

"A Commentary on Some Sermons of the Reverend  
 Sidney A. Peterman:  
 'The Leisure To Hate; Myths, Legends and  
 Learning; and the Common Faith of  
 Man!."

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COMMENTS ON "THE LEISURE TO HATE." \*1

"The history of mankind is for me very simply stated. It is the gradual freeing of men from tyranny;--from the tyranny of nature, from the want and hunger that destroyed primitive man;--from the political tyranny which enslaved millions of men and women in this democratic nation of ours even a century ago, from the economic slavery that still holds most men in its iron fist, and from tyranny that holds men in fear of sickness and pain.

But just as some men have struggled for their freedom and for the freedom of others, so too there have been those other men who consciously seeking to profit from the misery and torment of others have worked against the forces of history to enslave mankind or else unconsciously have found the leisure in which hatred frown and comes to full flower."

How can we throw our weight in the balance to swing history further along the main path of history--the freeing men from tyranny? If we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, what happens if we hate ourselves? Can we learn more about ourselves from the insights of psychonanalyses developed by Freud? \*2

"The vandal in America does not think to question the authority of his fellows when a suggestion is made to "cut down that tree," "get in the schoolroom and get even with the teacher" or "let's see if we can derail that train". The authority of the gang prevails; the authority of a society which whatever it says publicly laughs at such youthful escapades predominates.

The American soldier in the last war did not stop to question the ethics of murdering prisoners for he had been so indoctrinated with the authority of hatred for the yellow devils, so completely imbued with doctrines teaching the necessity and value of killing, that whatever pangs he might have felt were easily stifled by remembering the the treacherous Japs attacked Pearl Harbor and that the "only good Jap is a dead Jap."

I think that it cannot be questioned that the common factor in all of these cases is a reliance upon an external authority which was so powerful that the thical imperative was blotted out and murder and destruction were seen as protection and growth.

\*1--A Sermon by the Reverend Sidney A Peterman on U.N. Sunday, 1956  
 \*2--Rachel Baker, Sigmund Freud for Everybody-Popular Library (1955)  
 \*3--Rollo May-Man's Search For Himself-N.Y. Norton (1953)

What is the characteristic of a communication system which is authoritarian? Is it not the lack of feedback? What do we mean by "feedback" Is the "inverse feedback circuit" of Norbert Wiener a satisfactory concept? \*4

"The second common factor which can be seen is a complete lack of responsibility, a complete lack of a feeling of an inclusive community or of acceptance of the obligations of brotherhood and fellowship.

Here I feel religion must speak and speak loudly and clearly of the validity of intimate personal living, despite all the pressures of the time, which make it possible for us to increase rather than decrease the needs of community which is so desperately needed."

If religion is to speak on this, must we not understand the process by which people grow up? Perhaps there is also a process of growing in religious history. \*5 Can we say that this process resembles the gradual growth from an authoritarian religious system to a system with feedback between individuals and the institutions?

Can we somehow increase the probability of our relating creatively to the people about us by utilizing the analogy of feedback circuits from the recently developed field of cybernetics?

"Yes, the countless tragedies, the misery and unhappiness caused by the repetition of "they say" which have proven to be false are easily forgotten and we rush heedlessly on determining our attitudes towards each and other men on the basis of what "they say." I challenge each and every one of you to stop just a moment the next time you repeat or quote that mystical "they", and then say to yourselves, I have found the leisure to hate, I too can rely upon false authority and cause unhappiness and distress by blindly relying upon authority.

Perhaps our sins will be small sins and the results of our reliance upon authority will not be too grievous, but within us we carry that potential of finding the leisure to hate which we must constantly guard against."

If we accept external authority without checking, are we not acting with a severed feedback link which in any electro-mechanical system would allow an unstable equilibrium leading to self-destruction?

"In big things, or in small things, whenever we forsake our own senses of justice and truth, we are opening the door to hatred. Whether our acceptance of authority only breaks up our own marriage or the marriage of friends due to heedless gossip, or whether our acceptance of red-scaries or any other such cries results in the loss of freedom for a whole nation, we are acting as though we had the time to hate.

SEE FIGURE I

"Within every human being lies the seeds of an infinite goodness and also the potentialities of evil to an almost unrealizable degree. Most of us are content to be rather mediocre and indifferent, but if our children are to breathe the air of freedom, if our loved ones and friends are to exist in a free world, if our own insatiable desire and love for beauty, truth and goodness is to be filled, then we must choose the road whereon all men find within themselves an authority which speaks to the world as a witness for truth, which rejects all false artificial external authority, and all men must find that spirit of love and charity which a certain carpenter of Galilee so clearly exemplified that his name shall go down through history as blessed and loved by all men."

