

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONVERGENCE OF EXISTENTIAL  
COUNSELING AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

by

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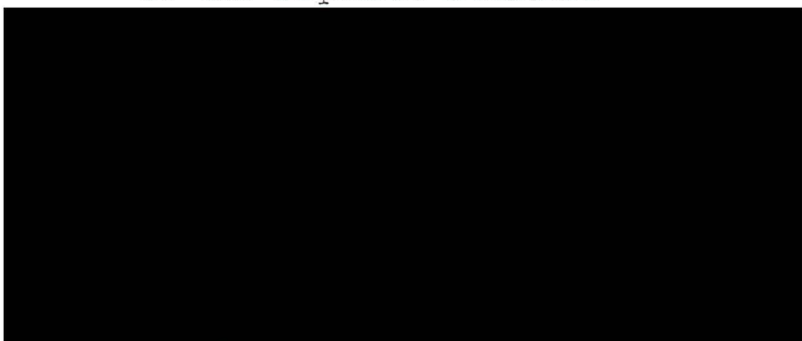
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#### ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the compatibility of the belief systems existential counseling and contemporary Christianity in an attempt to make available to man a conceptual tool by which he may integrate his psychological and religious development, lessen conflicts between the two processes, and attain an integrated functioning wholeness as a person.

The General System Theory as proposed by Bertalanffy (1968) with the notion of a system as a complexity of interacting elements establishing and maintaining an integrated wholeness provides the theoretical construct for the compatibility and convergence of the two systems such that a hierarchy of systems is formed. Thus while each system functions in its own right they both operate as subsystems serving to contribute toward the goal-directed wholeness of the supersystem. The rules of the language system: syntax, semantics and pragmatics are the criteria which determine the compatibility of these two subsystems. Their respective interacting elements and goal are analyzed accordingly. The elements of each system (process goals) are identified as; exercising personal freedom, improving encounter and discovering meaning with the goal (ultimate goal) being self-

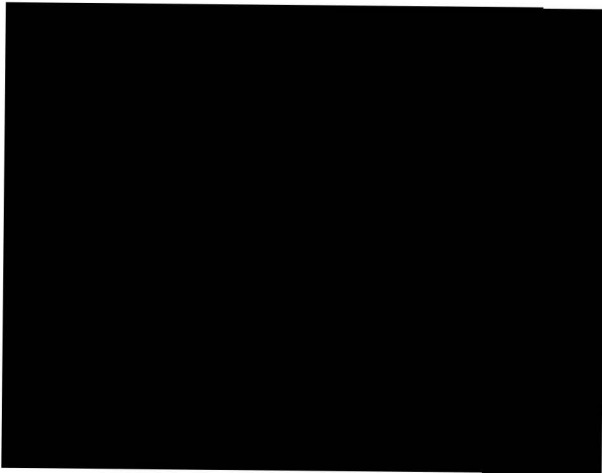
fulfilment.

The data analyzed are extracted from the writings of two recognized existential counselors, Rollo May and Adrian Van Kaam, and two equally reputable contemporary Christian theologians, Gregory Baum and Rubem Alves. The similarities between the elements and the ultimate goal of each system as represented by the above authors are tabulated and a common language devised.

The results indicate that there seems to be compatibility between existential counseling and contemporary Christianity with regard to their respective "process goals" (interacting elements) and their ultimate goal. The similarity is such, that there appear to be points of convergence as well as of compatibility and a hierarchy of systems appears to exist.

This being so, the existential counselor who accepts this integrated tool in relating with a Christian client who seeks personal growth through therapy but conceptually and experientially separates his personal growth from his Christian living, can provide his client with an opportunity to integrate the whole of his life. The client is encountering a person who will enable him to confront all of his inner conflicts, religious and otherwise, to become a more complete, whole person, rather than a compartmentalized being.

The priest or minister implementing this supersystem can assist those persons with whom he comes in contact in much the same way. He can lead them to find that their personal growth and self-fulfilment is part and parcel of their participation in and identification with the redemptive life of Christ; that man's growth in humanness, in wholeness is the redemption of mankind in process.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Modern man is still searching for ways by which to control his world and make of it a better place to live. In the process he is developing a highly technical universe and a scientifically informed society. But what is man's role as a person in the midst of his sophisticated knowledge and his scientific achievements? He seems to be experiencing what Frankl (1963) calls an "existential vacuum" and is turning from considering "out there" to look within himself. Man is vacillating between Erickson's (1968) stage of puberty and adulthood. He is moving beyond the typical adolescent question "What can I do?" to ask, "Who am I?" and "What gives meaning to my life?"

Today more than in the past, psychologists are moving in the direction of viewing man as a whole person, an organic super-system of integrated physical, psychological, emotional, social processes (Fromm, 1968; Bertalanffy, 1968; Laszlo, 1969; Gray, Duhl, & Rizzo, 1969). Many men acknowledge, or at least consider, the existence of a religious need within by creating a "Ground of Being" for themselves; by accepting the God of an already existing belief system; by denying the

existence of a higher being or avoiding giving thought to it (Fromm, 1967; Allport, 1968). As long as man does not come to grips with the spiritual aspect of his life and deal with it in relation to his entire being, he may not function efficiently. Ignoring a part of the whole in his goal directed system (wholeness) man may not realize his potential to be a whole person.

#### Statement of the Problem

The writer views this predicament of man with regret but also with hope. For there exists both theoretical and empirical evidence that a person needs more than psychology (a science of behavior) with its knowledge, methods and techniques to become a whole person (Mowrer, 1961; May, 1967; Allport, 1969; Frankl, 1971). Many psychologists are suggesting that the insights of philosophy and religion are needed (Frankl, 1967; Tournier, 1964; Allport, 1969), while some philosophers (e.g. Maritain, 1956) and Christian thinkers (e.g. Kennedy, 1970; Tillich, 1952) are recognizing that psychology is enabling man to become more whole. In the midst of today's seemingly insecure society many individuals are seeking a belief in something or someone beyond themselves to draw their lives together. Many are turning to forms of meditation and pentecostal prayer. Feelings and emotions are being recognized as good and vital experiences of a full life. Greater than ever, then, is the need on the part of man to integrate his life of faith and feelings, his

life of relationship with his supreme Being as well as with human beings. He needs to see that his personal growth and his religious experiences can be part of the same growth process. Therefore he is in need of a conceptual system which reveals the integration of the two belief systems active in his life.

Existential counseling (defined on p. 6) and contemporary Christianity (defined on p. 6) may provide man with the integrated system which he consciously or unconsciously seeks. For existential counseling and contemporary Christianity seem to converge in their respective process goals (see pp. 78-80) and ultimate goals (see p.82), to form a hierarchy of systems.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the possibility that the belief systems of existential counseling and contemporary Christianity converge in such a manner as to form a hierarchy of systems. That is, to determine the two conceptual belief systems, each serving its own function and held in control or limited by the functioning of the other (Simon, 1962; Bertalanffy, 1968; Whyte, Wilson, & Wilson, 1969) that form a conceptual super-system of two sub-systems which contribute to the establishment and maintenance of an integrated functioning wholeness (Hall & Fagan, 1956; Bertalanffy, 1969; Iaszlo, 1972).

### Significance

The existence of such a conceptual system could make available to man a pre-integrated conceptual tool. He could then think in terms of his personal growth toward self-fulfilment occurring simultaneously with his Christian growth towards the realization of the "new Jerusalem." In fact, he may choose to consider his personal growth process and his Christian growth process as one process working toward one ultimate goal.

The existential therapist who accepts and implements this view when dealing with a client, who operates on a set of religious beliefs, may thus provide his client with an opportunity to encounter all of himself. A whole person, rather than a fragmented or compartmentalized person would be confronting all of his inner conflicts (religious and otherwise). The Christian in therapy could become a more complete person, consequently a better Christian, as a result of this existential growth process of counseling. Liège in his "Consider Christian Maturity" (1965) is supported by Lepp (1968) in stating that a mature Christian must be a mature person.

In addition to offering the Christian a broader vision of the effectiveness of existential counseling for himself as a growing person, psychologically and religiously, this study is designed to indicate how this "humanization" of man is present in the message of Jesus Christ. It also attempts

to show that there is the possibility that men, regardless of differing beliefs, are taking the same steps towards personal growth and self-fulfilment in God.

Persons of Christian belief systems could possibly find greater joy in merely "coming to be" as persons were they to accept the convergence of their "personal growth" and "Christian growth." Priests and ministers could more effectively contribute toward the continuous growth, psychological and religious (psychoreligious), of those in their care were they to think and operate with this integrated conceptual system. It would seem that their pastoral counseling would better enable a person to draw all of his life into his relationship with God.

#### Definitions

The following definitions of significant terms provide a common language for the communication and understanding of the content of this thesis.

Existentialism in this context is an attitude toward functioning man arising out of his basic nature as an essence which "ex-sists," stands out (Maritain, 1956; Kierkegaard, Nietzsche in Blackham, 1965), and comes to grips with his existential (human) condition. The emphasis is placed on man coming "to be" (Heidegger in Gallagher, 1962) as he shapes his own history; fulfils his unique "beingness" by making choices, decisions and assuming responsibility; and by transcending self (Buber, Jaspers in Blackham, 1965), to

"exist in some other existence [Tillich, 1965]."

Existential counseling or psychotherapy is a therapeutic process in which a therapist, counselor, participates and assists a person in exploring his personal existence within his "here and now" world (May, 1967b) with the intent of fostering subjective awareness and the appreciation of choice, freedom and meaningfulness (Heucher, 1964) thus effecting ". . . the free actualization of self in the light of the life vocation and the authentic life situation [Van Kaam, 1966, p. 30]."

Christianity is a way of living wherein a personal and communal relationship between God and man effects man's salvation (Abbott, Vatican II, 1966) through, and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965). This relationship is experienced by the individual in time and in eternity (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965; Kennedy, 1972) in so far as he freely accepts and implements in his human condition the salvific message of Jesus Christ (Abbott, 1966)--"you must love the Lord your God . . . you must love your neighbour as yourself [Matthew 23:37-40]."

Person is that inner core of man that is continuously in the process of becoming (Tournier, 1957) a unique singular existence "interwoven with a shared essence . . . existing always at the contingent moment of experience [Curran, 1969, p. 29]" seeking a personal base that is somehow enduring,

fulfilling, and enabling him to reach beyond himself.

Personal growth is a dynamic existence of the person whereby he becomes more fully himself as he liberates himself from inauthentic, paralyzing "modes of existence"; discovers repressed modes of existence within him; develops new authentic ways of being; and integrates with authentic past behaviours his newly found behavioural patterns (Van Kaam, 1966; Fromm, 1968; Maslow, 1971).

Theology is a formulation in human symbols of the revelation of God to man and man's response to God's revealed word--Scripture and history (Tillich, 1967; Curtis, 1970)--for the purpose of salvation (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1968).

Religion is the "state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the questions of the meaning of our life [Tillich, 1963, p. 4]."

Reality exists for the individual in so far as he participates in man's existential situation, is conscious of and responds to it (May, 1961; Kierkegaard in Blackham, 1965). In Christian terms reality includes his participation, consciousness of, and response to the revelation of God through his presence in the world, the message of Christ and other persons (Baum, 1971; Kennedy, 1973).

Encounter is a dynamic meeting of one person with another person, oneself, or an object, resulting in an increase of human knowledge (Kwant, 1965). In the case of a

person meeting a person the "I'Thou" relationship (Buber, 1958) is such that "I" participates in the "Thou's" way of being in the world.

Convergence is the tending towards points or degrees of similarity in form, habit (Webster, 1956).

System is a set of complex elements interacting in such a manner as to establish and maintain an integrated functioning wholeness (Bertalanffy, 1969; Laszlo, 1972; Hall & Fagan, 1956).

Hierarchy is that phenomenon known as supersystem which forms when two or more systems contribute towards a whole, with each subsystem serving its function and held in control or limited by the function of the other (Simon, 1962; Whyte et al., 1969; Bertalanffy, 1968).

Communication is a process by which ideas, thoughts, feelings are conveyed to another (Webster, 1956).

Syntax is the ordered arrangement of words particular to a given system of symbols (Kelly, 1969; Webster, 1956; Bochenski, 1965).

Semantics of communication deals with the meanings of the symbols, that is the relation between the symbol and the "reality" being symbolized (Webster Dictionary, 1956; Kelly, 1969; Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967).

