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The Changing Role of the Priest from Facilitator of Escape Responding to Mediator of Positive Reinforcement

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THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE PRIEST
FROM FACILITATOR OF ESCAPE RESPONDING
TO MEDIATOR OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

by

Robert J. Crackel

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
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Robert James Crackel
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INTRODUCTION

One day a saint was walking down the road. He met an angel carrying a torch in one hand, and a bucket of water in the other. The saint asked, "What are the torch and water for?" The angel replied, "The torch is to burn down the castles of heaven and the water is to put out the flames of hell. Then we shall see who really loves God.

John Shea relates the above legend in his book on heaven and hell (1972, p. 1). It is an illustration of what many have been trying to make fully occur in the Catholic Church. It will be, in a very general sense, the purpose of this work to investigate the changes brought about by this change in the ultimate ends.

A Brief History of the Church's Life

Historically, the Church teaches that it was founded at the time of Christ. For several centuries there was growth in Christianity until it encompassed all of Europe. During this time there were heresies and schisms, but the Church did not stop and become fixed in the one inflexible form. It was, however, to become fixed in the sixteenth century with the Council of Trent.

Pre-Trent

For some centuries before Trent, in the Middle Ages, the study of theology flourished. St. Thomas is perhaps the best known of the Middle Age theologians who were known as Scholastics. Gradually, however, there was a decline in theology. Albergio and Camaiani, from whom this basic summary is taken, describe it thus:
The necessary and fruitful bond between the life of faith and speculative reasoning was thus lost. Speculation became hair-splitting for its own sake. The universities, instead of invigorating society as in previous centuries, became the separate world of a caste, intent on little more than defending their own privileges and the school of theological thought to which they traditionally owed allegiance (1969, p. 203).

As a result they go on to describe the gradual abandonment of the study of theology by the hierarchy and the aspiring young men who now pursued the study of canon law. Theologically ignorant, these men developed a very external, almost superstitious religion. Although there was some attempt at reform, this was basically the hierarchical situation at the time of the Protestant Reformation.

**The Council of Trent**

Begun in 1545, the Council of Trent was a meeting of the Pope and all the important hierarchical clergy of the world. Its purpose was to stabilize the Church after assaults by the Protestant heretics. In doing so, the Council issued definitive, binding decrees on a great number of theological questions. Decrees included those on Scripture, the reaffirmation of the objective validity of the Sacraments, the doctrines of the Eucharist, Penance, and Extreme Unction.

Although there have been many councils, the importance of this one endured for centuries. With active enforcement of the decrees through the centuries, the doctrines of Trent were able to "overshadow every other authoritative tradition within Catholicism, not excluding the Patristic one (Albergio and Camainai, 1969, p. 211)."

They also say that the Post-Tridentine period lasted until the Second
Vatican Council of the early 1860's.

Yinger (1970) describes Christianity's heritage as a combination of a Judaic concern for the community where the problems of morality are religiously significant and the Greek concern for the overwhelmingly fearful problems of the individual and his salvation. If such be the case, the Council of Trent surely overemphasized the Greek concern for the vertical, individual relationship with God (Blomjous, 1970, p. 20).

The result of this emphasis on the individual and very strictly defined, legalistic theology was a view of the Church which Gallagher (1970, pp. 72-74) and Hargrove (1971, p. 237) call the monastic view. God's call was to withdraw from world affairs like a monk, to fast and abstain, to pray, to view one's life as a preparation for the other world. Hargrove further adds (1970, p. 52) that within this view advance in the spiritual life was seen almost exclusively as reserved to the religious and a few of the laity.

The Second Vatican Council

In 1962 Pope John XXIII convened the twenty-first ecumenical council, Vatican II. In the course of three short years this assembly was to begin revamping almost the entire Church. Of sixteen documents issued by the Vatican Council, the vast range of subjects covered included: the nature of the Church, the Church's mission in the world, the hierarchical structure, the formation of priests and religious, and the liturgy and the Sacraments (Abbott, 1966). So vast and radical were its changes that the entire notion of what it means to be a Catholic in the world was reformed.
Gallagher (1970, p. 77) describes this change in the Church’s view of its mission as a move from the monastic view of Trent to a "service-witness" view. The service-witness orientation is a socially oriented one, where the believer must serve his fellow man at all times as Jesus would have (Gallagher, 1970, p. 75). The writings of the Council support his understanding of the new nature of the Church:

Let everyone consider his sacred obligation to count social necessities among the primary duties of modern man, and to pay heed to them. For the more unified the world becomes, the more plainly do the affairs of men extend beyond particular groups to the whole world. But this challenge cannot be met unless individual men and their associations cultivate in themselves moral and social virtues, and promote them in society (Abbott, 1966, p. 22).

The Resultant Changes in Religious Behavior

The change in the mission of the Church resulted in a number of changes in the members’ behavior. The areas of change were many: in Church-state relations, in interdenominational relations, in intradenominational relations. Although all are of probable import, it will be the task of this paper to investigate the changes in intradenominational relationships solely. Specifically, the area of interest will be the changing role of the priest before and after Vatican II. It will be shown that the priest, formerly the officially sanctioned mediator for avoidance and escape responses, is now functioning to mediate positive reinforcement for desirable behaviors which are prerequisites to heavenly reward.

The analysis of this change in the "escape-facilitating" nature
of the priest to that of a reina iner will center around the pre-
Vatican and post-Vatican ideas about: (a) the sacrament of Confession
(moral theology); (b) the Mass and the Sacraments (sacramental
theology); and (c) the parish structure (ecclesiology).
PART I: CONFESSION
The first area of focus in contrasting the contingency management system of the past and modern Church is Confession. Before analysing the environmental variables which control behavior on the part of the role of the believer, the role of the priest and the theological motivation for going to Confession will be examined. The attempt will be to provide a brief background sketch of the framework of beliefs which served as norms for individual behavior.

The Priest's Role

All people (except those not in mortal sin) who belonged to the Church were obligated to come at least annually to reveal their serious sins (McGuire, 1953, p. 127). The priest could then probe into the client's life, admonish, or instruct him in a uniquely personal way. He had an excellent opportunity to control members' behavior.

Within the Confessional setting the priest in the traditional Church became the arbiter of morality in lieu of the conscience, which was the arbiter in theory. Moral theology textbooks taught that only the individual's conscience could judge the morality of his actions (Healey, 1960, p. 27). Yet because of the priest's advanced and unique education in moral theology, he became the judge in reality (Reedy and Andrews, 1966, p. 34). The priest served a triple function within the rite (Weller, 1950, p. 297). First, the priest, like a doctor, "cured" the malady of sin. Secondly, as a mediator, the
priest functioned as in most of the other ecclesiastical rites, as a man set apart through whom alone an effective avoidance or escape response could be made. Only with the imparting of the priest's absolution could grace, it was believed, reach the attrite soul (McGuire, 1953, p. 167). Thirdly, as judge, the most emphasized of his roles, the priest adjudicated whether or not the penitent was sincere and the extent of his sin.