Can we develop a clearer idea of how men can evolve their own internal authority through the use of analogous inverse feedback amplifier circuits? Perhaps we can consider the development of a child by following feedback circuits.

SEE FIGURE II

\*4--Norbert Wiener--Cybernetics--(or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine) N.Y.: Wiley (1948)

\*5--Compare the comments of C.F. Kent, A HISTORY OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE N.Y. Scribners (1897) P.ix and Grace E. Storms

HOW OUR BIBLE CAME TO US Boston, The Pilgrim Press (1955)

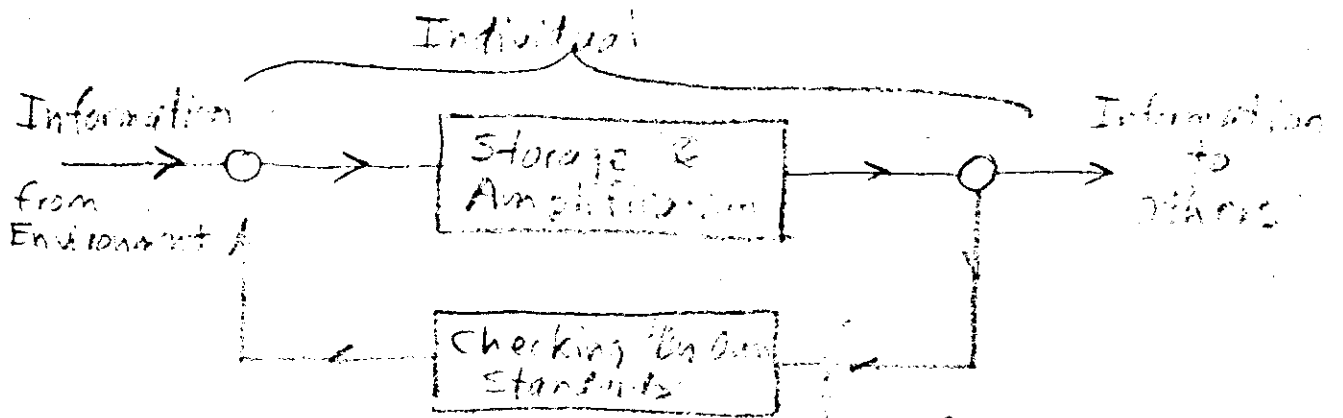


Figure 1 - Individual Feedback Circuit.

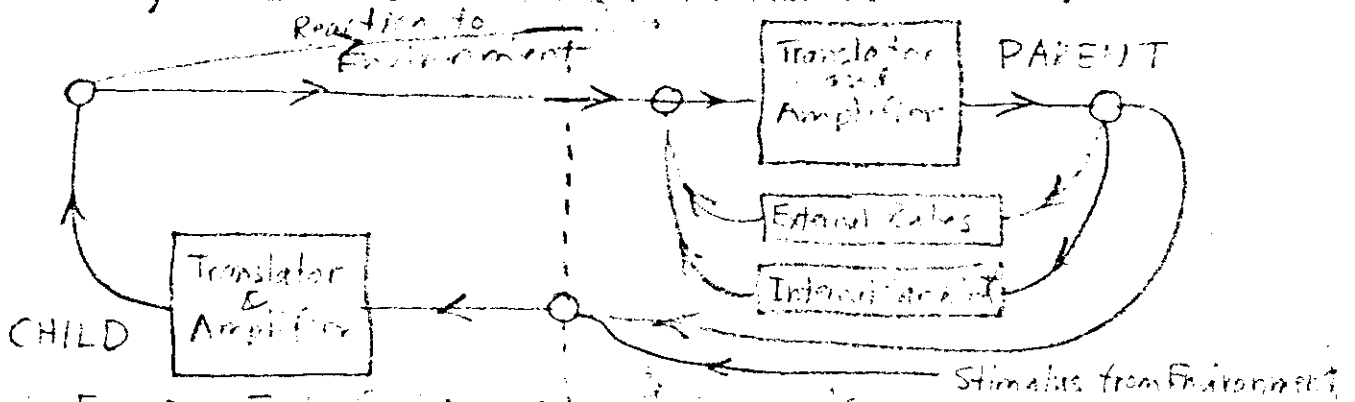


Fig. 2 - Early Child and Parent Units Provide Controls.