Pragmatics in communication involves the assessment of the effectiveness of conveyed meaning determined by the extent to which their purpose is achieved by persons using

the word meanings (Bochenski, 1965; Watzlawick et al., 1967; Kelly, 1969).

Ultimate goal is an end or objective arising out of the purposive nature of man and life (Byrne, 1963; Peterson, 1970) and giving meaning to lesser goals (Parloff in Mahrer, ed., 1967; Patterson, 1973).

Process goals are dynamic change objectives attained only in so far as they are experienced and contribute to a person's ongoing growth towards self-fulfilment (Grendlin, 1967; Miller, 1969; Peterson, 1970).

Transcendence is that which moves beyond the present and the experienciable (Moltman, 1969); that which is transfinite (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1968).

Virtue is a fully developed capacity to accomplish readily and constantly moral good even against opposition and at considerable sacrifice. Infused virtues, bestowed by God, enable the whole person to tend toward the triune God (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1968).

#### Limitations of the Study

Existential counseling and contemporary Christianity are, each in their own right, conceptual systems. That is, they are each an expression in symbolic terms--words of "a complexity of interacting elements" existing in a concrete living system (Bertalanffy, 1969; Miller, 1969; Smith, 1969). As systems they are both subject to systemic analysis with regard to their respective elements, their interacting

relationships, their processes and their established goal (integrated wholeness).

This study is limited to considering the compatibility of the goals of the therapeutic and religious systems. Attention is given to the process and ultimate goals of each system. These goals are identified as they are dealt with. For the present, "process goals" are goals in process towards the realization of "ultimate goals." The latter are distinguished as those goals which give meaning to the lesser goals and go "beyond mere remediation to the promotion of growth and development" of the person (Peterson, 1970, p. 111).

The compatibility of the process and ultimate goals of these two systems and ultimately of the systems themselves, is determined according to the criteria of the language system: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. The "need-relation" aspect, pragmatics, is also treated conceptually. It is assumed that each system has an impact on the person who utilizes it and that similarly, a person employing the converged conceptual system also benefits. Testing the effectiveness of the converging systems is the task of many and other types of research.

While exploring and scientifically attempting to show that a convergence of the systems exists such that there is a hierarchy, both systems conceptually forming a "higher" system (Bertalanffy, 1969; Whyte et al., 1969; Laszlo, 1972),

this investigation does not claim that both systems are one and the same. Each is an individually constituted system containing elements not included in the other. They converge to form a hierarchy in so far as they give evidence of compatibility which "is not necessarily inclusive" nor "does it involve the determination of everything that is possible [Stebbing, 1961, p. 197]." It is assumed, therefore, that unidentified variables, although existentially essential to each independently "organized whole" are not incompatible with the elements forming the new system. It is the writer's contention that there are in all probability other levels of compatibility not dealt with here (Grene, 1969).

Of primary relevance to the work at hand is the notion of existentialism. For our purposes it is limited to an attitude toward basic phenomena coloured by the American orientation of hope, creativity, new meanings (May 1961; Tillich, 1965; Allport, 1969). Its scope is defined by the works of the existential therapists, Rollo May and Adrian Van Kaam. These writings are selected because their authors are recognized American existential therapists (Stein, 1948; Allport, 1969; Peterson, 1970; Arbuckle, 1970; Patterson, 1973). Both claim to be existential therapists (May, 1948, 1969; Van Kaam, 1966); each recognizes the other to be such (May, 1969; Van Kaam, 1966); and both frequently contribute articles in existential psychotherapy to recognized journals (e.g. Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry;

Harvard Educational Review).

Contemporary Christian thinking represented here is that of Gregory Baum (Roman Catholic) and Rubem Alves (Protestant). Statistics of the World Council of Churches justify representing Christian thought through Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians. For, of the approximate 1,024,106,500 persons forming the Christian community, 323,288,000 are Non-Catholic while 577,633,500 are Catholic (World Almanac, 1974; W.C.C, 1974). These authors, Baum and Alves, were also chosen on the basis of their American orientation. They obtained the major portion of their theological studies in American seminaries (Baum, 1971; Alves, 1969). Further, the former draws largely from another eminent theologian, Rahner, and the works of Vatican II (Baum, 1968, 1969, 1971) in support of his own thinking; his writings appear in The New Concilium (1972, 1973); he is presently a professor of theology in Toronto. Alves, likewise, draws from fellow Protestant thinkers (Bonhoeffer, Lehman, Moltman, & Alves, 1969). He is recognized as one of the principal theologians of the Third World--liberation theologian (Cox in Alves, 1969, p. vii-xii; Berryman, 1973); he is influencing those in seminary these days (S. Maeda, personal communication with the World Council of Churches, February 26, 1974). Both men are proposing that "life and freedom can be found together [Alves in Berryman, 1973, p. 388]" as the People of God come to be in their existential

condition.

## Method and Procedure

### Method

The method adopted to investigate the compatibility, and the convergence of the two belief systems of existential counseling and contemporary Christianity, is that of systems analysis. This approach is grounded in Bertalanffy's basic concepts of system: "a complexity of elements standing in interaction" dynamically ordered toward wholeness, and "hierarchy of systems" wherein two or more systems interact as subsystems of a supersystem also "whole" oriented. Attention is given to the elements of each system, the dynamic relationship of these elements, and the wholeness effected (Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 33; 1969).

This science of systems, known as General Systems Theory, while a product of many researchers is "best portrayed and understood in terms of the thinking of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who first gave the theory its name [Gray, Duhl, & Rizzo, 1969, pp. 8-9]." His work is elaborated on and employed by Laszlo in "The Systems View of the World" (1972); is utilized by Loomis (1960) in sociology; is applied to organizational behaviour by Kelly (1972); and strongly approved of by Gray, Duhl and Rizzo (eds., 1969) in psychiatry.

Laszlo (1969) provides the model used here to represent man extracting information from his environment "Information-

flow System." He constructs what he calls "a model for the simplest possible system which could perform the operations observed of the human mind [1969, p. 2]." One element "C" of this system functions as "control-coding" of the input from the environment. That is, the information events are cognitively examined against an already learned code or norm. In this cognitive process man uses symbols of reality. One rational construct according to which "the symbols are to be mapped (i.e. what their meaning is) [Laszlo, 1969, p. 91]" (Deese, 1969) is the language system, communication by means of symbols (Smith, 1969; Laszlo, 1972; Bertalanffy, 1969).

The minimal components of the language system, the interacting elements of syntax, semantics, pragmatics are assumed to be the criteria against which rational man tests the compatibility of the systems being considered here. Smith acclaims and supports the linguistic anthropologist's methodology and theoretical concepts relative to speech as guides to "the analysis of other codes of human interaction [Smith, 1969, p. 4]."

### Procedure

The procedure of the study develops according to the following:

#### Chapter II

This investigation necessitates an exploration of:

- A. Existential philosophy in order to
  1. identify its influence upon psychology and psychotherapy,
  2. specify a particular form of this school of thought--American Existentialism,
- B. Contemporary Christianity,
- C. Bertalanffy's General System Theory,
- D. Laszlo's Information-flow System.

The process goals and the ultimate goal of existential counseling and contemporary Christianity are drawn from the literature in the areas of therapy and theology, respectively. In both systems these are represented as:

- A. process goals:
  1. exercising personal freedom,
  2. improving personal encounter,
  3. discovering meaning.
- B. ultimate goal:
  1. self-fulfilment

### Chapter III

The formation of a hierarchy of systems, the convergence of the systems existential counseling and contemporary Christianity is dependent upon the compatibility of the systems with respect to:

- A. their elements,
- B. the relationship of these--compatibility,
- C. the goal toward which each system is directed.

As indicated above the criteria of compatibility are the minimal components of language:

- A. syntax,
- B. semantics,
- C. pragmatics.

Under the scrutiny of this code of rational analysis, the language system, are the interacting elements and ultimate goal of:

- A. existential counseling as represented in the writings of:
  - 1. Rollo May (1960, 1961, 1967, 1969),
  - 2. Adrian Van Kaam (1966, 1967, 1968, 1969).
- B. contemporary Christianity as they appear in the works of:
  - 1. Gregory Baum (1968, 1969, 1971, 1972, 1973),
  - 2. Rubem Alves (1969, 1972).

#### Chapter IV

A consensus of meanings (semantics) of each element of respective systems are drawn from the works of the representatives of each system. Since the elements are in process they are also considered from the point of view of effecting behaviour (pragmatics) within the systems. Hence, the consensus of the semantics and the pragmatics of each element are presented as the meaning of a given element related to its appropriate behaviour. The commonalities of each element are identified.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Theoretical Background

The theoretical basis of the problem under investigation lies in a construct of three related sciences: philosophy, psychology and theology. Existentialism provides one philosophical-psychological framework which may be related to Christian concepts.

The underlying philosophical assumptions operating in this context take shape in the following description. Man is a composite being of body and spirit capable of physical, mental and emotional growth in his human situation. He is basically good with a propensity to evil. Through freedom and responsibility he is capable of transcending self in his own reality both for his own good and that of others. He moves out beyond himself in so far as he remains open to and relates with others in his ever changing world of reality and persons. A further assumption is that he is capable of and in many instances does operate on a religious belief which integrates his entire life. With the present philosophical position allowing for religion it is necessary to look at the function of religion in the realm of psychology and psychotherapy.

## Existentialism

It is essential to this study to clarify the term "existentialism" for it identifies the counseling orientation under consideration and the environmental milieu in which both systems, counseling and Christianity, are compatible in the conceptual system of man. However, it is an impossible task to identify each philosophical concept, define and determine its relevance to the topic in question. An attempt is made to give an overview of the development of existential philosophy and synthesize its contribution to counseling.

As a philosophy "existentialism" is basically concerned with ontology, the science of being (Maritain, 1957; Herberg, 1958). Maritain (1957) recognizes that existence may be affirmed to be primary while at the same time assuming and preserving essences or natures manifesting intelligence. On the other hand, being or existence may be affirmed in such a way as to destroy essences (intelligent natures capable of considering concepts) and in so doing destroy the philosophy of existentialism (Maritain, 1957). In the early seventeenth century Descartes proposing the latter trend of thought conceived of a supreme Existence devoid of any nature and functioning devoid of any order, wisdom, purpose (intelligibility) (Maritain, 1957).

The New Catholic Encyclopaedia supplemented by Kaufmann (1956), Kaplan (1961), and Sadler (1969), provides the

following brief development of existentialism. Hegel (1770-1831) speaks of man as "having reality only as a thinking being" and thus contributes to the reign of rationalism. His totalitarianism of reason was violently opposed by Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and Nietzsche (1844-1900) who objected to man's being considered in an abstract, detached way as subject or object. This living, existing person, underlies subjectivity and objectivity. He must be considered as an experiencing person, a living, real being, thinking in existence. Further, Kierkegaard sees man as a being in the making; a being who becomes what he makes himself by utilizing his freedom to make vital choices and coping with despair and "existential anxiety" arising from his awareness of the limits of his existence (death and nothingness).

The movement is enriched by Heidegger (1889-1952) who adds his concept of the "to be" (Dasien) of man--man in his everydayness "standing out toward" the "to be" in dread and concern to encounter the world, to become authentic and whole. About this time Sartre (1905-19-- ) applies Descartes' view to the finite level to propose that the world and all that exists within it exists without reason, to no purpose, is "absurd." A being possessing consciousness and freedom, man alone can give himself a reason for existence by choosing to be the kind of man he wants to be. He creates himself. Also contributing to existential thought is Marcel (1889-

1973) with his concepts of self being "'founded' by participation" in being; of being including the self that thinks so that man can say "I am my body [N.C.E., p. 736]"; of being present to self; of being present to others by transcending self. Jaspers (1883-1969) adds his notions that "limit situations," struggles, disillusionments cause man to transcend self. At this point faith is operative causing man to consider "Being-for-oneself," consequently personal convictions regarding the ultimate meaning of life. Self-fulfillment is achieved only if the person accepts his historicity and communicates with other existences of the past and present.

Pertinent is Maritain's (1957) differentiation of "philosophical existentialism" and "existential existentialism." The first he calls "the posture of 'cause seeking' characterized by a certain theoretical universality of detachment from self for the purpose of knowing [p. 130]" essentially philosophical; the second, "saving my all" is man coming to grips with his existence, therefore essentially religious in nature. It is an attitude of faith leading to a dialogue with or a rejection of the God of Faith. He claims that the existentialism of Kierkegaard and others (Kafka, Chestov, and Fondane), although arising and developing within philosophy, is not a true philosophy. Following suit, Tillich (1952) contrasts the existential attitude of involvement with that of a theoretical attitude defining

"existential" as "the attitude of participating with one's own existence in some other existence [p. 125]."