Whether the priest only could serve as "physician, mediator and judge" is a matter of concern. St. Thomas of Aquinas advised that Confession be made to any Christian in the event of necessity (1928, p. 158). Although not a "sacramentally perfect act", one would look to Christ to supply the deficit caused by the lack of a priest. However, such a practice has never received much support within the Western Church (Palmer, 1959, p. 267), and today the priest remains the sole minister of Confession.

Theological Motivation for Confession

Confession played a very important, recurrent role in the life of the traditional Catholic. Most people were prone to commit serious sins fairly frequently. Because only those people who are free from serious sins are allowed to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, most regularly participating members confessed often. So, going to Confession became almost a prerequisite behavior for religious behaviors of the believer. Knowingly participating in a sacramental function while in a state of sin resulted in a harsh penalty: such people committed the grave sin of sacrilege (McGuire, 1953, pp. 95, 163, 179). When a person committed a serious sin, he
was thought to be in a state of sin, and none of his acts gained him grace. The task then became to move to a new state where sacramental responses became effective in securing grace. It was desirable to gain grace because one type of grace, sanctifying grace, led to an increment in the person's future status in heaven. The other type of grace, actual grace, helped one to resist temptation and do good (McGuire, 1953, pp. 52-53). Further, in addition to having the chance to attain grace, only a soul free of serious sin could avoid hell. Since death could have conceivably come at any moment it was imperative that every time one entered the sinful state he should return to the holy state as soon as possible, lest he be caught in sin and go to hell (Shea, 1972, p. 71). As Shea puts it, "In the minds of many sin plunged into hell; confession snatched from the flames (1972, p. 70)." So, it was generally for two reasons that the faithful confessed: to regain the holy state (and thus be able to respond efficaciously in other ecclesiastical functions) and to be secure from everlasting punishment.

The Church classified all immoral behavior into two categories of sin: mortal and venial. Mortal sin is the theological term for what has been previously termed serious sin in this study. Mortal sin left the sinner in the sinful state, whereas venial sin only led to a decrement in the holy state (McGuire, 1953, p. 35). While mortal sin was serious sin, venial sin was far less serious and it consisted of all sins which were not mortal.

Being in the state of mortal sin would be theologically undesirable because it could result in three consequences: (a) eternal
damnation, (b) possible temporal punishment, and (c) a time-out state for the individual when no good responses were rewarded with grace (McGuire, 1953, p. 171). Further, all actual grace (which was needed to resist further temptation) was permanently lost. All of a sinner's sanctifying grace was lost until he repented. Only two responses were possible on his part that would have any result: contrition, which would return him to the holy state, or more sins, which would (in a quantitatively imprecise manner) worsen the degree of the eventual punishment.

With such dire theological consequences, one might suppose that mortal sin would be a rather infrequent occurrence. In fact, the Church even set three rigorous, defining conditions which had to be met for a sin to be mortal: (a) that the sin must be freely chosen (i.e., it cannot be "chosen" at gunpoint), (b) the behaviour must be aware that the sin is gravely wrong, and (c) the act must in fact be gravely wrong (McGuire, 1953, p. 37). Yet even with these seemingly hard-to-meet criteria, many acts were classified as being objectively mortally sinful. A common example was missing Sunday Mass without just reason. Others included masturbation, illicit sex, cheating, stealing, etc. (Conway, 1960).

Venial sin was the generic name for all sins not as serious as mortal sin. Any immoral act not meeting all three conditions for mortal sin above was considered a venial sin. Venial sin did not cut the person off from his relationship with God. It left him in the holy state, although with less grace (McGuire, 1953, p. 35). Yet a further supernatural consequence of such venial acts of sin was the
accretion of an amount of temporal punishment. When a person did
die with unremitted temporal punishment due to sin, he was required to
spend time in purgatory, a place of purification, before going to hea-
ven. The time in purgatory was called temporal punishment, since
it was punishment that only lasted for a time. The threat of tem-
poral punishment rendered committing venial sin, from a theological
viewpoint, aversive.

Along with the requirement of Confession and contrition, the
Church required satisfaction (penance). The satisfaction was not
held to be atoning, since sin against God was an infinite act which
was permanently atoned for by the infinite act of Christ (McGuire,
1953, p. 179). Vicarious satisfaction, even though only for the
penitents’ sake, was compulsory. The penance imposed by the priest
(usually prayers, fasting, or charitable works) was in accord with
the state of the penitent and the kind of sins (Weller, 1950, p. 390;
Barton, 1951, p. 86). Besides being a prerequisite for the remis-
sion of sin, the Roman Ritual lists as benefits of penance: the
remission of temporal punishment, the blotting out of venial sin
which was unconfessed, and an increase in divine life (Weller, 1950,
p. 290).

Since the probability of being perfectly contrite is quite low,
the Church established another mechanism for escape from temporal
punishment, indulgences. Theologians believed that the merits of the
saints and Mary were a part of the Church, since their graces had
been so overabundant in life. Accordingly, they taught that a kind
of treasury of their unused merits existed and that the Pope could
dispense from it to the faithful on earth to release them from tem­
poral punishment (Smith, 1964, p. 977). A book, the Raccolta
(Christopher, 1952), was published listing all the prayers and acts
one could perform and the amount of time in purgatory from which one
was released.

Establishing Belief in the Contingencies

In the theological belief summary above, it can be seen that
the main reasons a person acted religiously or morally would be to
move to a new state or to increase the future quality of the next
state to be entered. Although theologians hold that the state of sin
is real, for the purposes of this study such recourse to theological
speculation will not be made. When a person says he is in a state
of sin, it means that he has acted, compared his behavior to a set
of norms, and then decided that his behavior is inconsistent with
those norms. Generally he will at least covertly describe his con­
dition as being one of a "state of sin." This covert verbal des­
criptive behavior will be referred to as "tacting" his interior state
(Skinner, 1957).

Theologians did not follow people around announcing when they
were in a state of sin. Nor was the knowledge that one was in a sin­
ful state instinctual. Therefore, in order to control behavior, the
Church had to establish tacting sinful behavior by the individual.
As a corollary goal, it further established his belief in the theo­
logical contingencies described above and in the fact that they
really do prevail.
The probable social mechanisms for conditioning this descriptive behavior and belief are diverse. A child was held to be incapable of committing serious sin until he had reached the age of reason, about seven years old (Addis and Arnold, 1960, p. 15). However, during the years before seven, he did not usually live in a religious vacuum. Parents, friends, and other adults probably established tacting "bad behavior" in the child through a gradual discrimination training procedure coupled with differential reinforcement and punishment. As the Catholic child grew older, he would probably begin receiving religious instruction. In this environment, relying on the previously established discrimination of responses in the response class "bad behavior," a minimal amount of simple instruction could result in the new additions to the same response class of "bad behavior." Further training through the years could establish more complicated discriminations related to judging the kind and gravity of sinful behavior.

