

THEOLOGY OF COMMUNITY, report of W.E.Elliott on 31 Jan 70 data-gathering from 70 students

NOTES: (1) In each of the 3 sections, what precedes "... " is material that appeared with the greatest frequency, and the frequency is often indicated in parentheses. (2) "Community" appears as "c." (3) As virtually all the material is in the students' original wording, quote marks are used only for other purposes.

A. MY DOMINANT FEELING ABOUT COMMUNITY, RIGHT NOW, IS.....desperate, vital, massive need for it (16) (I miss it; my community needs more spirit); love (3); anxiety (2); warmth, care for one another (2); indispensable (2; without it I will stop functioning); living in love (2; total giving and receiving)....fear; desirable if oriented toward good; survival; uncertainty as to what is expected in c.; overwhelmed; hopeful; transition; want it to grow; jungle; "we"-feeling; relationships; desire; wondering what it means; ambivalence; becoming; doubt; sharing; good; longing (2); slipping; hope; fear that because of population bomb, c. can't survive; interdependency; oneness, unity; dubiousness (where is c. real?); together in unity in diversity; impatience.°°°°Are the following feelings, or ideas? Process-oriented; understanding; c. is our channel of salvation and the path of true human existence; freeing creativity; needs a vast program of re-education.

B. AS I SEE IT RIGHT NOW, THE BIGGEST HINDRANCE TO COMMUNITY IS.....being closed (9; 2, because of fear); inability to communicate (7; 2, lack of true communication); fear (9; intellectual, emotional psychic, etc.); fear of openness, of risking myself, of being vulnerable, of losing something, of honestly expressing oneself; selfishness (6; egocentricity, self-interest (2)); misunderstanding (2; of what we really are, think, feel); apathy (2); indifference (2); lack of honest trust (2)....people; our own selves; unwillingness to share honestly; fragmented life-style; superficial c. (false togetherness); persons feeling inadequate for c.; suspicion, personal insecurity; greed; wisdom with age (?); alienation; hate; politics; lack of power to effect change in the 70s; rigid structures; lack of love and understanding; ignorance of c.; ignorance of the other; differing ideas of "c."; herd mentality (thinking that people always have to do things together); insecurity and immaturity; not knowing how to have a clean fight.

C. THE SORTS OF THINGS I'D LIKE TO GET AT IN THE COURSE ARE.....how establish a good c. through theology? (9; togetherness and cooperation; a c. that begins and remains open); how develop leadership? (6; can it develop in every c.? what's needed beyond group skills?); what is c.? (5; at the various levels? and what its problems in relation to definition? and how define it in relation to what it can accomplish?); what is Christian c.? (4; and how arrive at it? how discover what it distinctively is?); how build trust and live freely and fully in the face of apathy, hostility, and violence? how achieve "we"-feeling? (2)); how prayerfully work toward real c. in my groups? (4; build c. within c., such as the local church, so that the c. is truly God's c.-on-mission? and how have c. in the Church at large? do the same c.-building skills apply at all levels of Christian c.?); better reaching out to others; better self-understanding (3) and understanding of the wider contexts of c. (self-understanding in relation to God and others...greater perceptivity, warmth, sensitivity in appreciating others); practical suggestions for communal living (3); improving human interaction, personal and functional (3; interactional techniques informed by Christian principles); factors helping and factors hindering c. (3; inner and outer realities making for closeness/distance, and what can I do about them?); why c.? (2; communal life-style; individual responsibility to make c. process operate); teener group development (2; ages 12-14; caring for each other as persons rather than things); how help people in a c. to see diversity (4) as a jewel rather than as threat? how cope with differences? diversity from different developmental stages, and resulting in opposition and conflict); how can I get close to people (2; break down the wall that surrounds me and them?); understanding conflict (2).... advanced ideas--perspectives for the 70s--questioning of cliques\*; how communicate the concepts of Christian c. to college-age youth turned off on established Christianity?; how can I bring my own sense of Christian c. to more vibrancy?: communication skills (and willingness to communicate); what c. means to others; extended c. (not narrow c., which we already understand; where is "family" at?; family health problems; participation methods in the study group; role of law/freedom in world c.; better understanding of the kinds (5) of c.

in one man's life, and how establish c. at all levels; wider exposure to other points of view, desires, groups (looking at c. through others' eyes); effects of "true" c. on the world scene; c. as a world-wide social problem, and how can the particular life-style of a religious c. be of value to the world?; urban blight as destructive of c.; proper function of c. in spite of bureaucracy; how interest people in c.?; what place in c. can "oddballs" have?; how overlapping interests can be made a blessing; roles and structures necessary to a c.; feelings within a c.; evaluation of a c.; reconstruction of a c.; theology of Spirit as moving through historical interaction; sense of c. here in class;; historical perspective: the role of c. in the process of human development; how can I move from spectator to fuller participant?; how form c. with only a few?; the basis for c.; personal sensitivity in c.; how relate Christ to all aspects of c.?; relationship between the Church as sign and the human c. (large, medium, small groups), and how should the people of God function in these nonecclesial communities?; the "why" of the hindering factors; role of authority-leadership in c.; comparative value of individual- and c.-centered activity; possible directions for c. in the 70s; how sort out, broaden, enrich my concept of c. under G- to make me a better

teacher of c. to youth; how does c. become responsive to its members?; how prevent corruption and cooption of leadership, and deal with it if it occurs?; how deal with contentment? help people to change?; c. in relation to human problems (war, conflict, etc.); in a technocratic world, how release the human resources for c.-building?; the roots of hate and the other social vices (greed, envy, sloth, etc.); relate Scripture to our life; anything that will teach me more about c. (2); dynamics of c. relationships (e.g., authority/submission); role of religion in educating people to the sense of c.; how help each other in c. to grow (fraternal encouragement, correction, etc.)?; possibilities and difficulties in living in c.; how does structure fit in with notions of c.?; how can those who have known c. in a traditional way become open to change within c.?; how be a Christian in the NYC c. and in the world c.?; interdenominational approaches.

\* After this remark, this student added the following: "DON'T READ: This is important time; please, no more gear-greasing. That is small-group business, and most of us do that in our other groups." WEE comment: Are you really all that burned over by and burned up on group-ism? If so, what specific group processes do you wish us to avoid?