

For the United Church of Christ I was asked to do research toward a fresh structure of confirmation appropriate to (1) the times and (2) the fact that four traditions had come together to form the new denomination. By 1961, I'd come to the conclusion that traditional confirmation should be divided into Junior Confirmation [before adolescent rebellion] and Senior Confirmation [during/after adolescent rebellion]. This thesis was worked through in the UCC Confirmation Committee [Continuing Committee on Confirmation and Church Membership], and adopted by many influential leaders in the church--e.g., David Colwell and Allen Miller; but the committee will to compromise resulted in plopping confirmation right in the middle of the time-span--too late for a rite of passage, too early for mature decision; and this baleful compromise, subsequently written into the UCC literature, prevails to this day...but I've been asked to re-present my thesis, in the light of the rather general discontent with the present system throughout the denomination.

This thinksheet provides a look at the thesis, but chiefly lists my major papers, which can be borrowed by requesting by letter of the alphabet, as follows:

- pp 2-10
#1150
- A. "The Psychosocial Integrity of the Churches' Sacramental Life," Dec/61
 - B. Minutes of said committee, 3-5 Dec 61--including my chart showing how the single sacrament under "Ritual Freedom" split into Baptism/Eucharist in the "Primitive" period, then into three-stage [single confirmation] in the "Early Modern" period, and--my proposal for the "Present Time"--into four-stage, with Junior Confirmation at about age 12 and Senior at about age 18.
 - C. "Rites Celebrating Belonging," 1 Oct 65. This builds on David Colwell's expansion of my thesis.
 - D. Minutes of said committee, 8f Oct 65. Colwell uses my "owning the covenant" as the first [instead of my second] stage of confirmation, and associates it with first communion--saving the word "confirmation" for the second stage. Thus first stage is not rite-of-passage [puberty] celebration, but readiness for the Lord's Supper. [The Eucharist/Holy Communion/Lord's Supper floats, in the various communions, all the way from pedobaptism onward, and is a question relatively independent, for UCC, of the confirmation question.]*
 - E. Minutes of said committee, 18 June 65. Extensive treatment of my question, "How can we prepare out of the actual historical activity of the church a rite that takes into account modern developmental aspects?" + extensive dealing with Ross Snyder's paper for the meeting ["hero's hourney," etc.].
 - F. "The Bio-Church: 'How Are Creation and Redemption Related in Confirmation?'" --a paper assigned by the committee for its 13f May 66 meeting; contrasts "natural communities" and "decisional [voluntary-association] communities; "I propose as an organic principle in the constructing and testing of rites: HOW DOES THIS RITE CELEBRATE NATURE AND GRACE? EARTH'S STORY AND OUR STORY? ...MORAL: If clergy become less embarrassed by nature, the laity...by grace."
 - G. "Ritual Clarity"--a paper prepared for the 13f May 66 meeting of the committee, in fulfilment of assignment. "In religion, ritual change occurs through the dominance of dilettante or scientific-experimental interest or from the inward pressures of spiritual vitality or from outward [political] coercion...Given the continuance of our present [four-denominational] rituals, how shall we make the most [ritual clarity] of the mess?" We must "re-theorize the church's sacramental life"--thus Appendix I [which reappears as thinksheet #815]: "Criteria for the Adequacy and Clarity of Christian Rites"--also, Appendix II [the reverse of #815]: "Liturgical Terms."...In this paper, one way clarity is sought is through surrendering the term "confirmation" entirely: my "Junior Confirmation" becomes "The Rite of Affirmation" [including baptism if the pubertous was not given pedobaptism], and my "Senior Confirmation" becomes "The Rite of Membership"--the former, "belonging to the confessing church"; the latter, "belonging to the institutional church."
 - H. Theologian Allen Miller and I, in this paper, use my two-stage confirmation for three-stage membership: "christened member," "communicant member," and "covenant member." I still [1976] hold with "junior confirmation" and "senior confirmation."