An explanation of the reasons for believing supernatural contingencies do prevail is somewhat more complicated. The maturing human infant comes in contact with many contingencies. If a baby cries at night, he will usually be fed. If a three year old throws a brick at someone, he will generally be physically punished immediately. As the child matures in human society, the contingencies become more and more delayed. When a child eats too many of the wrong foods, his mother may verbally make him aware of the contingency: namely, that eating too much food will result in the aversive state of affairs called a stomach ache. After enough of these instances, the child
comes to learn that acting with regard for verbally expressed contingencies can result in the eventual attainment of reinforcement or in avoidance or escape from aversive events.

A further discrimination most children are trained to make is between potentially correct and incorrect verbalizations of contingencies. On the basis of the status of the speaker in society, other people's verbal behavior, one's past history, and other environmental variables, one comes to discriminate to some degree if the speaker's verbal rendition of the prevailing contingencies is accurate. Here the Church's goal becomes evident: how to make the believer behave so as to reflect the fact that the verbal theological summaries of the supernatural contingencies are in fact reliable.

The methods of instilling this behavior are probably largely dependent upon the control of the body of believers who form part of the individual's environment. Mothers and fathers, people who in most cases reliably verbally summarize naturally prevailing contingencies, might upon occasions of observing sinful acts restate the contingencies (e.g., "If you miss Mass, you little devil, you'll go to hell!"). Others in the environment may also state the theological contingencies after observing behavior. Overt verbal disagreement with the validity of the theological contingencies on the part of the young person might have a high probability of setting the occasion for punishment by the adult. Further, any overt verbal behavior expressing agreement about the contingencies on the part of the young person is likely to be reinforced with at least attention and most probably a host of other reinforcing consequences. Finally,
if the young person observes another sinning and states the contingencies, he may not only be reinforced by the admiration of his peers, but also he may be reinforced by the cessation of the observed behavior.

One further reason for acting as if the theological contingencies correctly portrayed reality was that the priest, a man of high status, promulgated them. Although such reasoning may seem ludicrous at first, for many believers this assertion seems likely to be true. The priest was the most important man in the parish. Only he could perform the religious rituals. Only he had had extensive training in moral theology and philosophy. Only he was formally consecrated to the service of God. Considering such unique sacerdotal attributes, sometimes coupled with immense civic influence, it does not seem unreasonable to hypothesize many were at least partially more inclined to believe the Church's moral theology because "the priest said so."

The Control Exercised by the Theological Contingencies

If the believer was disposed to accept the theological statements of supernatural consequation of behavior as accurate, the institutional Church had the possibility to control. The kinds of behavior which could be strengthened will be analyzed with regard to four theological tenets: (a) the ultimate rewards and punishments, (b) the division of sin, (c) the individual's immediate knowledge of sin, and (d) perfect vs. imperfect contrition. Thus a general idea may be had of the control exercised.
The Ultimate Rewards and Punishments

It is unlikely that very much religious behavior on the part of most Catholics occurred solely out of a desire for eternal reward. This assertion seems true in light of the nature of the ultimate consequences. If heaven is a static condition after death where regardless of stature all are supremely happy, there exists little heavenly motivation for good behavior. If indeed people did respond religiously because of a covert verbal contention that such action would place them in a better state than anyone else, they were either naive or misinformed about the nature of universal supreme happiness. From a theological viewpoint, simply getting to heaven was the best reward one could get. Therefore, it seems plausible that any religious behavior which occurred to produce feelings that one's final holy state was pragmatically ameliorated was not due to shrewd theological insight, but to some other variables.

There is even more reason to believe that the major ultimate controller of religious behavior was hell and not heaven. First, one could more easily plunge into a sinful state than better one's lot in heaven. The lists of sinful acts were very long, and even non-acts were sinful; hence, one was frequently inside the sinful state, and religious behavior was required to remedy it, behavior incompatible with "stocking up for heaven." Secondly, probably a somewhat reliable index of what motivated religious behavior was the images of the two end states. Hell seems to be by far the
more elaborately depicted, and it was often a favorite topic of sermons. (Indeed, it is common to speak of the "hell sermon," but one rarely hears mention of the "heaven sermon," cf. Shea, 1972, p. 90.) It is a smoky, fiery dungeon filled with corpses being devoured by burning brimstone (Shea, 1972, p. 90). Heaven, on the other hand, was a much more drab place. According to Shea (1972, p. 88), the typical image of heaven was a place of rest (hence, requiem). He says that at one time, when men toiled long, hard hours in the fields just to subsist, the prospect of eternal rest might well have been very enticing. As the years passed, though, and man found interesting activity more rewarding than inactivity and repose, the image of eternal rest became one of infinite boredom. As Shea puts it, "Heaven begins to look like an old people's home in the sky (1972, p. 89)."

Thus, it is much more probable that religious behavior occurred to avoid the self-description of being in a state of serious sin or to escape the psychological state of affairs described by the person as "being in a state of serious sin." Being in hell because of one mortal sin was believed a potentially aversive event; being in hell for more than one mortal sin was believed to be a potentially more intensely aversive event. On the basis of this belief, the individual was given further discrimination training for him to be able to tact (with the accuracy of a crude approximation) the severity of his sinful state.
Here arises the question of why this self-tacting behavior is to be avoided or escaped by the behaver. Certainly no contact with the potential ultimate aversive stimuli (or reinforcers) has been made. So the possibility of "self-description as being in mortal sin at the time" becoming a conditioned punisher through pairing with the unconditioned punisher must be ruled out. Perhaps for some the persistent discourses on the nature of heaven and hell by credible people in terms already experienced by the audience (e.g., the fierce fire of hell) would be enough to establish this relationship. Yet another possible explanation is that the "self-description as being in a state of mortal sin" is a conditioned punisher because of its consistent pairings with: (a) the immediate removal of conditioned positive reinforcers (possibly self-tacts of being in a holy state or possibly the approval of one's peers), (b) the individual's tacting his position as being one of minimal defense against further decrement into a sinful state (since loss of actual grace left one thus, or worse), (c) the tacting of one's position as one such that no other sacramental functions could be engaged in before the absolution of the sin.