### American Existentialism

An additional discriminatory factor is that of American existentialism as compared to European existentialism (Allport, 1969; Tillich, 1965). The latter carries with it a pervading tone of dread, anxiety, despair--Sartre's "nausea"; the former, a more optimistic orientation evidenced by its concepts of self-identity, growth, progress, self-actualization (Feifel, 1959; Maslow, 1964; Allport, 1969). In speaking of the American hope in the existential situation, Tillich (1965) admires the courage to risk experimentation, failure; to experience dread, tragedy, guilt, even despair; to go beyond these to taste of new hope, new meanings. He sees the American seeking to be himself while forming a part of the "creative process of history," that is, affirming himself "as a participant in the creative development of mankind [p. 107]." His meaning is thus realized within himself as he goes beyond himself in his creativeness whether he senses this process of creativity as divine or not. It is this western world view of the Existential "attitude" (as opposed to a philosophical stance) that will be the framework for this thesis.

### Existential Psychology

The existential situation of today witnesses man

attempting to come "to grips with his existence" in the form of existential psychology (Allport, 1969; Maslow, 1971; May, 1969); existential psychiatry (May, 1969); as well as existential theology (Maritain, 1957; Buber, 1958; Herberg, 1958; Tillich, 1967). Allport (in May, 1969) in speaking of the existential movement sees it as deepening "the concepts that define the human condition" and preparing the way for a "psychology of mankind." May and Basecu (1968) represent the influence of the already indicated philosophical concepts on psychology in the following:

Existential psychology is a comprehensive science whose aim is the integration of the observations of differential psychologists into an explanatory theory about human behaviour in its lived intentional entirety . . . the existential approach is thus dynamic in the fundamental sense that it takes the person always as emerging, always in process of becoming. Existentialists emphasize . . . that man exists as a subject and object at the same time. . . . Every act is of consciousness of something; that is, it has its objective as well as its subjective pole. Consciousness is an active process; the man who is doing the experiencing and the objective work which is the object of consciousness can never be separated [pp. 82-83].

### Existential Counseling

Applied to counseling Van Kaam (1966) speaks of existentialism as an attitude ". . . an orientation of attention . . . for basic phenomena [p. 11]." In the therapeutic process it

lays great stress on the "here and now"; fullness of the present experience; qualities rather than quantities; content rather than causal relationships; the subjective awareness and appreciation

of choice; freedom, and human need for meaningfulness. The existential therapist ultimately wishes to help the patient to explore and realize his existence [Heucher, 1964, p. 163].

He assists man in his ability to structure his world through encounter with an understanding of the whole person as he faces the anxiety, loneliness, guilt factors of his ontological condition (Curtis, 1970). The result of which is the client "is set free so that he may actualize his unique self in his unique life situation in accordance with the demands of reality [Van Kaam, 1966]." This "we-experience" results in a real caring, a contact with the other's personal feelings, experiences, attitudes. It is an appeal on the part of the client and a response by the therapist "to be with and for him"--the client (Van Kaam, 1968). Marcel (in N.C.E., 1967) speaks of this relationship as an "ontological communion" and Van Kaam (1968) as a "community."

Each of these persons is an inner core that is continuously in the process of becoming, of emerging from his personage (Tournier, 1957). As he emerges a person develops toward self-actualization by means of a liberation of himself from inauthentic, paralyzing modes of existence, by discovering repressed modes of existence in himself; by developing new authentic ways of being; and by integrating into a new life style the newly found behavioural patterns with authentic modes of the past (Van Kaam, 1966). Personal growth is the dynamic existence of the person according to Fromm (1968), Maslow (1971), and Van Kaam (1966).

In attempting to grasp the total phenomenological world (the inner subjective view) of the individual the existential approach to therapy considers the client's values and principles (Frankl, 1971; Peterson, 1970; Beck, 1963; Allport, 1961). Also included are "the key concepts of the client's religious world . . . freedom, personal encounter with God, and the discovery of meaning in life [Vaughan, 1965, p. 553]."

### Christian Concepts

#### Related Notions

As early as the birth of depth psychology, Sigmund Freud sees the influence of religion in the lives of his clients. He, however, considers it to be a dangerous illusion (Fromm, 1967). Jung (1938) takes a phenomenological position of religion as a "numinosum" which "seizes and controls the human subject which is always rather its victim than its creator [p. 4]." Fromm (1967) refutes the argument that psychoanalysis and religion are irreconcilable to offer the vision of both being united in seeking "the cure of the soul [p. 90]." Allport (1950) gains insight into this same vision and writing as a scientist "making no assumptions or denials regarding the claims of revealed religion [p. xi]" attempts to meet today's demands that psychology and religion find a common ground. May (1967b) disagrees with Freud on holding that "religion is per se a compulsive neurosis" but agrees that "Does it increase dependency and keep the

individual infantile? [p. 166]" was a useful question. He evaluates it on the basis of its lessening or strengthening the individual's exercise of his "own responsibility and ethical power [p. 167]." Mowrer (1961) indicates that psychology and religion have a common ground in the nature of the person; both can aid the therapeutic growth of the person; but each science remaining unadulterated for the good of the other, ultimately the person.

Frankl (1971) unhesitatingly begins his therapeutic approach in the realm of man's spirit for he is convinced that life is asking something from man, that man must be "educated to responsibility for his own movement toward meaning [p. xiv]." Continuing on in this vein Reudin (1964) takes a look at the interrelationship of psychotherapy and spiritual guidance; Liége (1965) places emphasis on the need for the Christian to achieve "human maturity" in order to arrive at Christian maturity; and Lepp (1967) investigates the compatibility of Christian teachings and psychiatry.

#### Contemporary Christianity

Today's "open" Christians are considering their existential situation in the light of the message of Jesus Christ as he lived it two thousand years ago. They are also availing themselves of the thought stimulated by the existential philosophers, while asserting that "a Christian philosophy is existential in its own right [Gilson, in N.C.E., 1967, p. 727]," that is, "essentially existential

[Maritain, 1957]." Beginning its investigation by considering the existential world of existence it arrives at the notion of the absolute Act of Being as the uncaused Cause.

Kierkegaard (in N.C.E., 1967) brought the Christian world's attention to the application of this notion to man as well--to consider man in his existential situation, his "human condition." For man is ever changing his world through his deeds and simultaneously changing. Man is in the state of becoming man, of becoming and making himself a Christian (Michalson, 1956). While in a process of progress in self-realization many Christians are attempting to bring about the oneness of the human family (Kennedy, 1972). Further, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World states:

. . . far from thinking that works produced by man's own talent and energy are in opposition to God's power, and that the rational creature exists as a kind of rival to the Creator, Christians are convinced that the triumphs of the human race are signs of God's greatness and the flowering of His own mysterious design [Abbott, 1966, p. 232].

It is contemporary Christianity's view that the contemporary Christian should be alert to the "signs of the times" as Pope John XXIII called them so that he will recognize the tasks of the world in their own right; that he will participate in them as part of salvation now for himself and others in his existential situation. In other words, Christianity is taking steps towards integrating in its way of life the existential notions as summed up by Herberg (1958); ". . .

experiential concreteness, personal concern and commitment, the uniqueness of the existing individual, the primacy of enacted being (existence) over the mere concept of being [p. 3]."

Thus, Jesus Christ's message of love of God, love of self, love of and service of others is seen by many of today's Christians as not only relevant, but bound up in the salvation of man's entire world through the cross of Christ. Their daily living, interpersonal relationships, creative existence, suffering and death each and all find their meaning for them in the "I-Thou" encounter with the Son of God. Ideally, through faith, hope and love their human and spiritual growth progress and integrate their whole mode of existence. These growing Christians see their leader as an existential humanist truly concerned with and meeting them for healing purposes in their human situation (Potter, 1973). Christianity is coming of age also, in that it is slowly emerging from the security of its cultural trappings to face the challenge of becoming truly Christian through Christians who truly love in their existential world.

#### Existential Counseling and Contemporary Christianity

Studies revealing the influence of existential counseling or therapy on religion are slowly emerging. Vaughan (1965) sees the facilitation of freedom in the client by the existential counselor as promoting the inner freedom of the counselee, improving his relations with others (God included)

and providing him with the opportunity of discovering meaning in his life.

Charles Curran (1969) in his "Religious Values in Counselling and Psychotherapy" demonstrates the integration of religious values on the part of the individual by means of the counseling-therapeutic process. He views this process as "person-centered and aimed not simply at knowledge but at an assimilation, cognation and investment [p. 24]," and as such, an effective aid to religion. He also states that "religion joins and reinforces [p. 24]" modern man's humanistic efforts. Man could be called "A Theo-Psychological Being [Curran, 1971, p. 121]."

Bergen (1972) undertakes the task of constructing a theoretical framework for religious involvement comprised of the thought of Tillich "concern with ultimate concerns." Otto's "numinous" quality (feeling or non-rational aspect of concern with ultimacy), and Eliade's "hierophanies" concept (the concretized aspect of ultimate concerns--sacred space, time, etc.). He then proceeds to consider Perl's Gestalt therapy as a "Functional Religious Involvement."

Studies immediately relevant to the proposed thesis are few. Oden (1966) on undertaking his thesis "that there is an implicit assumption hidden in all effective psychotherapy which is made explicit in the Christian proclamation [p. 9]" expresses astonishment that someone had not already "come up with a much more adequate statement of the deeper intention

of this thesis than I have articulated [p. 13]." The author (Oden, 1966) of "Kerygma and counselling" takes great pains to distinguish rather than equate psychological adjustment with man's healing, or salvation through Jesus Christ. Although he perceives many natural analogies between psychotherapy and kerygmatic self-identity the latter he recognizes as an analogy of faith.

The presented material along with Beck's statement, "The nature of religious existentialism and its application to counselling must be explored [1963, p. 117]"; Stern and Marino's Psychotheology (1970); the implementation of existential therapeutic techniques by religious educators (Belka, 1966, 1968; Payne & Heyer, 1969, 1971) all offer reasonable support to the pursuit of the study undertaken here. Also of a supportive nature is the existential orientation of modern times and of these pages which justifies the utilization of the writer's "existential" experience of the reality of this thesis.

#### General System Theory

Focusing on the convergence of two systems suggests using the systems approach to science. Science today speaks in terms of "laws of integrated wholes acting as such" (Laszlo, 1972), of "a complexity of elements standing in interaction" (Bertalanffy, 1969). Hall and Fagen (1956) draw attention to the import of the relationship between the interacting elements of a system, that which "ties them

together." In order that a given system be recognized as such its facts or elements must be mutually compatible, although some elements may be mutually independent of others in the system (Stebbing, 1961). Stebbing (1961) identifies the primary condition "without which there can be no system [p. 196]" as mutual compatibility between the constituent elements. There may be some such elements within a system ". . . not included in the system but not incompatible with any fact in the system . . . some may be mutually independent of others [1969, p. 67]."

According to Hall and Fagen (1956) systems may be:

1. - organic: living dynamic, having attributes that change with time
  - inorganic: inanimate, static, having unchanging attributes
2. - concrete: sensoryperceptual, e.g. atoms, muscles, genes
  - abstract: conceptual in nature, that is, equations, laws, processes derived from the concrete
3. - closed: static, unprogressive, having no interaction with the environment
  - semi-closed: having some interaction with the environment but limited to protective or survival functions
  - open: having interaction with the environment such that growth and development is enhanced (e.g. man's self-actualization).

In functioning man there are several "wholes" or systems

operating and "standing in interaction" with one another such that he is considered to be "a complex unit in space so constituted that its component subunits, by 'systematic' cooperation, preserve its integral configuration of structure and behaviour and tend to restore it after non-destructive disturbance [Weiss, 1971, p. 14]." Personality theorists such as Allport, Maslow, Goldstein, Frankl, Erickson, see man to be more than this organic, concrete, semi-closed system. For man is capable of and does enhance both himself and his environment by means of seeking meaning, establishing order, and transcending himself even at the cost of disequilibrium (Allport, 1960; Bertalanffy, 1969); Gray et al. (1969) and Laszlo (1972) investigate and support this view.