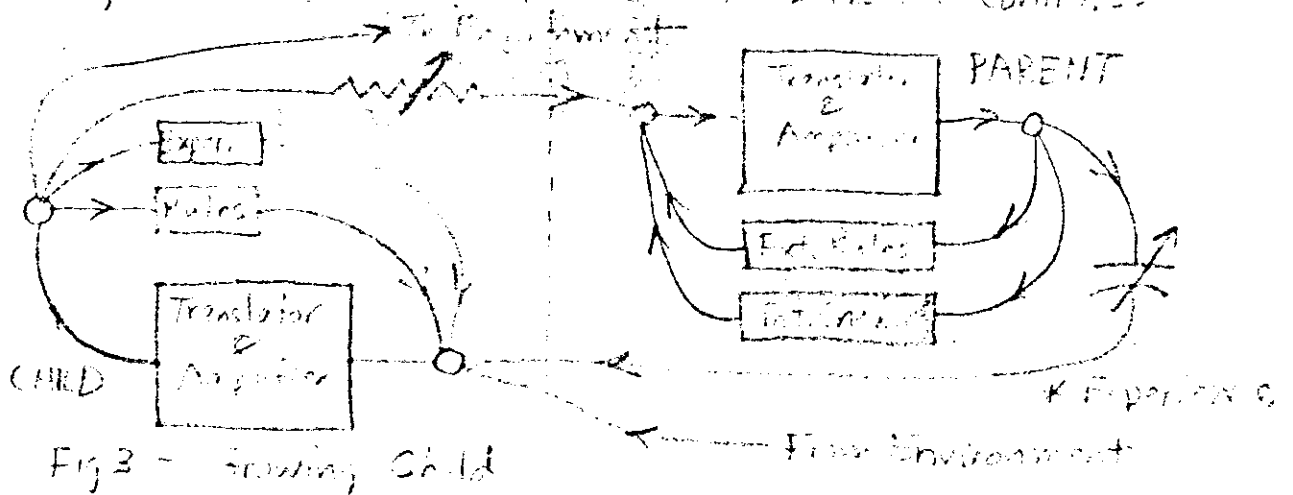


Fig 3 - Growing Child

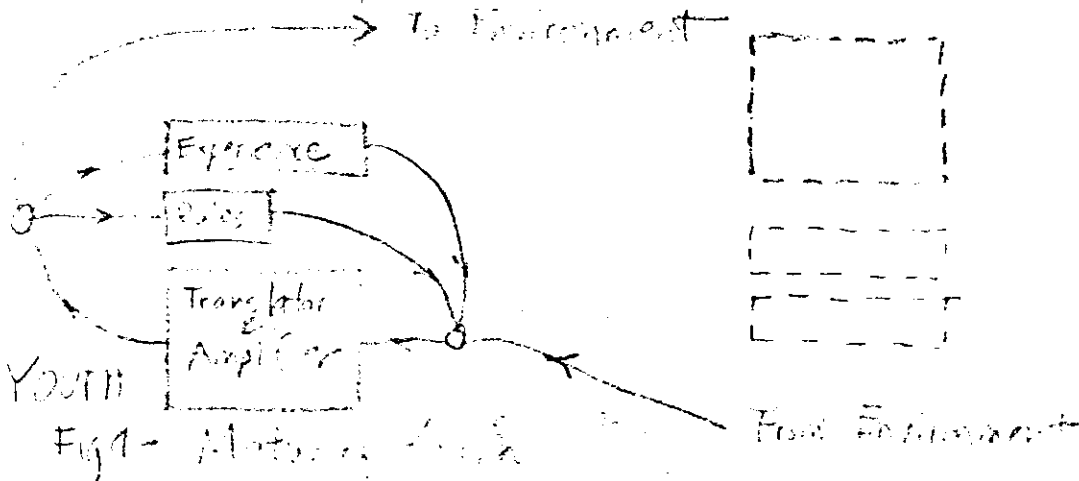
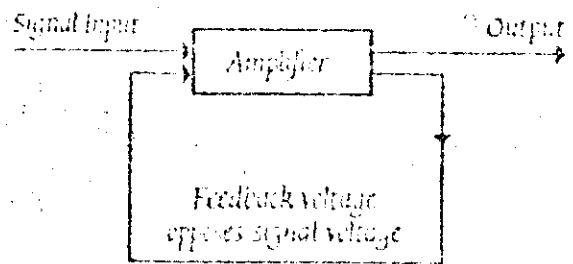
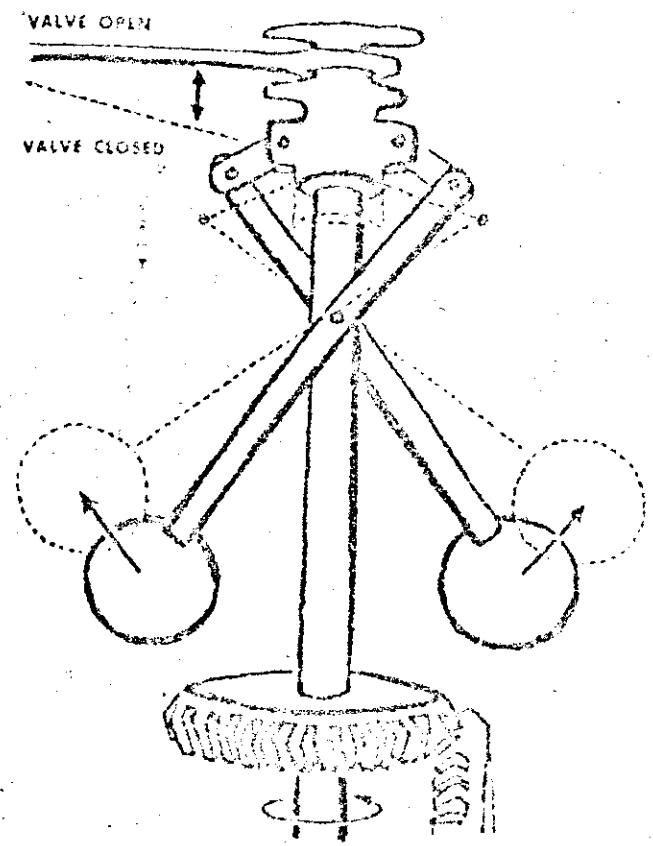
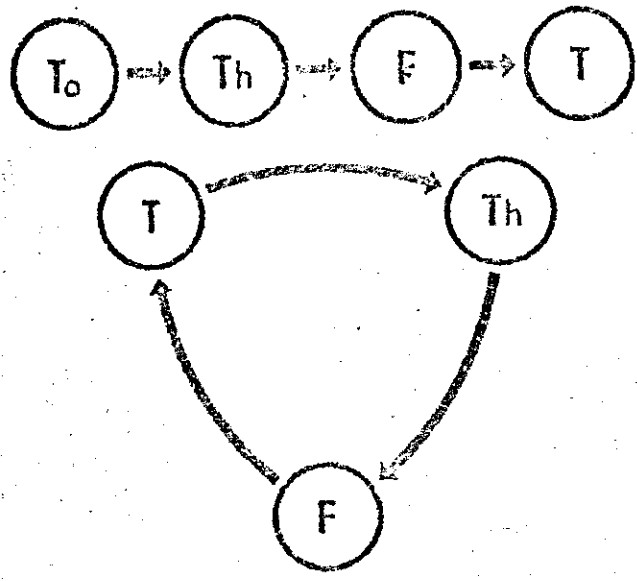
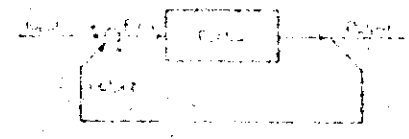


Fig 4 - Mature Youth

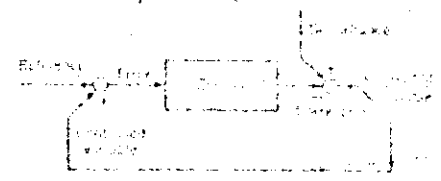
1/14/57 FEW



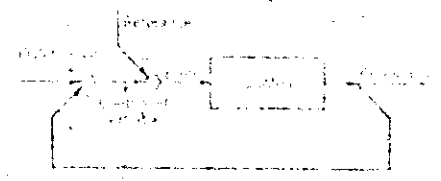
- Schematic Representation of the Negative Feedback Amplifier



(a)