The intermediate consequation, temporal punishment in purgatory, had the possibility of some rather intricate control. It enabled the Church to consequate as a function of the degree and quality of contriteness on the penitent's part. The penitent did not know precisely how much temporal punishment was due him, so he could never be sure just how much debt he had left. The Church was able to effect fairly intricate control over "sorrow for sin," since its
system allowed that any closer approximation to perfect contrition would be automatically reinforced by escape from more time in purgatory. Conceivably this negative reinforcement could too have been used to shape more and more perfect Catholics. This was impossible, though, for two reasons: (a) as cited above, only a few were seriously considered as called to perfection, and (b) morality was based on a system of absolutes which admitted nothing short of immediate and perfect compliance (ergo, ruling out any shaping procedure).

It is dubious whether the belief in the contingency of temporal punishment for sin exercised much control over behavior. The ordinary believer was still too actively engaged in avoiding mortal sin. Therefore, in a further effort to reduce the frequency of venial sin, it was carefully pointed out that too many venial sins would eventually be likely to lead to mortal sin (Heggen, 1963, p. 46).

The Division of Sin

By classifying immoral acts as mortally or venially sinful and further by number and gravity, the Church set up a framework for drastically lowering the probability of the most heinously offensive behaviors on the one hand; on the other hand it was able to keep all but the most holy people dependent upon its escape mechanisms. The frequency of very immoral acts was probably reduced in number because of the exact specification of the nature of the grave acts and of the contingent very severe amount of supernatural punishment earned. In the case of severely deviant Catholics, since the amount of supernatural punishments was never exactly specified, the Church could
always exaggerate the severity of punishment for the inappropriate act occurring too often. Better Catholics were never able to escape this whole system since almost any act which seemed even slightly evil could be taught or thought to be venially sinful. In both cases, many people were dependent upon the Church's official rites to produce ritual discriminative stimuli which indicated that self tacts of being in sin would no longer be accurate.

The Individual's Immediate Knowledge of Sin

Immediate consequation of a response is more likely to affect the response probability than delayed consequation (Whaley and Malott, 1962, p. 2-5). Through the establishment of the self-descriptive behavior of the individual, the Church seemed to recognize this. By establishing "self tacting as being in a state of sin" as a conditioned punisher, the Church allowed for immediate consequation of a response. A sin was committed, the behaver checked his behavior against a set of norms, and "realized he was in a state of sin." No one had to come around and tell him; he was the accusing agent. Because he himself mediated the punishment, it could be consistent and swift.

Perfect vs. Imperfect Contrition

Theologically speaking, the Church realized that all penitents would not be contrite. For some, attrition (imperfect contrition) was all that was possible. Consequently the Church had a method for reinforcing closer and closer approximations to perfect contrition:
the nearer the person was to perfect contrition, the more temporal punishment he could feel he had escaped. The priest did not mediate in this contingency; no one could be sure if the penitent was closer, not even he himself. (Perhaps the Church could maintain striving for perfect contrition by never setting precise criteria for determining absolute achievement of it.)

Yet the behavior reinforced and the terminal goal seem to have been out of phase with each other. Theologians believed eventually the penitent should be contrite solely out of love for God; yet to achieve this the Church reinforced escape behavior. If the transition was made, it certainly would have been unlikely to have been a result of this process.

Contrition entails not only a mental "attitude," but also the resolution (at the time of contrition) not to sin again. One was not required to be persuaded he would not sin (since, being human and a victim of original sin, this was unfeasible), yet one had to resolve not to sin again (Barton, 1951, p. 63). There was a moral obligation to avoid those stimulus conditions where the probability of sinful action was reasonably high. No attempt was made to countercondition in those situations. One was simply bound to avoid them (Healey, 1960, pp. 55-56).

The Control Exercised in Confession

The Church's control of moral and religious behavior was not, however, exclusively concentrated in an explanation of the contingencies. An analysis of the behavior of confessing one's sins in the
ritualistic manner of the Church is also integral to understanding the control of moral and religious behavior. The analysis will concentrate on: (a) the judgment role of the priest, (b) the listing of sins and the absolution, and (c) the penance.

The Judgment Role of the Priest

The judgment role of the priest probably enhanced his controlling power, since it was to him alone that one had to tell all. Further, behavior is best maintained when the consequation is consistent. Precise specification of behavior and contingencies by the priest-judge could bring about much greater control than the conscience-formulated ethical guidelines which theory held to be the judge. Seminary courses taught future priests to recognize the relative morality of commonly occurring acts. Additionally, so that every priest could be a judge consistent with all the others, confessor manuals were used. Modeled after a work by St. Alphonsus Ligouri in the seventeenth century, these manuals were very precise and detailed. Following the outline of the Decalogue, under each commandment are listed particular sins and their gravity (Healey, 1960). Use of such manuals insured consistent consequation by any priest.

The Listing of Sins and Absolution

The listing of all known mortal sins to a priest in the sacrament of Confession is required for valid absolution (the elimination of a person's sins) according to the Church (McGuire, 1955, p. 7).
Absolution was thought to remove a man from the state of sin even if all his mortal sins were not confessed (where there was no "intentional omission"), but only confessed venial sins were removed (Smith, 1954, p. 987). The result of this listing requirement was often to strengthen a tendency to go to confession even when the believer was not in the state of mortal sin so as to confess venial sin. The Church benefitted from such a situation by having more opportunities to consequate behavior and to check sinful practices which might have generalized to more sin (Foley, 1970, p. 47). However, viewed negatively, frequent confession probably strengthened in some people scrupulosity, the breakdown or deformation of the individual's discrimination repertoire (since nowhere within the rite is it clearly stated whether certain sins are mortal or venial) and would leave relatively little time for the priest to work with more aberrant sinners.

The revelation of the contingency that not listing all known mortal sins was in itself a grave sin of sacrilege was one attempt of the Church to control the accuracy of the listing of sins. Some inappropriate behavior might have been accidentally reinforced as a result of the Church's attempt to solve this problem. In some cases conditioned suppression might have occurred. The confessional setting may have served (without the "consciousness" of the penitent) as a very effective stimulus in the presence of which very little remembering would occur. Long intervals between confessions and scant examinations of conscience could have served to shape and maintain this kind of behavior. Another possibility which could have resulted
was the scrupulous person, a person who could not discriminate the gravity of sin and thought many objectively normal actions were gravely sinful. Such a person would in effect be overresponding. Much of this behavior would probably have been controlled not only by escape from the supposed eternal punishment, but also by an escape from conditioned anxiety.