#### Hierarchical Order

The existence of a system as defined necessarily includes elements which are limited by others within the whole. Similarly where several systems are contributing toward a whole there exists a hierarchy of order (Simon, 1962; Whyte et al., 1969; Bertalanffy, 1968). Herein systems are constrained, due to the function they serve within a given organism or "whole." Thus there exists in the living organism supersystems, systems and subsystems (Weiss, 1971).

Application of the systems theory in various areas of learning brought to the fore structural similarities in different fields as well as correspondence in the laws and

principles that govern intrinsically different entities. Consequently, Bertalanffy (1969) drew up his General Systems Theory:

There exists models, principles and laws that apply to generalized systems or their subclasses, irrespective of their particular kind, the nature of their component elements, and the relation or the 'focus' between them [p. 32].

In psychology the systems view is bringing about a shift away from the "robot model" of man and has enhanced the progress of related areas in the form of Piaget's studies, Gestalt psychology, Allport's concept of personality (1937, 1961), the General Systems Theory of Psychiatry (Gray, Grinker, & Duhl, 1969), and multiple family therapy (Laqueur, 1969). Its influence on philosophy (Laszlo, 1972) and theology (Tillich, 1967) is also significant. So viable is this theory, Allport (1969) believes that coupled with the "existential movement" there is the possibility of arriving at "universal psychology of mankind."

#### Information-flow System

Man is a dynamic open network of physical, emotional, social, and cognitive systems (Bertalanffy, 1969; Gray et al., 1969; Laszlo, 1972). He realizes his potential for openness as a system to the extent that he interacts with his environment inter-personally (two or more interactive systems) as well as intra-personally (one individual in interaction) (Laszlo, 1969). The interactive process or system (Hall &

Fagen, 1956) between two or more intra-personally interacting systems is described by Kelly (1969) as ". . . a field of inquiry concerned with the systematic use of symbols to achieve common or shared information about an object or event [pp.450-451]."

Laszlo (1969) postulates a model which depicts man interacting with events in his environment, then extracting information, and finally learning (self-organization). In his Information-flow System the information flow is circular in movement. The information begins and passes from "E" (information event) to input "P" (filter of information) through control-coding "C" (coupling) resulting in "a specifically coordinated response "R" of the relevance of "P" to "C." Control-coding "C" may take the form of a rational construct "designed to exhibit the interconnection of the perceived items of experience deductively, from axiomatic premises [Laszlo, 1969, p. 53]." One such construct within man's "control-coding" repertoire is that of language.

#### Language Construct

This "code of human interaction [Smith, 1969, p. 4]" communication by means of symbols (Smith, 1969; Laszlo, 1969), is systematic, symbolic, and need-related (Kelly, 1969). In other words, language is a system of interacting elements which system is comprised of both symbols and the rules governing the use of those symbols. The rules are syntax, an ordered arrangement of words particular to a

given language structure; semantics, the relation between the symbols and the "reality" they represent; and pragmatics, the effectiveness of the symbol in conveying its meaning when used by a person (Kelly, 1969).

#### Ultimate Goals of Therapy

By definition systems are wholeness oriented, in other words, goal oriented. Conceptual systems drawn from the observed "real" experiences of systems are similarly considered to be goal directed (Smith, 1969). Two such systems are therapeutic and religious systems (Bergen, 1972), utilized by men to realize their "three ultimate objectives: first, to retain their health and to acquire skills with which to master their physical milieu; second, to organize social systems in which they can feel relatively secure; and third, to evolve philosophies and theologies that promise certainty and serenity [Masserman, 1972, p. viii]."

Although the early years of psychotherapy offer scanty literature regarding goals (Beck, 1963; Mahrer, 1967) of late a wide variety and range of goals are appearing on the therapeutic scene (Peterson, 1971; Patterson, 1973). However, as Patterson (1973) points out some agreement is detectable where levels of goals are recognized. Byrne (1963, pp. 3-25) offers a hierarchical division of the counselors' goals: immediate ("the moment-by-moment intention of the counselor during counseling"); intermediate ("related to reasons why students seek the service of the counselor");

and ultimate, described by Peterson (1971) as "anchored in the supreme value of man as a being of worth and in his purposive nature [p. 111]" and giving meaning to the lesser goals.

Peterson (1971) goes on to say that the greatest contributors to the formulation of ultimate goals are the existential therapists focusing as they do on "givens" of human nature: man's finiteness, his potential to act, his ability to choose and his separateness-but-relatedness each accompanied by subjective experiences of continuing and ultimate existential anxieties (Bugnetal, 1965).

#### Ultimate Goals of Existential Counseling

A person may respond to this human condition in such a disposition of dread that he is not in harmony, is not authentically living, thereby reducing his potential to actualize. In a sense he is partially dead. It is the task of the psychotherapist to assist this individual "to get back into life" and move towards self-actualization (Maslow, 1971); become a fully functioning person (Rogers, 1961; Allport, 1969); to be aware of and utilize all that is essentially human within him (Dreyfus, 1964); to find meaning in life (Frankl, 1971; Tournier, 1957); or to actualize himself within his unique life situation (Van Kaam, 1966). Taking an existential position, Byrne (in Peterson, 1971) offers the following ultimate goals:

The counselor's goal, firmly based on the human worth of the individual regardless of education, intelligence, color, or background, is to use his technical skills (a) to help each counselee attain and maintain an awareness of self so that he can be responsible for himself; (b) to help each counselee confront threats to his being, and thus to open further the way for the counselee to increase his concern for others' well being; (c) to help each counselee bring into full operation his unique potential in compatibility with his own life style and within the ethical limits of society [p. 112].

Vaughan (1964, p. 554) in a symposium on existentialism in counseling specifies three aims pertinent to each of the above goals and relevant to the topic at hand: (1) "fostering freedom within the counselee; (2) improving his encounter with others; (3) discovering meaning for his existence."

#### Process Goals of Existential Counseling

On the basis of the foregoing, the ultimate goals of the existential counselor are freedom, encounter and meaning to be exercised by his client in realizing his potential, that is, his self-fulfilment. However, the attainment of this goal is an "ongoing process" (Sechrest & Wallace, 1967) in which the client interacts unceasingly with his environment. For he is an "ongoing functioning system" (Gray et al., 1969; Ackoff & Emery, 1972) exercising and experiencing (Grendlin, 1967; Leighton, 1959; Gray et al., 1969) in his existential situation. Peterson (1970) states:

Living and dynamic beings cannot be adequately described by norms; they require rather verbs. Thus, in the existential or self-actualizing

model one is more likely to find emphasis upon such concepts as experiencing, becoming, and valuing [p. 114],

and proceeds to indicate differences between process goals and static goals.

Therefore, this study treats of man as "an ongoing functioning system" striving towards his ultimate goal of self-fulfilment ("an ongoing process") by means of the process goals of: exercising personal freedom; improving one's encounter; and discovering meaning in life. These latter are spoken of as goals in process, that is means, towards his ultimate goal.

#### Ultimate Goal of Contemporary Christianity

The "Ultimate Gestalt" of the Christian is personal fulfilment in an unending life of union with the triune God, and the communion of persons redeemed in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965; Stern & Marino, 1970; Moltman, 1969). On freely accepting his goal, in faith (on the word of God), the Christian is infused with the dynamic self-communicated life of God (Baum, 1971; Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965; Abbott, 1966). This life manifests itself in man's life as he exercises the virtues of faith, and hope and love (Baum, 1971). Faith enables him to respond to the revelation of Christ; (Baum, 1960); hope suffuses his life with divine meaning; and love impregnates him with divine love so that fulfilment is realized only in possession and experiencing of the

beatific vision of God, himself (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965; Moltman, 1969; Baum, 1971). By means of these virtues he is capable of ordering his human capabilities and the whole of his person in knowledge and freedom to his transcendental (beyond-self) goal--God.

#### Process Goals of Contemporary Christianity

While divinely infused habits, these gifts from God are none the less habits (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965), their influence is limited by the frequency and force of their use. Thus the dynamic power of the life of God is limited by the freedom of the human person possessing them. For, a person becomes and continues to live as a Christian only in so far as he freely implements these gifts in his personal encounter with his existential situation, in such a manner that his every act is directed toward the divine meaning given him (Rahner & Vorgrimler, 1965; Abbott, 1966). In other words, the Christian's growth in faith, hope and love (in divine life) is determined by his freely accepting (believing) revealed truth; in freely perceiving divine meaning (hoping) in his life; and in freely encountering (loving) his existential reality (his world, himself, others, God). While he participates in the divine life he functions as a human person in process. His process goals (means towards his ultimate goal) those enabling him to utilize his infused virtues are: personal freedom, encounter and meaning.

Vaughan (1964) identifies these latter as "the key concepts of a person's religious world [p. 553]."

## CHAPTER III

### COMPATIBILITY OF THE SYSTEMS

#### Hypothesis

The belief system of existential counseling and that of contemporary Christianity are compatible systems with regard to their perspective process goals and ultimate goal such that they converge to form a supersystem of complex interacting elements establishing and maintaining an integrated functioning wholeness within the conceptual system of an individual.

#### Model

##### Interacting Elements

As a belief system, a cognitive system based upon experienced phenomena, existential counseling is comprised of a set of complex elements interacting in such a manner as to establish and maintain an integrated functioning wholeness (Bertalanffy, 1969; Laszlo, 1972; Hall & Fagen, 1956).

Among the elements, all of which are beyond the scope of this paper, are those of exercising personal freedom, improving encounter, and discovering meaning relating in such a manner as to effect the "functioning wholeness" of a person.

Similarly, the belief system of contemporary Christianity contains a set of complex interacting elements:

exercising personal freedom, improving encounter, and discovering meaning. As in the former system, these elements relate so as to realize wholeness within an individual, that of self-fulfilment.

### Relationship of Elements

The interaction of the elements of a system are so ordered that "the relations or 'forces' between them" (Bertalanffy, 1969) contribute towards its specific structure (Laszlo, 1972). The system theorist, while concentrating on a given system "as a whole" complexity, focuses equally on "maintained relationships among its parts [Laszlo, 1972]." These relationships are arbitrary, in that they are dependent upon the particular point of view taken in considering a given system or subsystem within a system. A relationship may be of a spatial, temporal causal nature as well as one of complementarity, conflict, compatibility (Gray et al., 1969). The latter relationship, compatibility, is held to be the force maintaining the structure of the two interacting systems, existential counseling and contemporary Christianity.

### Goal

By definition, existential counseling as a system is goal-directed. Its interacting elements are directed towards the functioning wholeness of a person. Likewise, contemporary Christianity is a goal-directed system whose interacting elements elevated to a divine level also propose to effect

the self-fulfilment of an individual. However, this self-fulfilment, realized by means of elevated elements, faith, hope and love, is also a "wholeness."

#### Compatibility According to Syntax

The compatibility of the two systems of interacting elements, ultimately of the two interacting systems forming a hierarchy of systems, is tested against the conceptual coding system of language.

The language construct (code) provides the criteria for determining the compatibility of the two systems, existential counseling and contemporary Christianity. That is, in his conceptual system man employs this model as he considers the compatibility of the systems and ultimately infers their convergence. He contemplates the interacting elements of each system, firstly, according to their symbolic structure (syntax); secondly, according to the meanings of these symbols (semantics); thirdly, according to their effectiveness in realizing the end proposed by the elements (symbols) as they interact with each other (pragmatics).

By definition, syntax is the ordered arrangement of words particular to a language (Bochenski, 1965; Watzlawick et al., 1967; Kelly, 1969). In so far as the interacting elements of existential counseling and contemporary Christianity are derived from and discussed in the same language system; the writings of the selected authors are also of the latter system; and the present study represents its material

and objective within the ordered arrangement of the same system of symbols of the English language, it is assumed that the following are syntactically compatible:

1. the interacting elements;
  - (a) exercising personal freedom,
  - (b) improving encounter,
  - (c) discovering meaning,
2. the relationship between the two systems;
3. the ultimate goal;
  - (a) self-fulfilment.

It is necessary to point out, that while the belief system of contemporary Christianity claims to elevate to a supernatural level its interacting elements and its ultimate goal of "integrated functioning wholeness," it does not contradict those of existential counseling. For, "A system is not necessarily inclusive; there may be facts not included in the system but not incompatible with any fact in the system [Stebbing, 1961, p. 197]."