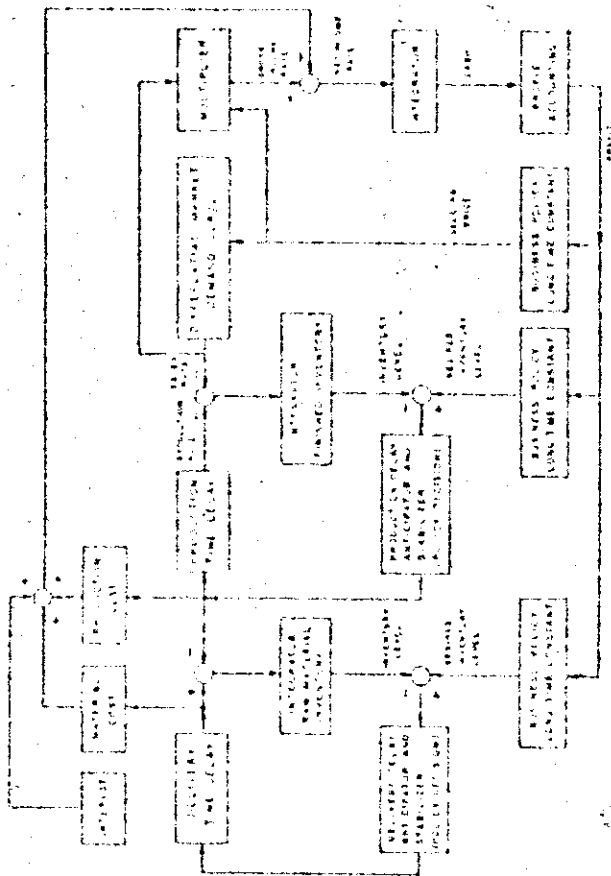


(b)

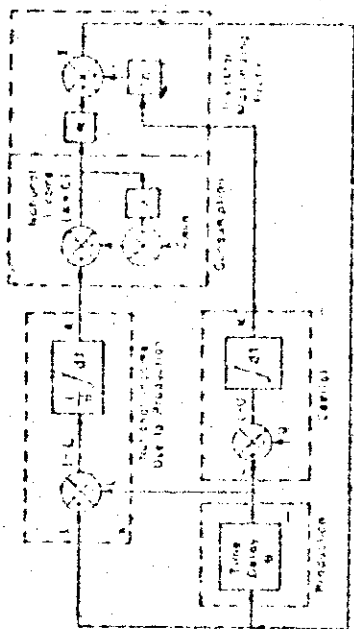


(c)

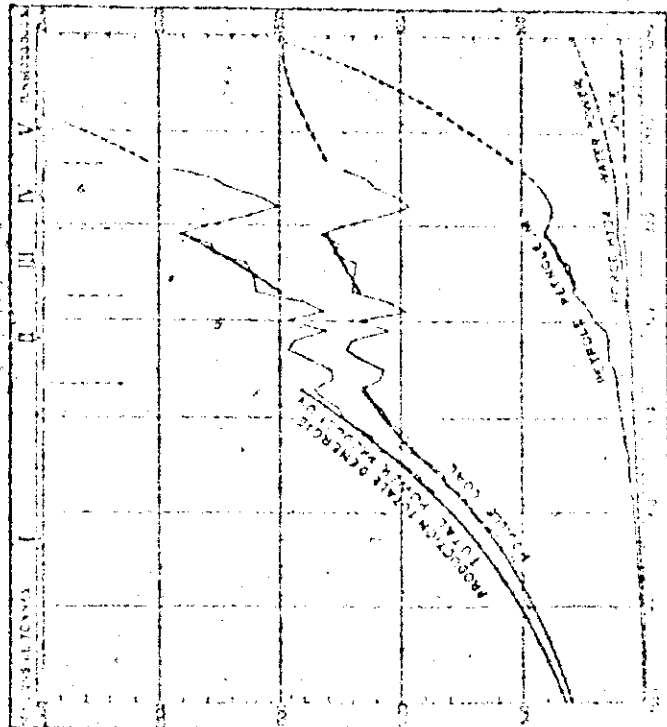
Feedback voltage opposes signal voltage



-Unilateral production analog.



-Macrodynamic capital production analog.



Myths, Legends, and Learning"  
(meeting of 4/17/57)

(Discussion Led by Rev. S. Paterson)

Announcement:

The discussion is planned to deal with problems of how, new concepts and symbols gained in man's scientific quest for understanding of himself and the universe can be integrated with the understanding gained by countless past generations.

Rough sketches of the symbolic representation of the areas of science considered in previous meetings of this season's discussion meeting will be on display in the "Church in the Round" for reference in the discussion. These symbolic sketches will be on exhibit so that artists can see if these forms can be developed into a more finished form for mounting in appropriate places in the Sanctuary to help tie together the contributions of the four principal religious activities of the church.