The problem of the scrupulous person would seem to have been very serious in the traditional Church. The role of coverants was foremost in any act: therein lay the arbiter. Only the penitent and Christ could truly have told if an action had been a mortal sin. The Church provided aids both in official (e.g., Scripture, encyclicals, theological writings) and in popular form (Conway, 1960). Any act which the penitent sincerely considered gravely wrong and which met the other two criteria was actually considered a mortal sin (Healey, 1960, p. 35). Yet discrimination training for this situation was very poor. Besides general instruction against the evils of certain flagrantly objectionable practices (pornography, etc.), the believer could form his conscience by trial and error learning (if the confessor took the time to instruct as well as to admonish). The results of this trial and error learning in the confessional could in many cases lead to disastrous results. Although the priest had been taught the special circumstances which nullified accountability for a sin, his training in judging moral matters was almost wholly objective. Cases listed in moral theology texts typically consisted of only three or four line descriptions of the act with very little about the individual's past history (Gleason, 1959; Healey, 1960).
Therefore, in determining if the action was sinful, the priest was trained to compare the behavior with stereotyped, perhaps very inapplicable models. The result could only be deformation of conscience. Alternatively, if the priest simply absolves the penitent after the enumeration of sins, the judgment of an errant conscience could be accidentally reinforced. The strengthening of such undesirable coverants and discriminatory repertoires could lead to scrupulosity or conditioned suppression, as mentioned above, or it could lead to conditioning the person to regard some very normal reactions as sinful, thus creating an alienated individual whose function in the Church and in the society could be seriously crippled. Furthermore, the person of errant conscience might verbally instruct or model and thus shape this deviant behavior in others.

The actual absolution of the priest seemed highly analogous to a discriminative stimulus for relaxation responses (Mikulas, 1972, pp. 78-79). If the Church successfully conditioned guilt feelings and anxiety to occur with the tainting of oneself as being in sin, the priest's bestowal of absolution would always be paired with the offset of the aversive stimulus, the tact of being in sin. If indeed such was the case, it would certainly seem to be one more way the priest's importance was enhanced.
CONFESSION: POST-VATICAN II

During the years succeeding Vatican II a rather radical change occurred in the tenets of moral theology. The traditional Catholic community had viewed the basic "world framework" as static; consequently, emphasis fell upon a person's immediate relationships with others. However, the promulgations of Vatican II changed all of this by emphasizing the pilgrim Church, whose mission included the perfection of the moral order. Moral theology was now forced to acknowledge a dynamic, social world as its proper domain and to effect changes within itself to acknowledge this fact (Baum, 1967, p. 167).

This transformation necessitated a number of sweeping changes in moral theology: (a) a new conception of the relationship between the institution and the individual, with a resultant change in the institution's contingency management system; (b) an increase in the size of the basic unit of moral behavior; (c) a change from viewing sin as a discrete act to viewing it as a dynamic process with ambiguous boundaries (and a growing understanding of the effects of sin on the "psychological man"); and (d) increased reliance on the set of conditioned response chains called "conscience" as a controlling entity. These changes themselves led directly to changes in the function and understanding of Confession.

First and foremost among the changes in moral theology was the new relationship between the individual and the institution. Formerly, the Church regarded all men as being called to follow Christ in almost the same way (Dusquesne, 1969, p. 23). It was the Church's
primary responsibility to keep the "flock" together and on the established path. As shown previously, the most effective tool of this contingency management system consisted in punishment of errant responses. The result for most was a relatively uniform invariable set of religious practices. Presently the Church (especially in the realm of moral theology) has begun to view each individual in his own environmental situation. The tendency is to work on helping the individual behave (in a Christian way) appropriately to his life circumstances. The role of the individual conscience receives much more stress than before (Currier, 1971, p. 33). People are no longer to be treated uniformly, nor are they all expected to behave according to the same exact moral prescriptions.

The second major change in moral theology, the increase in the size of the response unit, is to a large extent a result of the new individual-institution relationship. Since morality can now only be determined within the larger framework of a man's past history and his present environment (Heggen, 1968, p. 65), the size of the response unit has had to change from a single act with a discrete, observable beginning and end to a larger sample of behavior, often ambiguously defined. The institution finds it more important to control "longer-term" behavior patterns and concentrates on problems of a much more complex nature such as abortion, unethical business practices, etc. The hope is that individual actions, links in the behavioral chain, will be controlled and maintained by controlling longer-term patterns. This shift in the size of the response unit has had some implications for the new judgment of what constitutes moral...
behavior. Behavior is no longer regarded as an isolated entity, but is related to a larger context. Heggen says, "The positive or negative moral value of our deeds must be judged in the light of the fundamental moral orientation of the person (1968, p. 65)." Baum adds that "to establish the morality of an action, we will have to study how it transforms man and his environment (1967, p. 170)."

A third major area of revision in moral theology is the concept of mortal sin. Before mortal sin was regarded as a detached act, but most theologians today would reject that hypothesis (Heggen, 1968, p. 75; Foley, 1970, p. 24). Rather mortal sin is now seen as gradual in nature, as a process, and is most often represented as an attitude or conceptual set of behaviors: "It is an attitude so deeply rooted in his person that the relationship of love with God is destroyed (Foley, 1970, pp. 23-25)."

The notion of what constitutes sin in general has undergone a similar radical transformation. The previously almost untouched social dimension of sin has been unearthed and put into the limelight: "We can never speak of sin which is directed only against men (Heggen, 1968, p. 83)." Foley adds, "(Mortal sin is) a turning away from God's offer of personal union...a rearranging of values by man, independently of God.... Sin is the ignoring of God visible in Christ and in his brothers and sisters (1970, p. 18)." The effects of this are to add important new "socially-oriented" response classes, which are most compatible with the desired terminal behavior (perfect Christianity), to the behavior repertoire and to greatly increase the possibility of non-clerical consequation. More importantly, the effect of sin on
the sinner himself in a sense is evolving further: "Sin, besides turning us from God, binds us closer to ourselves, so that the abandonment of self becomes more difficult (McCabe, 1964, p. 87)." This last discovery possibly indicates a fundamental recognition of the principle of reinforcement. If a sinful response is allowed to be reinforced by the natural environment and with weak punishment or none at all, there will be an increased probability of the response. So, if the sinful behavior is reinforced often enough in the setting, the probability of that response occurring in the specific stimulus situations will be so high that it will preclude the possibility of the desired, Christian response, and the believer will be "bound to himself."

The fourth change in moral theology, increased reliance on a conscience as a moral arbiter, most probably results from the other three. Although almost always recognized as the basis for determining the morality of an action, in practice, as has been noted, encouragement of its use has been minimal. As evidenced by the statement below, there is now much more value attached to the dictates of the conscience:

A careful analysis shows that in conscience man has a direct experience in the depths of his personality of the moral quality of a concrete personal decision or act as a call of duty to him, through his awareness of its significance for the ultimate fulfillment of his personal being.

The moral value of an action is measured exclusively according to the judgment of conscience arrived at after due consideration of all circumstances (Hoffman, 1970, p. 411).