#### Compatibility According to Semantics and Pragmatics

Semantics deals with the meanings of the symbols, that is, the relation between the symbol and the "reality" being symbolized. Attention is focused here on the meanings of the interacting elements; exercising personal freedom, improving encounter, discovering meaning, of the two belief systems, existential counseling and contemporary Christianity,

and each system's peculiar ultimate goal, self-fulfilment. The meanings attributed to these elements by the former system are represented in the works of Rollo May and Adrian Van Kaam; those of the latter, by Gregory Baum and Rubem Alves.

The pragmatics, the assessment of the effectiveness of the conveyed meanings, are treated conceptually in this investigation. That is, the interacting elements and the ultimate goals of each system are considered from the point of view of expected behavior on the part of persons using each of these systems. Since the interacting elements are semantically scrutinized as in process toward a goal (behaviorally), the expected behaviors are considered along with the meanings of each element and ultimate goal.

The following section presents, therefore, each element in turn: exercising personal freedom, improving encounter, discovering meaning; and the ultimate goal as represented by the existential therapists, Rollo May and Adrian Van Kaam, and the Christian theologians, Gregory Baum and Rubem Alves. The data to be analyzed are then systematically extracted from the material of the authors; schemata are drawn up on the basis of these data; and a common language is constructed.

It is necessary to quote excerpts from the various authors. For ease in reading and writing, each author's ideas are presented in isolation from the other. The name of the author is mentioned once in each paragraph with the

understanding that each additional reference is derived from the writings of the same person.

### Exercising Personal Freedom

Existential counseling. Carefully avoiding a philosophical discussion of freedom, Rollo May (1966) defined freedom as ". . . man's capacity to take in hand his own development [p. 138]." In so far as a person becomes conscious of self so that he can recognize the controlling factors in his life (inhibitions, repressions, childhood conditions), his "freedom proportionately increases." "Freedom is cumulative; one choice made with an element of freedom makes greater freedom possible for the next choice. Each exercise of freedom enlarges the circumference of the circle of one's self [1967a, p. 139]." Further, the accepting of limitations (determined factors), the realities of one's existence, "should be a constructive act of freedom." May's client is encouraged to recognize his needs, limitations, his potentialities, his abilities and on the basis of these, freely make decisions conducive to his growth as a person, to his "standing out," to his self-fulfilment.

This freedom "to become what we truly are" is never achieved in a vacuum. Rather it develops as one continues to interact and consciously "chooses to act with some responsibility, in the structure of his relationship with the world, especially the world of other persons around him [May, 1967a, p. 142]."

Van Kaam (1966) supports this view for he states, "How one chooses to grow within these limits [of one's factual orientation] depends upon one's freedom, upon the independent stand one takes in the world [p. 51]." He believes man's freedom to be rooted "in his very nature as man [p. 52]." His freedom is such that it "cannot be totally eradicated by circumstances, no matter how severely it is stifled under the stiff iron mesh of neurotic patterns." He sees his client, after a period of therapy, as "able to affirm himself as a source of initiative within his life situation [p. 52]"; having "the freedom of giving a meaning to all his limitation which enables him to soar psychologically beyond those walls, and to actualize himself in a meaningful way hitherto unknown to him when he faced the bars of his restricting situation [pp. 52-53]"; and acquiring a "free unique personality." The latter phrase Van Kaam (1966) uses

to indicate the person in the fullness of being, when he has reached the top level of freedom. His freedom is such that he is able to give complete fulfilment to each of the facts that go toward making up his personality. His freedom stretches so widely into all corners of his life that he is able to turn each obstacle or adversity into a positive personal value. In freedom, he becomes able to experience his very illnesses in such a way that they help him grow [p. 52].

Recognizing that "the aim of counseling is growth in freedom and responsibility [Van Kaam, 1966, p. 87]," Van Kaam relates with his clients in a manner that will lead them on to behave as persons whose actions are "an outgrowth

of deep and personal decisions [p. 93]." He considers the denial of responsibility, the possibility of "wholesome, normal guilt [p. 87]" to be "closely related to the denial of freedom [p. 87]."

Freedom is not an idea removed from my life situation, but an attitude rooted in self-presence to the whole, by which I live reality as it is and discover myself as the surprising person I can most fully be [Van Kaam, 1968, p. 19].

#### Contemporary Christianity.

Man comes to be through a process in which he himself must make the crucial options. This is why man is called an historical being; he comes to be through an historical process in which he himself as well as his community are involved [Baum, 1971, p. 37].

Baum (1971) sees the freedom by which man makes these "crucial options" as more than "the ability to choose between inconsequential alternatives" for "there are certain choices in a man's life which do not remain extrinsic to his being, but which co-determine the very person he is becoming [p. 54]." This becoming life "has to be chosen again and again [p. 158]."

Man does not always sense himself eager to respond when threatened by his own inadequacies; when asked to love others or to open to truth. Yet, at times he experiences the freedom to choose to be "in a new way," and "he marvels at the freedom he finds in himself [p. 54]." This freedom is a gift from another who cares. "Love, in other words, gives freedom. Love accepts another person as he is, and

discerns in the other person hidden strength. Love communicates to the other a new kind of self-possession, and enables the other to act with self confidence [p. 50]."

This freedom given through love enables a person to respond to a summons, a calling forth to be in a new way.

The Christian believes that while he is summoned by persons and situations the call emitted is couched in divine love. For

the gift that creates our freedom is the love that God extends to every man and that engenders new power in him to grow in his humanity. This creativity in man, which we have called his freedom, is due to God's redemptive presence in human life and is offered to every person through his relation to the community. This gift . . . is ultimately God himself, the Holy Spirit [p. 57].

The Christian now enters creatively and caringly the world of others, and concurrently his own ultimate reality--Divine Love. He believes that in bringing to other men this same love, he brings "the gift that creates our freedom . . . the love that God extends to every man and that engenders new power in him to grow in his humanity [p. 57]." In so living the Christian is experiencing salvation ". . . what happens to a man who finds in himself the freedom to turn away from selfishness to a new love of neighbour and greater concern for society [p. 30]."

"Freedom is creativity," states Alves (1971, p. 133). Speaking from his existential situation, the "Third World" of South America, Alves describes the oppressed man as

deciding "to take his future and destiny into his own hands [1969, p. 11]." In becoming critical of the tyranny of his situation man is also becoming aware that "he is born to freedom. . . . His consciousness looks at the facts as something against which he is opposed [p. 11]." He is discovering that he possesses "freedom to re-create his world and himself anew, according to his own choice [p. 17]." Inasmuch as he continues to "react," to "negate " "the suffering his situation creates; . . . the present state of affairs [p. 13]" his "consciousness is open for the future [p. 11]" freedom.

The possibility of creating a new tomorrow "is transformed into reality only through the mediation of free acts [Alves, 1969, p. 14]" exercised by "a historical subject who decides to make himself free. And more than that: his subjective decision will become history only if he has power to overcome the objective resistance which is opposed to his project [p. 88]."

From where he stands Alves sees man, of himself, unable to exercise such freedom, freedom to create a new world. For man is caught in the dilemma of escaping domination only to create a new one of his own; or of choosing to remain domesticated in a system "that trades security for freedom, goods for a critical consciousness, a full stomach for man's vision of a new tomorrow [Alves, 1969, p. 84]."

The author recognizes that the resolution of this

dilemma has been given to man, for it is "of a power from beyond history [Alves, 1969, p. 89]." It is a gift first experienced in, exercised and proclaimed by the biblical people of God--a community of faith. The God of these communities introduced His people to freedom by calling them out of bondage. His "politics of liberation [p. 92]" was carried out through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For He made available to man more than a subjective freedom of a "new self-understanding," the liberation of the self"made free from the past, from the fear of death, for the future [p. 128]." In Him, God entered human history, such that "the future is open and objective history is seen as the history of freedom [p. 129]."

### Improving Encounter

Existential counseling. The existential therapist attains his goals, largely by means of the encounter process or the therapeutic relationship. May (1967b) speaks of the existential encounter as "the grasping of the being of the other person" which "occurs on a quite different level from our knowledge of specific things about him [p. 38]." This form of knowing another person requires "at least a readiness to love the other, broadly speaking, if one is to be able to understand him," for it involves "a kind of union, a dialectical participation with the other [p. 38]." By means of entering into contact with an individual's "unique pattern of potentialities," the counselor assists the client in his

becoming aware of himself, in bringing the unconscious, to consciousness so that he can exercise his freedom in his own "coming to be."

By means of this consciousness, the "capacity to transcend the immediate situation [May, 1961, p. 275]" the client is better equipped to move about in his world in a more constructive manner. For his

World is the structure of a meaningful relationship in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates . . . it includes as well all the individual's future possibilities. . . . World is never something static, something merely given which the person then 'accepts' or 'adjusts to' or 'fights.' It is rather a dynamic pattern which, so long as I possess self-consciousness I am in the process of forming and designing [1967a, p. 60].

"The therapeutic encounter creates a new 'you' in the patient," writes Van Kaam (1966). The author sees his care-filled meeting of the client reducing anxiety in the latter; allowing him to actualize himself with another person; giving him the opportunity to experience being, however momentarily, <sup>as</sup> "master of his life situation"; and primarily making possible the experience of an "awareness of being no longer alone in the depth of his being [p. 54]." This "therapeutic love and concern creates a 'we', a companionship which is experienced as totally different from the 'we' of daily social situations." Van Kaam claims that the invaluable outcome of such a meeting is his client experiencing "the joy and vigor of being a new 'I' [p. 54]." In the presence of the therapist who desires his client's freedom

the client is enabled to delve into his "personal attitudes"; uncover his true feelings; break through the web of false perceptions and experiences; become aware and free of stored up hostility. He exercises his ability to create his own emerging personality (inasmuch as this is possible) in one life situation and better equipped to function similarly as he dynamically moves into his total life situation (Van Kaam, 1966). Further,

My client's therapeutic experience that his life is growth and becoming implies his acceptance of the fact that his personality will never be 'finished' or 'totally understood' or even 'without mystery or problem' or that he will always be on the road, always a traveller, an adventurer, a pioneer who never reaches the far West of his full existence [p. 168].

Contemporary Christianity. Baum (1971) states,

The process of man's becoming can be described in terms of two dimensions, dialogue and communion. Man comes to be through conversation with others as well as through a deeper, less conscious sharing with others in love and fellowship [pp. 40-41].

Significant encounters between men "produce remarkable transformations in their lives [1969; p. 75]."

"Dialogue" allows for man's listening as well as responding to others. He "is never simply the creation of the community to which he belongs. He becomes himself, distinct from others, by responding [Baum, 1971, p. 42]."

Inasmuch as he makes his responses freely in dialogue he is responsible for his own coming to be as a person. This dialogue may be either a "happy sharing" or a call to receive

a truth which summons to a conversion, a change. In his freedom a person may avoid responding to the latter by means of defenses or choose to remain open to it. Thus "our response to the word addressed to us has become constitutive of who we are [p. 43]."

Communion "is the participatory dimension" of man's becoming. "Because they care," that is, love and accept, "some persons enter creatively into a man's history [Baum, 1971, p. 48]." In so doing they enable another ". . . to come to greater self-knowledge, to assume wider responsibility for themselves and thus to become more truly human [p. 50]." In other words, "love gives freedom [p. 50]." Caring people (community) supply the freedom by which a person becomes independent of them to form part of the community "in a creative way." Such a person is thus prepared to care for others.

It is man's experience, however, that he is hesitant "to respond, to act and to be in a new way." Therefore, this freedom, that which enables him to respond to the summons addressed to him, is a gift granted to man. "This power to move away from oneself is always a gift, a gift that is created in us through the care we have received and the word addressed to us [Baum, 1971, pp. 53-55]."

The Christian's gift of "faith involves the whole person [Baum, 1969, p. 15]." "Faith is often described as a personal encounter with God in Christ [p. 11]" or "a

dialogue of God's and man's response [p. 15]," an encounter with God's living Word which transforms him, creates faith in him, and establishes him in a new living relationship with God [p. 11]." In faith God is personally present to the Christian in the deepest dimensions of his life, "in the dialogue and the communion by which men enter into their humanity [p. 57]."

. . . man's encounter with the divine does not take place in a special section of his life, in his religious moments, but in the entire process, personal and social, by which he comes to be [1972, p. 3].

Alves (1969) sees man as "able to have communion--not mere contact--with the world" and, having a freedom which is "power to transform the world," he humanizes and historicizes nature. "He is able to respond instead of simply react . . . and when he responds the world becomes different [p. 3]." He becomes different. But to humanize his world man must be conscious of himself, of his opposition to his world, of his sufferings, of his visions. Only then is he able to meet his present to recreate as

He remembers his past experience. He probes his world. He relates his memory and experiments to the need for action in his now. He makes choices, takes risks, makes mistakes, reorganizes his action and, with it himself. In and through this interplay with history, he changes and becomes different [p. 137].

