don't insult yourself and me by taking the b.s. route to harmony and success. I realize you aren't all the best writers in the world, and all I expect is that you be the best writer you are. This isn't a contest in professional composition. DO be original, witty, clever, sincere, unusual, honest. DO see me if you wish to CREATE something different from anything I've said so far: you ARE different, you know.

This kind of work would be called "Individual Research" in college, or most frequently, graduate school. You develop, study, immerse, communicate in an area of interest the way YOU want to; the way you know you operate most efficiently and well. rq
There is an inexplicable, possibly mysterious, irony in the
enraging fact that Bakan's article has been torn out of the Loyola
LT 9th floor periodical library. Your initial reference in March
to "mystery-mastery" piqued my curiosity, and ultimately my disgust
as I back-paged The American Psychologist bound volume, discovered
that volume 20 contained NO articles for 1965 as referenced, but
rather 1966, and ultimately that there were TWO volume 20's, one of
which at least turned out to be for 1965...an omen mysterious only
to those not familiar with the LT library. Quick to validate an
unpublished Parkinson's Law, the golden fleece was conspicuous by
its absence. A tattered spine was all that separated pp. 185-192.

To further my circa NE 8-toned disgruntle, the eventual
mimeo'd reprint of the article was in short supply, our availabil-
ity coordination poor, and my copy itself an excellent example of a
Marshall McLuhan/David Bakan/rq observation: the credibility gap
existing is damn near unbelievable; my copy of the article was a
poor print, obfuscating in endless hedgerows of shadow a mere read-
ing, let alone understanding. As a long-time victim of Gutenberg
Galaxy, husband of an editor for Encyclopaedia Britannica, current
researcher at the high school level of the phenomena of mystery-
mastery understanding of students by teachers, and disciple and
college lecturer ("experience-orienter") of film as media, well....
Bakan was speaking my language before I even COULD read him. Surely
a retort to my ill-ish library omen.

I am not being facetious; rather, I am deeply steeped
currently in Bakan's thesis that the M-M core is definitely oper-
ating as a hindrance to our understanding of the nature of human
personality. I will also add that it seems to further extend it-
self into the very operations of learning itself, within the stu-
dent as well as the psychologist (is HE a student?). Bakan refers
to "cultural lag," the PREconception of the alternatives in hypo-
thesis-testing, the limitation of SURPRISE!! the "ideal of research
is more in terms of CONFIRMATION than DISCOVERY," etc., in a ring-
around-the-rosy of titilating, serious, CLEAR messages. He says
on our page 7, for instance, "For understanding necessarily entails
the suspension of the taboo on mystery." Yes, yes--eagerly I soak
it up because I am working every day at the very core.

OPENNESS, LISTENING, NONPRECONCEPTION, REVEREOR, ACCEPTANCE
(not acquiescence), TESTIMONY, CURIOSITY, CRITICISM, INDIVIDUATION,
INVOLVEMENT, COMMITMENT: these are my operating principles in my
current thesis project with senior high school boys, my marriage,
my sense of community, and person as a counselor in Loyola's
Upward Bound program, my counselor orientation at Loyola at the
M.A. level influenced chiefly by Eugene Kennedy (Psyc 368) and
yourself.
Bakan's reference to contemporary man's most obvious commitments--that he live as a socially interacting organism (community) and that he manage his own affairs are simply understatements in my experience. My own previous commitment as "teacher," the parallel discoveries of myself as "person" and as "counselor," and my subsequent professional involvements have just this past week begun to become identifiable as all one and the same.

I've spent considerable hours this past month living, using reflecting, dialoguing Bakan's ideas, and at the preliminary, elemental stages at which I am experiencing them, they are real, they work. It's more than exciting; I feel as though I am at the very core of personality dynamics and involvement. The very process of testimony in this brief paper is an Easter in itself. I've become firmly committed to my unorthodox methodology (if nonpreconception can be labeled that way) regarding my M.A. thesis, which is nothing if not a solid extension of my self. The bag of surprises my operating principles precipitate are, to me, wild. Some days I am afraid to continue, for fear of closing up defensively, in trembling of the humbling "de-education," in awe of young persons coming to a realization of themselves by the simple fact that our media, which I call "elbow room," is NOT a M-M experience, and for that, is unique to them and effective for them. Their response is spontaneous, individually responsible, communitarian. Life at school without a continual aura of bullshit (the vernacular for M-M) is a revelation, a "learning."

Concisely, then, I think I have caught the essence of my total commitment within the essence of Bakan's message and of this assignment. A little unwieldy perhaps, but certainly "operationistic."

APPENDIX G. STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age_______  Sex_______

2. How many years of formal religion have you had? ______

3. Do you consider Jesus Christ as:
   a) a good man
   b) Son of God
   c) radical
   d) a friend
   e) "holy joe"
   f) other__________

4. How often do you go to Mass?
   a) every Sunday
   b) twice a year
   c) once a year
   d) seldom
   e) never
   f) other__________

5. If you miss Sunday Mass, do you feel guilty?__________

6. Do you agree with any of these quotes?
   a) "The Mass is too long."
   b) "The Mass has too many unnecessary parts attached to it."
   c) "The Mass is too old-fashioned."
   d) "The Mass has no meaning for me."
   e) "The Mass is for old people."

7. Which of these is most closely related to how you think of a priest?
   a) mediator between man and God
   b) a good man
   c) above man
   d) a man who forces his ideas on you
   e) a person with whom you can talk freely
   f) "holy joe"
   g) a person who has no influence on your life
   h) a person with whom you are afraid to talk (If so, why?)
   i) doesn't know what's coming off
   j) other__________

8. Is God for you, any of these?
   a) a father
   b) someone waiting to punish you if you do wrong
   c) old man with a beard
   d) a friend
   e) abstract idea which you can't describe
   f) other__________
9. Where did you get the above idea from? ________________________ 

10. Does the Church in general, a) help you 
    b) hinder you 
    c) have no influence in your life 

11. Do you feel that Catholics are the only people who can gain Heaven? _________

12. What is the main reason that you go to Mass? ________________________

13. If the pope makes a statement forbidding birth control, is it his own personal decision?________

14. Right now, can you see a need in your life for the Catholic Church?________

15. Do you feel you live your life as a Catholic? ___________
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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Rob A. Quarles has been read and approved by the director of the thesis. Furthermore, the final copies have been examined by the director and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

June 5, 1968

Date

Sister Mary Constantine, S.C.

Signature of Adviser