This heavy reliance on conscience can be viewed as having several
consequences: (a) a firm recognition of the gradual nature of the shaping procedure (ergo, new counseling techniques and morality); (b) a more ambiguous (almost impossible to behaviorally define) model for morality which can lead to extremes in enforcement by the priest or the penitent both in being too exacting (scrupulosity) or too loose (lax conscience); (c) a great lessening of the amount of the immediate negative consequation by the individual after committing single immoral acts (which would heighten already established tendencies to rationalize or not even realize immoral acts); and (d) at least covert verbal behavior which is more in accord with Scripturally established goals of Catholicism (peace, love, etc.)

With the advent of this age of "conscience," an age where all these changes in moral theology have occurred, the task of training conscience ranks among the highest of the Church's earthly goals. The spiritual counselor/confessor must take care to gradually shape up autonomy and intensity of the conscience as well as increasing the extent and number of moral principles in the subjects' repertoire (i.e., to increase the number of conceptual sets and to increase the number of elements in the sets and help the behaver generalize to respond to "subtler elements" of the set), according to Hoffman (1970, p. 412). Conscience training might be established through traditional oral or written moral instruction to groups, but a more expedient and sure way has been recognized: to encourage the genuine activity of the conscience (Hoffman, 1970, p. 413). Perhaps the method of conscience training has changed because of: (a) the inefficacy of verbal instructions when the desired behavior is not
effectively consequated; (b) the "gradualness" dimension of successive approximation; (c) the inadequacy of the former trial and error method of learning; (d) the realization that periodic monitoring of this genuine conscience activity can lead to control of the quality and extent of generalization of moral behavior in specific individuals; and (e) the credibility gap that would probably arise with the use of group moral instruction because of the ever-changing set of rules.

It has been in the attitudes and psychological mechanics of Confession that the most significant, observable results of all these changes in moral theology have been seen. Foley (1977, p. 3) lists some of these changes as: (a) a greater concern for internal events, (b) more attention to the depth and totalness of the penitential experience, and (c) greater concern for the personal (i.e., the individual's environment). Whereas formerly external, stereotyped facts were rattled off instantly as sins, now the sinner is asked to talk about himself, his failings and his personal imperfections (Heggen, 1968, p. 22). Social sins of omission, almost entirely neglected before, are of prime import. As typical of the new examination of conscience, Heggen suggests the Catholic might ask himself about the conscientious conduct of his occupation, respect and cooperation in the family, and the authenticity of his religious experience (1963, p. 22). A famous Catholic psychologist, Eugene Kennedy, has even extended this social dimension of sin to the point of saying that the full Apostolate and holiness are only attained by those who are psychologically "healthy" in their relationship with others (1972,
The priest's role in the Sacrament has been adapted in response to this new attitude. The representative of the whole community of believers united with Christ, the priest "sums up the Church's existence in space and time (Abbott, 1966, p. 108)." Within the Sacrament, aside from the role of reconciler, the priest now functions:

(a) to aid in conscience formation as discussed above; (b) to broaden the notion of what constitutes sin; and (c) to find and to strengthen by verbal reinforcement the response classes desirable of the individual Catholic.

Broadening the notion of what constitutes sin is essentially instructing and then reinforcing novel generalizations of conscience-originated action. The priest must not only extinguish notions of mortal sin which are not "act" oriented and reinforce verbal behavior evidencing a "process" view of sin, but he must also prompt, verbally reinforce, and sometimes even model appropriate generalizations of a possible Christian response to novel stimulus situations in the penitent's life.

There is a growing realization that shaping and strengthening these new responses is no easy task. Hagmaier and Gleason say, "...we are suggesting that purely rational and supernatural explanations and admonitions will in many cases be insufficient to change human behavior, wipe away sinful habits, and motivate man to a higher life (1959, p. 31)."

Currently, in somewhat of a response, the wave of humanistic psychology engulfs the Church. Of all the priests doing advanced
study, the number studying counseling is second only to the number studying theology (Greeley, 1972, p. 100). Many books are being published which assess the amount of interphase between contemporary humanistic psychology and the Catholic religion (Kennedy, 1967, 1973; Curran, 1958, 1969; Greeley, 1969; Monden, 1965). These humanists call for the liberation and education of the emotions; they want people to "know themselves" (Kutz, 1967, p. 155). Fundamentally one could view them as seeking to have the individual look within for the desired, Christian set of often weak responses (which are regarded as the true "self") and to strengthen them to prepotency. Since emotional responses in most instances are probably instilled in childhood (the time when Christian instruction often has the most chance to control long-term behavior), one readily sees why so much attention is paid to "liberating" (i.e., bringing response probability to sufficient strength for overt behavior in accord with these emotions) and "educating" (shaping to sophisticated expression) these emotions.

It is important, though, to note that currently the priest does not stop at building overt behavior; he must build "intention" also (Heggen, 1965, pp. 63-65). If intention is simply a verbal, concise response summary in specific stimulus situations of the probability of a certain set of behaviors, then this goal may persist, due to its utility. Certainly as long as the current conception of conscience as "king" prevails, attention will probably be paid to the building of intention, on philosophical grounds, regardless of its pragmatic worth in an effective behavior change strategy.

In summary, then, the current principle mode of control by the
priest is positive reinforcement for the gradual approximations towards desirable Christian behaviors or for novel generalizations of "moral behavior." In contrast, the priest in the traditional Church used a system of "punishment—escape from punishment" to control behavior. The new mode of control was the answer to the problem of the change in both the philosophy of the individual's relationship with the institutional Church and the global concept of the institutional Church's profane mission.
PART II: THE MASS AND THE SACRAMENTS
When do the majority of active diocesan priests feel like they are most like priests? Andrew Greeley reports seventy-four percent of the priests he asked answered that when they are saying Mass and hearing Confessions they feel most like priests. Of the priests who were fifty-five years and older, eighty-nine percent felt this way, yet only fifty-six percent of those under thirty-six felt their sacramental role had such importance (1972, p. 53). There is a subtle point hidden in these statistics: the past "cultic" role of the priest is rapidly diminishing. Within the pre-Vatican II Church the priest was the sole leader of the Mass and the administrator of the Sacraments, the official rites of the Church (Baptism, Confirmation, Confession, Communion, Marriage, Holy Orders, and Extreme Unction). Much of the theological cast of many of the Sacraments was an escape or avoidance of eternal damnation. The parish priest, because of his role, became an indispensable facilitator of such escape behavior. Through the Sacraments he helped people escape or avoid tacts of being in a sinful state. It is only today that a metamorphosis in the understanding of sacramental theology and the priesthood has come about.

The Role of Ritual

In older times there was little occasion for direct approach to God by an individual. In the public actions of the Church almost invariably the petitions and prayers were funneled through the priest.
Even privately prayers of petition were addressed to God through an intercessory (Christopher, 1952). Sacramental religion has consequently been characterized as a minimal response on the people's part to initiate a resultant automatic celestial chain of behavior culminating in reinforcement (Clark, 1958, p. 336).