Today man is coming to a new self-understanding. He is discovering "his world as a message addressed to him [Alves, 1969, p. 3]" that he is "future-oriented." He can choose to

adapt or resign himself to it; utilize his past personality structures to control or defend himself against it; or he can take a critical stance, rebel and create a new life style for himself (1971). For he has the "freedom to re-create his world and himself according to his own choice [1969, p. 17]."

From the point of view of the historical experience of the community of faith, love is the name for the dialectics of liberation in history. Love is what God does in order to make man free [p. 126].

In his loving activity within human history God destroys both "the objective and subjective conditions of slavery" notes Alves (1969). But the politics of God are such that

God needs man for the creation of the future . . . part of the mutual pact of faithfulness to the liberation of man that unites God and man. . . . So man's freedom is to become activity that makes the world different [pp. 136-137].

As he undertakes to co-operate with God in the creation of a new world, a new tomorrow, man grows in freedom, creativity, love.

### Discovering Meaning

Existential counseling. According to May (1939)

The individual must have some purpose in his life, however fragmentary, if he is to achieve personality health. Without purpose there cannot be meaning; and without meaning, one cannot in the end, live [p. 216].

He must also believe in a purpose for the "total life-process." He becomes a healthy personality who has purpose

and meaning inasmuch as his freedom and responsible acts are based upon his consciousness of himself as a person for "He is the ethical animal who must . . . make choices of values and goals [1967b, p. 150]." These latter

serve him as a psychological centre, a kind of core of integration which draws together his power as the core of a magnet draws the magnet's lines of force together [p. 151].

During therapy clients previously "driven," "unfree," governed by unconscious patterns, begin to become more aware of themselves. And this "consciousness of self gives us the power to stand outside the rigid chain of stimulus and response . . . to cast some decisions about what that response will be [May, 1967b, p. 138]." Thus a person is brought to a sense of inner freedom which continuously increases depending upon his ". . . will to accept the fact that one is one's self, and to accept responsibility for fulfilling one's own destiny [1967a, p. 145]." This movement towards awareness of one's existence is determined by the person's ". . . decisive attitude toward existence, an attitude of commitment [1967d, p. 88]." In taking his existence "seriously" he experiences

. . . that discipline from the outside is changing into 'self-discipline'. He accepts discipline from the outside . . . because he has chosen with greater freedom what he wants to do with his own life, and discipline is necessary for the sake of the values he wishes to achieve [1967b, p. 148].

May goes on to say that while

The qualities of freedom, responsibility, courage, love and inner integrity are ideal qualities, never perfectly realized by anyone, . . . they . . . give meaning to our movement toward integration [p. 236].

Van Kaam (1966) states:

Nothing exists for a human being that does not have a certain meaning for him. The world for us is really what people, events, and things mean to us. . . . My counselee . . . may not yet be aware in a reflective way about what the world really means to him. Therefore, if he can really speak out in the therapy relationship . . . he may discover in what way he lives his world [p. 61].

This world of meaning has not been chosen in freedom until such time as the client, if he chooses to do so, freely ratifies those meanings which have been provided for him by family and culture. Since in therapy the client is recreating himself, becoming a free and alive source of meaning, he discovers that ". . . he is the source of his world of meaning and value. . . . He gives continual meaning and value to his symptoms, problems and life situation [p. 39]."

The existential counselor considered it essential that his client "discover that the integration of existence presupposes a wholesome project of life, a sound appreciation of all his modes of existence, and a readiness (willingness does not always succeed) to discipline his modes of existence in the light of the project to which he has committed himself [Van Kaam, 1966, p. 128]." Through therapy the client is gradually brought to make this existential commitment.

He discovers . . . that surrender to the mystery of existence always means a full presence to the situation here and now. He learns to accept every existential moment with all the risks and possibilities which it implies . . . life can only be lived today, not yesterday or tomorrow [p. 185].

Meaning, purpose, is realized in his "commitment to life, to his duty, to the demands of the present, to others"; and "is the necessary condition for an enhanced, unique personality." "This free and total commitment leads to unity and integration in the personality of my client. He becomes one with himself [Van Kaam, 1966, p. 185]."

Contemporary Christianity. According to Baum (1973) man is profoundly touched by the conviction that he lives in a fragmented world which houses a human way of living that is not "what it ought to be"; that his world and its humanity is calling out for a transformation. It is in the midst of this human world and condition that "Man encounters his destiny; he discovers it, receives it, is addressed by it, marvels at it, and makes it the ground for his hope [p. 20]."

The Christian believes that "from the beginning God has been Meaning addressing men [Baum, 1968, p. 41]." Jesus Christ simply reveals the truth that "all things and especially all people have been created and are still being created [p. 41]" by God "who is for us [p. 25]" a Father. He also discloses the salvation meaning of history--God is present in "man's becoming himself [1971, p. 38]," man's

"humanization." Thus "a new orientation to the world" is created, for "to believe that God is Father means to believe that men are destined to be brothers and that salvation is at hand in history [1969, p. 20]." It also means that the Christian "subject the whole of human life to the divine critique and engage himself in the political and the therapeutic orders to wrestle with the powers of evil [1971, p. 126]."

As he enters into a dialogue with God, man opens to and responds in faith to "the Summons," the "Meaning" of the Word of God. As he does so he becomes alive with the new life present in him, love, and dynamically participates in

divine creation as ongoing . . . as taking place now, as leading man into a redemptive future, as being God's role in history, as establishing mankind as God's people [Baum, 1971, p. 213].

Alves (1969) witnesses modern man the political humanist speaking a new language, one expressive of a vision of and passion for human deliverance. In his rebellious acts man is experiencing that he is more than "a reflexive repetition of his contacts with the world [p. 11]." Rather, this emerging "new consciousness" enables man to distance himself to look at the facts against which he is opposed. In so doing he is apprehending the inhuman in society and seeing "both the unfinished character of the world and the open horizons that invite man's creativity and experimentation [p. 14]." He is becoming conscious of "his world as a

message addressed to him, as a horizon into which he can project himself [p. 3]." He is discovering ". . . himself as a historical subject, as one who can create a new tomorrow. This is his vocation and in it he finds his humanity [p. 16]." He now has "a specific sense of vocation [p. 6]" "to give human meaning to the earth [p. 33]."

In the midst of this new consciousness of man "Christians are becoming more committed to the task of human liberation [Alves, 1969, p. 76]." The community of faith meets political humanism on the common ground of the "vision of and passion for human deliverance" and of a vocation to a "humanization" that is achieved by the "reality and power of deliverance which occurs in history [pp. 85-86]." They differ, however, on the origin of the political power which enables them to live out their vocation. While political humanism believes human liberation is made possible "by the powers of man alone [p. 17]," the community of faith believes this power to be a "gift" of freedom "from beyond history [p. 84]"--"God's politics of liberation [p. 92]." Because of this freedom "man hopes and therefore he acts [p. 135]." The historical shape of his creative act is "the community of faith . . . that social reality where creativity is incarnated [1971, pp. 198-199]." As the "community of hope . . . it is the future actually taking place in the present. The community is a 'sample' of the 'not yet' . . . of a banquet still to come [p. 201]."

## Ultimate Goal

Existential counseling. "Man is the particular being who has to be aware of himself if he is to become himself [May, 1967b, p. 42]." May also holds that to become himself a person must go through several stages of "ever-widening consciousness of self": innocence (life before consciousness is born), rebellion (attempts to establish freedom and inner strength of one's own), ordinary consciousness of self (a healthy personality state), and creative consciousness of self (1967b). The latter stage May identifies with "objective self-consciousness," "self-transcending-consciousness" which "cuts below the split between objectivity and subjectivity [pp. 119-120]." In this state

Temporarily we can transcend the usual limits of personality. Through what is called insight or intuition . . . we may get glimpses of objective truth as it exists in reality . . . experience something from a perspective outside one's usual limited point of view [p. 120].

While creative consciousness is achieved at rare intervals "it is the level which gives meaning to our actions and experiences on the lesser levels. . . . This consciousness is the most fulfilled state of human existence [1967b, p. 122]." May (1967b) states, however, "the patient will never get insight, never be able to see the truth, except as he is ready to come to decisions about his own existence [p. 135]" and "lives by meaning that he chooses [p. 235]."

For May, then, the goal of therapy is a person's

"becoming oriented toward the fulfilment of one's existence [1967d, p. 87]." In other words it is a person's taking "a decisive attitude toward his existence" thus permitting "himself to get insight and knowledge" in the process of which he is "discovering his being [p. 87]."

As a therapist Van Kaam meets and experiences "a fellow human being . . . as a person called to actualize himself within his unique life situation [1966, p. 166]." He describes his client as having ". . . lost the ability to understand and to realize the unique meaning of his existence [p. 166]." The therapist sees his task as fostering ". . . an atmosphere which will enable him [client] to understand himself within his situation and to face his personal responsibility [p. 166]."

During the growth process the client is brought to unravel his own "self-structure" which has been hidden beneath "the powerful defensive structures of his existence [Van Kaam, 1966, p. 166]," and prevented from actualizing itself. The therapist assists him in searching out "his own personal response to reality . . . his own personal decisive answers to life . . . his authentic guilt which is linked with a personal experience of responsibility for his becoming [p. 167]."

The therapeutic process, however, is an ongoing process of "growth, development and actualization [Van Kaam, 1966, p. 167]." It involves the discovery of inauthentic and

repressed ways of being, freedom from these, and the development of new personal ways of functioning. The end result is the emergence of a new, self-chosen life style incorporating the retained modes of the past with the new.

Van Kaam (1966) thinks it crucial that his client also "grow to the insight that his actual personality (the concrete realization of his hidden structure) is not unchangeable [p. 169]." For

The final aim of psychotherapy is . . . full acceptance of a dynamic existence opening up to continually new horizons. Such therapy will enable my client to adapt himself continually to his own emerging possibilities of being and to realize these possibilities in his life. For the human self reveals itself in constantly new aspects to be actualized [p. 168].

Contemporary Christianity. The process of growing, of becoming more human, takes place as man enters into a dialogue in which "the human community and ultimately God himself are involved [Baum, 1971, p. 157]." As he converses man is called to a "conscious conscience" which enables him to be in touch with his human condition where he listens to reason, to people and if he is a Christian, to Christ. In opening to this spoken word and freely discerning the message addressed to him, man discovers important values which he may choose to live by thus participating in his redemption, the work of Jesus Christ.

This growth in consciousness and the accompanying self-knowledge causes the person to become aware of both self-

centered and self-destructive trends in his life as well as of the destructive and exploitative trends in his society. He may refuse to listen to what he hears and in his fear of the new repeat<sup>t</sup> ". . . compulsively the patterns of the past, and decline the painful entry into death and resurrection [Baum, 1971, p. 154]." Or he may choose to wrestle with "this powerful source of sin [p. 154]."

Should the latter be his choice he must be prepared to lay hold of himself again and again, affirm life and open to the newness that is created as he experiences greater self-knowledge (Baum, 1971). "Entry into this self-knowledge changes man's self-consciousness and hence transforms his whole life [p. 156]." It is a "redemptive process" which includes many conversions (change of heart) effecting man's self-realization. Baum states,

. . . man's self-realization is a process in which sacrifice and self-abnegation have an essential role. Since man is born into a situation of ambiguity, life is available to him not by letting himself go but by facing the destructiveness in himself and reaffirming the new life offered to him. The quest for self-realization includes the way of the cross. To grow, to become more human, to realize oneself more fully is a process which is, properly speaking, redemptive and which incarnates the paschal mystery revealed by Christ [p. 155].

Therefore, the Christian in faith attempts to remain open and to listen to God's summons to the newness of life offered to him so that ". . . he will be ready to grow according to the inner working of the self-revealing God in his life [p. 155]."

"What is it that constitutes personality? It is a structure of values. . . . Value is relationship . . . that exists when it is given by man [Alves, 1972, p. 128]."

When man sees his world as an expression of his values, he is in harmony with his universe, he feels that he lives in a world of meaning. However, if he

. . . feels overwhelmingly that his values are being destroyed by reality, then his personality disintegrates even if his world is affluent and he himself materially wealthy [p. 125].