FBW  
(3-29-57)

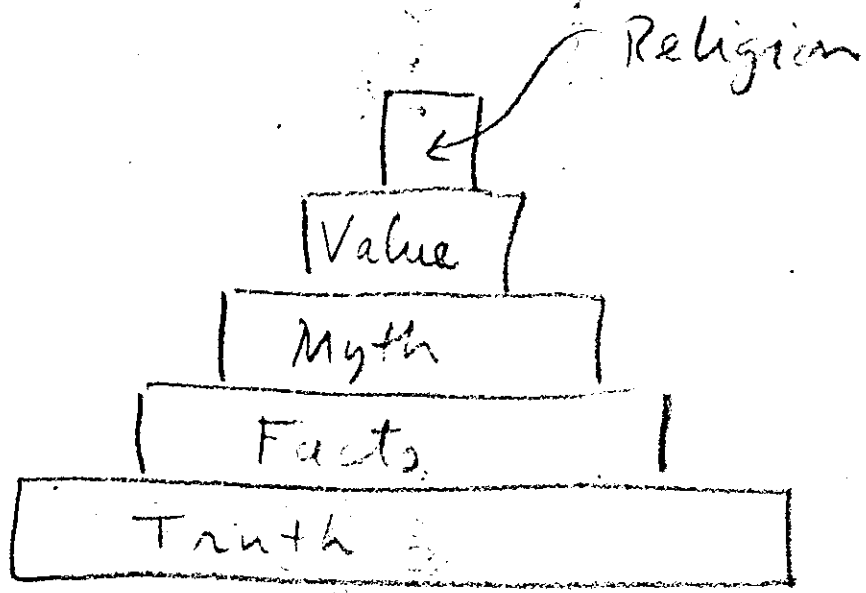
The four principal activities of the church are:

- (1) Church School
- (2) Worship
- (3) Ethical Motivation
- (4) Intellectual Stimulation

(from preceding  
Congregational Meeting)

A "myth." is interpreted by the total response to it, not its literal translation.  
 Through myths, words become conveyors of feeling, instead of mediators of meaning.

Sharing is done on a mythological level.



References:

Suzanne K. Langer	<u>Philosophy in a New Key</u>
Lawrence White	<u>The Next Development in Man</u>
Margaret Mead	(lectures on myths)



Meeting of 5/12/57: Myths (S. Peterman) 5-1

Myths are evaluable for

- (1) internal consistency
- (2) physical reality.

The "dying-rising God" myth has occurred many times in Mediterranean societies.

Israel - Jesus (From Israel to Rome)

Egypt - Isis

Iran -

Greece -

Rome - Mithra

Myths meet universal conditions and needs of human beings.

The revivals of 1750 can be compared with Campfire meetings. Now social salvation appeals to people. The appeal of Jesus is to groups, not primarily to individuals.

Science takes the simplest explanation of facts. A myth is good if it translates value out of facts most conveniently.

From myths ideals emerge.

The Crusades resulted in the myth of naturalism.

Islam = "One God and Mohammed is his Prophet" (This is the Semitic-Mohammedan myth from which science came. Out of existence there is a core of unity. i.e. Science accepts the simplest or most unifying hypothesis. Unity is at the heart of all existence.)

(These notes may have suffered severely in the long time delay between May 12th and Oct 11.

FBW 10-11-57

SOCIO-ENGINEERING PROBLEMS REPORT NO. 44

Date: Oct. 56      April 57 5/58      12/25/61 2/15/64 1/22/67  
Stage: Discussion Set of      Communication SEP 44      SEPR 44 Reissue  
Notes      Notes      Theory and  
Religion Notes

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## "The Common Faith of Man"

Supplementary Notes on Sermons of  
Rev. Sidney A. Peterman.

Rev. Peterman's May 11, 1958, Sermon at the First Unitarian Church of San Jose, Calif., emphasized the following points as the base for a common faith of mankind:

- (1) Human individuality is precious,
- (2) Various methods of state organization exist for MAN,
- (3) A belief in human equality,
- (4) A belief that peace is a desirable<sup>state</sup>/of the world.

Rev. Peterman said that these four ideas have been developing in the thoughts of leaders and prophets for the last 8000 years.

He also mentioned that Einstein said that only the church opposed Hitler.

SOCIO-ENGINEERING PROBLEMS REPORT NO. 44-A

Date: 5/11/58 1/23/57

Stage: notes on Draft  
Sermon Record

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