To employ a very simple analogy, theologically the Catholic believer was like a subject in an experimental chamber, the priest being the removable, essential response lever, and God being the omnipresent consequator who reinforces even minimal responses, regardless of topography. Exaggerated as this may appear, it shall be shown that: (a) the physical presence of the priest, not his worth or belief, was necessary for the efficacy of the escape response; (b) ritual served a variety of different functions for different people; and (c) the priest's role was basically to administer Sacraments and to preside over rituals which would release the Catholic from believing himself as being in an aversive state of affairs or to insure his avoidance of one.

The Priest as Response Mechanism

The Roman Ritual essentially established the fact that the minister acted as a mere channel in the sacramental act:

The sacraments are a matter of divine action and human devotion.... In the case of the minister, he must above all be empowered by the Church to act in her behalf and have the intention of doing what the Church does in her sacraments. It is not required that he believe in them or be enlightened about them. Nor does his personal unworthiness hinder their effect (Weller, 1950, p. xv).

As a consequence the believer could attend to readily observable
features of the ritual (proper gestures, sequence) to determine its validity. The institutional Church thus preserved the believer's credibility in its Sacraments, eliminated a lot of priest losses due to incompetency, and had established a whole set of behavior controlling processes which it could easily monitor. This external validity measure of a priest, then, supports the whole system of stereotyped behavior called ritual.

The Function of Ritual

There are several related ways of viewing ritual behavior. Wallace, for example, defines ritual as

...stereotyped communication, solitary or interpersonal, which reduces anxiety, prepares the organism to act, and (in social rituals) coordinates the preparation for action among several organisms, and which does all this more quickly and reliably than can be accomplished by non-stereotyped, informational communication (1966, p. 236).

A Catholic explanation would most certainly include the notion of ritual being simply overt signs of private, inner, supernatural happenings: "The fullness of Christian revelation is too rich to be grasped all at once by mortal man. This is given only to the 'Blessed in Heaven.' For us in this life the mysteries are disclosed fragmentarily and under the veil of symbols (Sullivan, 1955, p. 39)." Certainly traditional Catholic ceremonies reflected such a credence. A multitude of books were written and periodically revised covering every aspect of ecclesiastical ceremonies (especially O'Connell, 1944, 1964), and through the magnificent ceremonies perfectly recreatable with such books parts of the "mysteries" were revealed.

This heavy reliance on ritual was functional in a multitude of
ways. For some, exact ritual probably served only as a discriminative stimulus for interior religious moods, feelings of piety, covenants of the "in touch with God" type, and overt fixed responses at certain times. For others, not only did ritual elicit religious "feelings," but also it probably instructed about the sacred mysteries and the essentials of theology. Finally, for the more educated, ritual behavior served, it seems, not only the purposes of cueing piety and being instructive, but also of cueing the covert verbalization of whole related repertoires (e.g., history, liturgy, etc.) which lead to a complex phenomenon commonly called "aesthetic appreciation."

The believer had additional reasons for reinforcing the public ritual behavior of the priest. Ritual, as previously explained, was a signal that celestial action was taking place. The immense concern for stereotypy of such behavior could result from: (a) adventitious reinforcement; (b) variability possibly resulting in inefficacy or invalidity; and (c) the fact that variability in the priest's worthiness, eloquence, etc., are functionally related to the consequation. Such feelings could mean an insufficient number of "worthy" priests for the huge Church and eventual demise of the institution.

The use of ritual has a variety of possible goals, both for the believer and for the institution. Wallace lists the following four reasons for the member of a sect to engage in ritual: (a) to ensure the quickest and most thorough transfer to the end state (i.e., minimal response effort for maximum amount of reinforcement);
(b) to prevent undesired transformation (i.e., transfer into the sinful state); (c) transfer to restore equilibrium and status quo (i.e., to return to the holy state where responses become efficacious); and (d) transfer to reach a new equilibrium (i.e., an increase in sanctifying grace or divine life) (1966, p. 106). More specifically, the Church employs rituals for very diverse control purposes: "Ideological rituals are rituals intended to control, in a conservative way, the behavior, the mood, the sentiments and the values of groups for the sake of the community as a whole (Wallace, 1966, p. 126)."

Such a generic statement could be specifically broken down to: using ritual to instruct, to direct already learned behavior, to shape new behavior (usually where the component behaviors are already well established but not in a chain), and to consequate errant behavior when the individual strays from his assumed role (Wallace, 1966, p. 127).

One further specific control ritual can have is to instill and strengthen appropriate beliefs. Hargrove defines a belief as a "predisposition to act (which) can be triggered into action by an appropriate stimulus." She further views beliefs as influencing goals and actions, though not always (1971, p. 45). Such contentions necessitate defining beliefs as functionally related antecedents of behavior instead of covert verbal by-products of an established verbal repertoire. If the Church agrees with Hargrove, they would be relying on the theory that ritual results in belief which then produces behavior. That this functional relationship is a misrepresentation is readily apparent. The many people in line to confess their
sins sincerely attest a "belief" in certain tenets, yet some of their behavior is not in accord with some of their beliefs. A more useful relationship might be to regard belief as simply a covert verbal summary of certain prepotent behavior patterns. If such is the case, the "strengthening and instilling" beliefs mentioned above would amount to verbal instruction concerning the nature of a response class and the contingencies regarding its use.

The Mass

With the above background concerning the role of the priest, of rituals, and of beliefs, it is possible to look at the complex stimuli situations of the rituals called Sacraments. An analysis of the Mass and Communion, Baptism, and Extreme Unction (the Sacraments which affect most members of the Church) will demonstrate that within these Sacraments the traditional priest functioned to a great extent as a facilitator of escape responding on the part of the believer.

The Mass, the weekly worship service, was the most frequently attended ecclesiastical ritual where the individual might postpone or prevent the onset of an aversive state of affairs. All Catholics were bound by Church precept under the pain of mortal sin to attend Mass every Sunday unless just cause prevented them (McGuire, 1953, p. 123). Thus, attendance alone at Mass was a kind of avoidance response. Making the response of going to Mass during the appropriate time interval allowed the believer to know that he had just avoided "lapsing into mortal sin."

Additional kinds of avoidance within the rite are found. Powers'
exhortation is to young girls on "Why You Assist at Holy Mass":

You offer sacrifice, in union with the priest. You worship God, you adore Him, you praise Him, you thank Him, you beg His mercy and His blessing.

The Divine Victim speaks for you, pleads for you. Your offering is of infinite value; it is the Precious Blood itself.