Today man is becoming conscious that he had been accepting facts as values, becoming reconciled to the world, resolving some of his tensions, but has been slowly abolishing personality as well. In his new "self-consciousness," prompted by his suffering and the vision that the world is not what it ought to be, he is experiencing that he is born to freedom, to creativity. "What is actually happening is that personality is affirming the priority of its values against the brute factualness of the world that conspires against the aspirations of the heart [Alves, 1972, p. 129]."

To act on this consciousness, to relieve the pain and suffering that is involved man must be free to create and project his vision of freedom, peace and joy into his history, his society. But such a stand means resistance, rebellion and ". . . the verdict society passes upon him: misfit-insane, neurotic, heretic [p. 128]." Dominant powers and structures hold him in control.

The biblical people of God were called out of a similar

bondage into a life of freedom in faith and hope. In the person of Jesus Christ, God later entered human history to make known to man his condition and to again invite him ". . . to join the game of freedom, creativity, preconditions for human wholeness and social rebirth [Alves, 1972, p. 99]." He revealed the hypocrisy of living by the letter of tradition and law rather than by their spirit. He proposed new values, and lived in a new way. He stood in criticism and rebellion against ". . . the preservation of the past in the present . . . to open the present for the future [p. 99]."

It is in the Christian community that moves in faith and trust in the loving power of God identifies with the vocation of their Liberator, and responsibly co-operates with his politics of liberation that man is enabled to project into his world, his passions, hopes and love for a new tomorrow (Alves, 1972). By remaining open to his present world and remembering his past he transforms his world of today ". . . into a home and site of recovery for mankind [1969, p. 137]" a taste of and ground for hope in the ". . . resurrection of the body, the resurrection of nature, the elimination of repression [p. 153]" in the Kingdom which is yet to come.

#### Data to be Analyzed

##### Exercising Personal Freedom

##### Meaning of personal freedom.

Rollo May: "Freedom is man's capacity to take in hand his own

development [1966, p. 138]" a capacity which increases with each choice "made with an element of freedom [1967, p. 139]."

Adrian Van Kaam: "Man's freedom has roots that are in his very nature as man"---"it is such that he is able to give complete fulfillment to each of the facts that go toward making up his personality. . . . He is able to turn each obstacle of adversity into a positive personal value [1966, p. 52]."

Gregory Baum: Freedom is "more than the ability to choose between inconsequential options." It is the ability to "make crucial options which co-determine the very person he is becoming [1971, p. 54]" and which have "to be chosen again and again [p. 158]." Freedom is created by love.

Rubem Alves: "Freedom is creativity [1971, p. 133]," the ability "to re-create his world and himself anew, according to his own choice [1969, p. 11]." Freedom is a gift from beyond history, from God.

#### Meaning of exercising personal freedom.

Rollo May: The client is to exercise freedom by "accepting . . . the realities of one's existence--a constructive act of freedom . . . freely making decisions conducive to his growth as a person, . . . choosing to act with some responsibility, in the structure of his relationship with the world, especially the world of other persons around him [1967b, pp 140-142]."

Adrian Van Kaam: The client becomes "free unique personality"

by: taking an "independent stand" in the world; "affirming himself as a source of initiative within his life situation"; "giving meaning to all his limitations"; "actualizing himself in a meaningful way"; and "making deep and personal decisions [1966, p. 52]."

Gregory Baum: "Man himself, must make the crucial options," the choices "which co-determine the very person he is becoming." He has to choose "again and again" even when not "eager to respond when challenged; threatened; asked to love, to open to truth [1971, p. 158]." As a Christian he is to exercise his freedom in turning "away from selfishness to a new love of neighbour and greater concern for society [p. 30]."

Rubem Alves: In order that he experience freedom man must exercise "free acts"; decide "to make himself free"; "react to" and "negate" "the present state of affairs"; "overcome the objective resistance which is opposed to his project" to create a new tomorrow (1969, pp. 11-14). His creation of a "new World," a "new tomorrow" is possible if man chooses "to join" a community of persons "given . . . a power from beyond history [p. 89]," "God's politics of liberation [p. 92]."

### Improving Encounter

#### Meaning of encounter.

Rollo May: In the therapeutic encounter the therapist enters into "a kind of union, a dialectical participation with the

other" (client) in "a readiness to love, broadly speaking" in order to come to "an understanding of man," "a grasping of the being of the other person" which "occurs on a quite different level from our knowledge of specific things about him [1967, p. 38]."

Adrian Van Kaam: Encounter is a relationship wherein "therapeutic love and concern creates a 'we' totally different from the 'we' of daily social situations." The client, "no longer alone in the depth of his being," emerges as "a new 'I' [1966, p 54]."

Gregory Baum: "Significant encounter between men [1969, p. 75]" may occur as dialogue (a call and a response), or as communion (love and acceptance) both of which are contributing factors in man's becoming (1971). In faith the Christian enters "a personal encounter with God in Christ [1969, p. 11]" "a dialogue of God's and man's response [p. 15]" which takes place concurrently as does "the entire process, personal and social, by which he comes to be [1972, p. 3]."

Rubem Alves: Man is "able to have communion--not mere contact --with the world [1969, p. 137]." "He is able to respond instead of simply react. . . . And when he responds the world becomes different [p. 3]." "Man himself becomes different in the process [p. 137]." In his "history of his relations with his environment" the Christian, in faith, "encounters a God . . . who suffers with and for the people he loves [p. 118]." And this loving "is what God does in order to

make man free [p. 126]."

Meaning of improving encounter.

Rollo May: In the therapeutic process the therapist assists the client in his becoming aware of himself or a person "coming to be," as an individual, "a unique pattern of potentialities." In bringing into consciousness his unconscious, he is more present to the therapist and to his world. But "world is never something static, something merely given which the person then 'accepts' or 'adjusts to' or 'fights'. It is rather a dynamic pattern which the 'self-conscious' client relates to, forms and designs, and in the process uncovers his future possibilities [1967, p. 60]."

Adrian Van Kaam: In "the joy and vigor of being a new 'I' . . . the world of the client undergoes a recreation [1966, p. 54]." Therapy reveals to the client "that his life is growth and becoming . . . and his personality will never be finished. . . . But it enables him to adapt himself continually to his own emerging possibilities of being and to realize these possibilities in his life [p. 168]."

Gregory Baum: Each "dialogue between persons is an opportunity wherein a person" becomes himself, distinct from others, by responding ". . . to the extent that he makes them freely, he is responsible for who he is and comes to be as a person [1971, p. 42]." Each "communion" creates "in an individual the strength to enter into the dialogue of life . . . to become more truly ourselves [1970, p. 50]," to be "in a

creative way." Such a man ". . . is free . . . to be present to others and to share with them. He enters more fully into his own humanity [1971, p. 55]." It is "in the entire process . . . by which he comes to be" that the Christian encounters "God's living Word," "who sheds light on and affects the whole of man's earthly life [1972, p. 3]."

Rubem Alves: In becoming conscious of himself as able to criticize his human condition man discovers within him a further freedom and ability. He can, if he chooses, ". . . have communion . . . with this world [1969, p. 3]," make it different and become different in the process. His response to "his world as a message addressed to him [p. 3]" can humanize his world. As a Christian his "freedom is to become an activity that makes the world different [p. 137]." The community of faith understands itself to be a ". . . participation in the ongoing suffering of Christ in and for the world [p. 121]" a process of humanization and "liberation for the future [p. 127]."

### Discovering of Meaning

#### Meaning of meaning.

Rollo May: "Without purpose there cannot be meaning; and without meaning one cannot in the end live [1939, p. 216]." For the achievement of personality health is based upon "some belief in purpose in his life . . . and in the whole life-process [1969, p. 216]." "The value--the goal he moves toward--seems to him as a psychological center, a kind of

core of integration [1967b, p. 151]." In accepting his "inner" freedom a person is aware that his destiny is his responsibility, that he must take a "decisive attitude" toward his existence.

Adrian Van Kaam: Although a client "may not yet be aware in a reflective way about what the world really means to him nothing exists for a human being that does not have a certain meaning for him [1966, p. 61]." Their meaning determines the way he lives. During the course of therapy he becomes aware that he is "the source of his world of meaning and value, he gives continual meaning and value to his symptoms, problems and life situations [p. 39]." He is able in freedom to determine the way he wants to live.

Gregory Baum: "From the beginning God has been Meaning addressing men [1968, p. 41]," as Father which ". . . means to believe that men are destined to be brothers and that salvation is at hand in history [1969, p. 20]?" Thus "Man encounters his destiny; he discovers it, receives it, is addressed by it, marvels at it, and makes it the ground of his hope [1973, p. 20]."

Rubem Alves: Man has "a specific sense of vocation [1969, p. 6]." His world is "a message addressed to him . . . a horizon into which he can project himself [p. 3]." He is becoming aware of ". . . himself as a historical subject, as one who can create a new tomorrow. This is his vocation and in it he finds his humanity [p. 16]" and moves out "to give

human meaning to the earth [p. 33]." Empowered with his freedom "from beyond history [p. 84]" he embarks upon his "task of human liberation [p. 76]" which takes shape in "the community of faith . . . that social reality where creativity is incarnated [1971, pp. 198-199]."

Meaning of discovering meaning.

Rollo May: The client is assisted by the therapist to self-awareness, in affirmation of self, life, society, as he discovers that he has been "bound by unconscious patterns [1967b, p. 139]." As he becomes "aware of his existence [1967d, p. 86]" and takes "his own existence seriously . . . in an attitude of commitment [p. 88]" he chooses "with greater freedom what he wants to do with his own life . . . the values he wishes to achieve [1967b, p. 148]." "The qualities of freedom, responsibility, courage, love, inner integrity . . . give meaning to our movement toward integration [p. 236]."

Adrian Van Kaam: The therapeutic encounter is such that it enables the client to become aware that his world of meaning has been imposed upon him by family, culture, and society. During this process he experiences that he is becoming "a free and responsible person . . . re-creating himself [1966, p. 39]." The counselor assists his client further to "discover that the integration of existence presupposes a wholesome project of life, a sound appreciation of all his modes of existence, and a readiness . . . to discipline his

modes of existence in the light of the project to which he has committed himself [p. 128]."

Gregory Baum: Man discovers his meaning as he chooses to respond in faith to the Meaning addressing man [1968, p. 41]," in history. As he dynamically enters into dialogue with his "Meaning," God, he is summoned to "participate in divine creation as ongoing, as taking place now, as leading man into a redemptive future, as being God's role in history, as establishing mankind as God's people [1971, p. 213]."

Rubem Alves: Man's awareness of his vocation "to give human meaning to the earth [1969, p. 33]" develops as he becomes conscious of the fact that he is "opposed"; experiences that he is more than "a reflexive repetition of his contacts with the world [p. 11]"; apprehends the inhuman in society; and sees "both the unfinished character of the world and the open horizons that invite man's creativity and experimentation [p. 14]." Realization that his vocation "to create a new tomorrow [p. 16]" is beyond "the powers of man alone [p. 17]," he identifies himself with "God's politics of liberation [p. 92]."

### Ultimate Goals

#### Meaning of ultimate goals.

Rollo May: From Rollo May's point of view the ultimate goal of therapy is a person's ". . . becoming oriented toward the fulfilment of one's existence [1967d, p. 87]." This includes a readiness to take ". . . a decisive attitude toward his

existence [p. 87]" and to preserve an "ever-widening consciousness of self [p. 87]" on the part of the client. So disposed and aware he correspondingly gains "insight and knowledge [1967b, p. 119]" into himself and his personal responsibilities. He may also experience that "rare" phenomenon of "creative consciousness of self," a "self-transcending consciousness [p. 120]" which allows one to see truth unclouded by self, <sup>to</sup> love unselfishly, and to create effectively. This "most fulfilled state of human existence gives meaning [p. 122]" to all our actions and other experiences.

Adrian Van Kaam: "The final aim of psychotherapy is . . . full acceptance of a dynamic existence opening up to continually new horizons [1966, p. 168]." The person availing himself of this therapy is assisted in exploring his own "self-structure [p. 178]," "his personal response to reality . . . his own personal decisive answers to life . . . his authentic guilt . . . his responsibility for his becoming [p. 167]." He is also prepared to adapt to his continually "emerging possibilities of being" and <sup>to</sup> actualize these in his "dynamic existence" which is ever open to "new horizons [p. 168]."

Gregory Baum: The ultimate goal of the Christian as he lives out his history is "To grow, to become more human, to realize oneself more fully . . . which is, properly speaking, redemptive and which incarnates the pascal mystery revealed by

Christ [1971, p. 155]." This he does as he enters into a dialogue with his world, particularly his human community; remains open to reason, people, Christ; discovers his values; affirms himself; and responds to God's summons to an ever new life working within him. Thus he participates in his own redemption and that of others.

Rubem Alves: Today's personality is becoming aware that he is slowly being abolished in a world of dominant powers attempting to preserve their control "of the past in the present [1972, p. 99]." The Christian is becoming more aware that he has been invited by Jesus Christ to liberate man from such slavery, to ". . . join the game of freedom, creativity, preconditions for human wholeness and social rebirth [p. 99]." Since this call includes opening ". . . the present for the future [p. 99]" his goal becomes remaining open to his present world to transform it ". . . into a home and site of recovery for mankind [1969, p. 137]," the ground of hope for the Kingdom to come.

#### Analysis

The following schemata provide the analysis of the interacting elements and ultimate goals of each of the belief systems, existential counseling and contemporary Christianity according to the conceptual criteria of semantics and pragmatics. The common factors are extracted from the perspective of the existentialist therapists, Rollo May and Adrian

Van Kaam, and of the contemporary theologians, Gregory Baum and Rubem Alves. They are listed accordingly and a common language applicable to the works of the four men with respect to the interacting elements and ultimate goals of each system is drawn up.

Exercising Personal Freedom

AUTHOR	PERSONAL FREEDOM	EXERCISING PERSONAL FREEDOM
Rollo May	The capacity to take in hand one's own development	Accepting reality of one's existence. Freely making decisions conducive to growth. Acting with responsibility.
Adrian Van Kaam	The ability to give complete fulfilment to that which contributes toward his personality.	<sup>Assuming</sup> Takes an independent stand. Affirming and actualizing oneself. Making deep personal decisions.
Gregory Baum	The ability to make crucial options which co-determine the very person he is becoming.	Making one's own crucial options. Making choices frequently. Turning from self to love of neighbour and society.
Rubem Alves	The ability to create self anew according to one's own choices.	Making free acts. Deciding to make self free. Overcoming obstacles to creativity. Join a community to re-create a world.
Common Lang- uage	The ability to make those choices and decisions conducive to the growth and development of one's personality.	Affirming one's self through free and responsible decisions in one's world.

Improving Encounter

AUTHOR	ENCOUNTER	IMPROVING ENCOUNTER
Rollo May	A kind of union. A dialectical participation with the other. A grasping of the being of the other.	Meeting one's world, aware of one's uniqueness, potentialities, coming to be as a person. Being aware that one can change one's world and in doing so uncover future possibilities of one's growth.
Adrian Van Kaam	A relationship wherein love and concern create a "we" from which a new "I" emerges.	Entering one's world aware that life is growth and becoming. Exercising one's possibilities, adapting to these as one recreates <sup>one's</sup> his world.
Gregory Baum	Involves call, response, love and acceptance. A dialogue with God in the same process by which man comes to be as a person.	Moving into one's world aware of being a distinct person responsible for who one is and comes to be. Entering into dialogue with other persons in a creative way, a more human way and meet God.
Rubem Alves	A contact with and a response to human history, one's world and God present in it in such a way as to create a difference in a person and his world.	Becoming conscious of one's self, one's vocation in life and responding to the present. Opposing, rebelling and creating in freedom and hope.
Common Lang- uage	Establishing a relationship such that the interchange creates a difference in the interacting persons.	Entering one's world conscious of self as a unique person, responsible for one's coming to be and capable of initiating changes in one's world.

Discovering Meaning

AUTHOR	MEANING	DISCOVERING MEANING
Rollo May	<p>Purpose gives meaning. Meaning is essential to life.</p> <p>A decisive attitude toward one's existence.</p> <p>A goal, the core of integration.</p>	<p>Discovering unconscious binding patterns of living.</p> <p>Taking one's existence seriously.</p> <p>Taking a "decisive attitude toward one's existence."</p>
Adrian Van Kaam	<p>That understanding of his world which causes a person to value his world in a certain way and live accordingly.</p> <p>It determines a person's integrative process.</p> <p>A commitment to life.</p>	<p>Becoming aware of one's imposed world of meanings.</p> <p>Appreciating all of one's modes of being.</p> <p>Undertaking a project of life.</p>
Gregory Baum	<p>Meaning addresses man providing him with a destiny of sonship, and brotherhood in God.</p> <p>It is the ground of man's hope.</p>	<p>Becoming aware of the incompleteness of the human condition and responding to the summons by God to participate in an ongoing creation and redemption of men in their world.</p>
Rubem Alves	<p>A specific sense of vocation.</p> <p>A message addressed to man.</p> <p>A task, i.e. human liberation.</p>	<p>Developing a consciousness of one's stand in the world and responding to it.</p> <p>Becoming creative and identifying one's self with the politics of God.</p>
Common Lang- uage	<p>That which gives a purpose and direction to a person's life such that he is able to integrate all of his life and activities as a person.</p>	<p>Becoming conscious of one's existence; aware of one's role in this existence; committing oneself to a project in life; and acting upon one's decisions.</p>

Ultimate Goals in Process

Man is an open system having interaction with the environment such that growth and development is enhanced (Hall & Fagen, 1956). Existential counseling and contemporary Christianity are conceptual belief systems whereby man is assisted in his interactions, growth and development. Therefore, inasmuch as the interacting elements of each system are in process, man's ultimate goal whether attained through existential therapy or Christian living is also in process. The following schema shows this in that the ultimate goal of each system is identified as in process, hence, the listing of the ultimate goal itself and the apparently basic expected behaviour. The latter has made its appearance among the already analyzed interacting elements but seems to emerge here as being of primary importance---an ever ready openness. Perhaps this is an element that calls for recognition, particular attention and exploration within each of the relevant systems, the basis for another study.

AUTHOR	ULTIMATE GOAL	ULTIMATE GOAL IN PROCESS
Rollo May	A person's becoming oriented toward the fulfilment of one's existence.	Ever ready to widen one's consciousness, gain insight and knowledge into self and one's responsibilities.
Adrian Van Kaam	Full acceptance of one's dynamic existence and one's responsibilities for becoming in his world of reality.	Prepared to adapt to one's continually "emerging possibilities of being" and actualize these in his dynamic existence.
Gregory Baum	Participation in one's growth, becoming and realization, that is in one's personal redemption and that of others.	Remaining open to reason, people, and Christ and responding to an ever new life working within one.
Rubem Alves	Transforming human slavery into human wholeness and social rebirth.	Remaining open to one's present world in order to transform it into a home and site for the recovery of mankind.
Common Lang- uage	A person's growing becoming and realizing one's self, one's existence with responsibility in one's world.	Remaining ever open to new possibilities of existence, responding to these and actualizing them in one's world.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Compatibility

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that according to syntax, semantics and pragmatics the interacting elements: exercising personal freedom, improving encounter, discovering meaning, and the ultimate goal, self-realization of each of the belief systems, existential counseling and contemporary Christianity are mutually compatible, if not similar. Their compatibility is such that it is possible to devise a common language. Thus the analysis supports the condition of compatibility ". . . without which there can be no system [Stebbing, 1961, p. 196]."

Stebbing (1961) also states, "Although the constituents of a system must not be incompatible, some may be mutually independent of others [p. 197]." One such fact is the faith in Jesus Christ as God which is a central concept of Christianity. This constituent element, however, seems to give no evidence of contradicting any other element within the system of existential therapy. To all appearances it is a contributing factor to the growth process of the person rather than a contradictory one. Of further relevance here is, "There may be facts not included in the system but not

incompatible with any fact in the system [p. 197]."

There being mutual compatibility according to the linguistic code adopted; no evidence of contradictory constituent elements and ultimate goals of the two systems; and the possibility of devising a common language for them it is reasonable to suggest that the two systems are mutually compatible in the areas specified.

### Convergence

The establishment of a common language also indicates that there appears to be more than compatibility between the two systems. Convergence (tending towards points or degrees of similarity in form, habit) seems to exist between existential counseling and contemporary Christianity in the realm of process goals (interacting elements) and ultimate goals of each system. The only observable fact which appears to differ in this study is the person's belief in the presence of God in man's personal historical development. However, this is represented as building upon rather than interfering with human growth and personal fulfillment.

On the basis of the mutual compatibility and the convergence shown to exist between existential counseling and contemporary Christianity with regard to interacting elements (process goals) and their respective ultimate goals the two systems appear to form a hierarchy of systems. That is, the two systems may be thought of as subsystems of a supersystem wherein each subsystem serves its function and

is held in control or limited by the function of the other while contributing toward the growth, development, and realization of the whole person (Simon, 1962; Whyte et al., 1969; Bertalanffy, 1968). Thus the hypothesis stands.

The belief systems of existential counseling and that of contemporary Christianity appear to be compatible systems with regard to their respective process goals and ultimate goal such that they converge to form a supersystem of complex interacting elements establishing and maintaining an integrated functioning wholeness within the conceptual system of an individual.

#### Shortcomings of the Study

This investigation treats four specific points of compatibility and convergence between existential counseling and contemporary Christianity. In all probability there may be many more elements within each system that could be examined. An example comes to the fore with the emerging importance of "an ever-ready openness" in attaining self-realization.

The data subject to analysis are selected by the writer and are analyzed by the same. To this extent it is open to subjectivity and perhaps discrepancy in understanding and representing the meanings as conceptualized by the authors whose works are used. The frequent quoting is an attempt to lessen this shortcoming.

Writers selected to represent any system of beliefs

cannot help but be influenced by the environment in which they live. This could be an additional shortcoming in the present study since both Rollo May and Adrian Van Kaam have some theological training which may influence their existential thinking and their functioning as existential counselors. However, this is not necessarily the case. There are many instances where persons of a strong religious background have taken the position of opposing their early belief systems, e.g. S. Freud (Costigan, 1965) and B. F. Skinner (Time, September 20, 1971).

A similar bias, but leaning toward existentialism, could possibly occur in the writings of Gregory Baum and Rubem Alves since both of these men have developed their thinking in their existential world, one coloured by existentialism as well as by Christianity. In so far as these variables are present neither the existential counselors nor the contemporary theologians can be considered entirely free of their environmental influences so as to be acclaimed pure existential counselors or pure Christian theologians.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

An outgrowth of this investigation is the analysis of the convergence of the two systems as they are implemented by a person or persons in their lives as compared to those who live according to one of the belief systems or who attempt to live by both but as separate conceptual systems.

It would be valuable to investigate the effectiveness of a counselor who capitalizes on this convergence factor in assisting a Christian who comes for therapy. Of possible interest for research is the measuring of the effectiveness of a priest or minister who implements this notion of hierarchy of systems in assisting his people to attain self-fulfilment in the redemptive process of Christianity.

Consideration of Christ as an existential therapist could be a contribution to the Christian world as would be an examination of the therapeutic nature of a deeply held belief or set of beliefs.

To what extent is the element of "ever-ready openness" emphasized in therapy, in Christian living? How does its development correlate with the self-fulfilment experienced by individuals? Both are questions open to thoughtful exploration.

#### Conclusion

The demonstration that here is possible conceptual convergence between the two belief systems, existential counseling and contemporary Christianity, provides man with a pre-integrated conceptual tool. That is, he may think in terms of his personal growth toward self-fulfilment through therapy as occurring simultaneously with his Christian growth towards the humanization of himself and his world as he identifies with Christ. In fact, he is affirmed in considering his personal growth process and his Christian

growth process as one process tending toward one ultimate goal. Modern Christian writers (Abbott, 1966; Moltmann, 1969; Kennedy, 1972) support this view for they see the mature Christian to be one who seeks out the truth about himself as a person and in conjunction with the revealed truth and life of God within him realizes his redemption.

A therapist accepting this integrated tool in relating with a Christian client who desires personal growth but conceptually and experientially separates personal growth from Christian living, is in a position to provide his client with an opportunity to integrate all of himself. The client could thus confront more of his inner conflicts, religious and otherwise, to become a more complete Christian person.

While not the main focus of investigation, this study reveals that the humanization of man as contained in the Message and Meaning of Jesus Christ is effected through freedom, encounter, meaning, and the recreation of himself and his world. Also emerging is the notion that all men in taking steps toward self-realization, are possibly taking steps toward the humanization of self and others, towards fulfilment in God as revealed by Christ and theorized about by existentialists.

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