You lay up treasures against the dread day of Judgment. You lessent the temporal punishment due to sin. You shorten your purgatory. You afford relief to the poor suffering souls. You earn for yourself a higher degree of glory in heaven. You join yourself to the company of the holy angels who assist at the Holy Sacrifice to reverential awe.

You visit Calvary and come away, refreshed, fortified, and with a heart filled with compassion and love for Jesus who died that you might live. You prepare your soul against the dangers of life. You sanctify your soul and enrich it with many graces.

The Masses you hear during life will return to console and strengthen you upon your death bed (1932, pp. 31-32).

Six kinds of avoidance responding that occur are related in the above passage: (a) offering through Christ the Precious Blood so as to avoid counting oneself as being among those who share the fate of the damned; (b) laying up treasures for the day of judgment, that is, behaving so as to be able to avoid the condition at the end of the time interval of having the number and quality of the accumulated bad responses greater than those of the accumulated good responses; (c) avoidance so as to be able to tact a reduction in the amount of temporal punishment due (time in purgatory); (d) behavior on the behalf of others, the dead in purgatory, with the result that the behaver believes he has allowed another organism to escape punishment; (e) to be able to assess one's situation as being one
of more grace (grace which would allow the person to avoid sinful situations in life); and (f) to be able to say one's situation is such that he has sufficient grace to insure avoidance of a final, damning, sinful act on the death bed.

The idea of the Mass as a re-presentation of Calvary was a popular one (McCabe, 1964, p. 69; McGuire, 1953, p. 242). The popular name "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass" is a good indication of this fact. Bunnik says that although the best theologians and official doctrine never called the Eucharistic celebration an independent sacrifice or a repetition of Calvary, corruption and ignorance set in. Calvary properly seen was the one and only sacrifice, the Mass being the memorial thereof (1964, pp. 34-35). Popular theological writers (probably for hortatory purposes or in an excess of zeal) stressed the Mass as a repetition of Calvary or as an independent sacrifice. A plausible rationale for this extreme, erroneous interpretation lies in its power to control behavior. If theologians saw a need for the masses to attend church, one way to get them there was to instruct that the Sacrifice of Calvary must be repeated in the finite world for the individual believer, and that each must be able to tact his condition as being one where the redemptive escape has been sufficiently made in order to share in the fruits of the infinite act. Further, this sacrifice concept gives the people a somewhat more active role than a simple memorial service would. They must play certain roles to make sure that the finite sacrifice is fitting and efficacious. Seeing the Mass as a new sacrifice might lend further credence to the idea that failure to make the sacrifice personally
finite, "to be at Calvary," would result justly in eternal damnation.

Even when the church building was filled with the faithful, the Church always officially taught that it is the priest who acts for the salvation of the people (Sacred Congregation of Rites, 1969). Commonly, the people were thought to "assist" at Mass. Formally, this would mean (theologically speaking) the avoidance response was being made by the priest, and that without him the response was not possible (as in the analogy of the experimental chamber's lever).

The most active part of the faithful assisting at Mass was their reception of the Sacred Species (Holy Communion). Although primarily more a response performed to produce positively reinforcing covenants, even this sacramental element was not outside of the escape paradigm. As a primary effect, Communion was believed to produce in the recipient an increase in fervor, according to Smith. In turn, this increase in fervor could result in the absolution of venial sin and the remission of some of the temporal punishment (1954, p. 115). Hence, the individual could look at his behavior and note that his reception of Communion would probably result in his escaping some after-life punishment for sin. A further element of possible escape responding occurred at the moment of the elevation of the Host: "The Church desires the faithful to look at the Sacred Host at the moment of the Elevation. To encourage this practice, an indulgence of 7 years each time, for looking on the Host, with faith, with piety, with love, while saying the words 'My Lord and My God'; and a plenary indulgence once a week to those who do this daily for a week... (O'Connell, 1964, p. 266)."
Within the Mass proper, the degree of social control was minimal. The worshipper in his pew need only follow the priest's inaudible prayers in a bilingual Missal (prayer book) and kneel, sit, or stand at a few appropriately marked intervals. There was very little control over other facets of the worship style of the member. Often popular devotions (e.g., saying the rosary, saying prayers to gain indulgences) went on during the Mass. The rationale is rather evident: since basically only physical presence and the occurrence of stereotyped behaviors at fixed intervals were required for believing one's behavior had resulted in at least some measure of efficacious avoidance, other responses (many of them also avoidance) could be ongoing and reinforced. The believer, then, acted so as to minimally behave for the maximum reinforcement.

**Sacraments of Transition**

After Confession and Holy Communion (the two most frequently occurring opportunities for "avoidance" responses) are two of the other Sacraments, Baptism and Confirmation, each of which usually occurs only once in an individual's lifetime. These two Sacraments, of initiation and of the transfer from earthly life to eternal life, correspond to two major events in the natural life. Again, they each basically offer a situation in which the Catholic can escape in some way through the mediation of the priest.

**Baptism:**

The Roman Ritual describes Baptism as "a restoration to the life
of grace which sin destroyed (Weller, 1950, p. 57). Man, unbaptized, is thus in the state of original sin, an inherited sin due to the human condition. Until through the priest he escaped the condition by being baptized, the member-to-be was described as being in a condition of continual danger of being eternally deprived of the Beatific Vision through death as a non-Christian. This insistence upon the baptismal ceremony must be understood as resulting from the Catholic theological opinion that through Baptism one "plunged into a new ontological being (Weller, 1950, p. 57)." Unless a person through the priest added a supernatural dimension to his life, until he established a concretely-defined relationship with God, all of his behavior could be of no avail. Infant Baptism being the norm, the only avoidance responding usually possible was on the part of the priest, the parents, or others concerned about the child. The Church admonished that all children be baptized as soon as convenient after birth; this is further evidence that little more than avoidance responding of potentially aversive tacts on the part of the member or the member's parents was going on. Also, the very intricate, elaborate set of rules in Canon 20 which guide the priest in all possible issues of confusion (e.g., if a child's limb only extends outside the birth canal and death is imminent) suggest that on the part of the priest there was a grave obligation to make this response. As perhaps the final proof that Baptism was little more than avoidance responding, the Church allows any person, Christian or not, who has the proper intention and uses the right form to validly baptize in extreme emergency (McGuire, 1953, p. 141).
Any adult who had reached the age of reason was believed at some
time in life to have had the chance to make the avoidance response
(Baum, 1968, p. 145). (See Fig. 1.) Called the doctrine of "suffi­
cient grace," this catch-all rule held that sometime God gave enough
strength to a person so that he could fundamentally choose God or
reject him. Thus, besides sacramental Baptism, there existed Baptism
by blood (i.e., martyrdom of an unbaptized person for the faith) and
Baptism by desire as means by which men could say they had escaped
the natural state of original sin (McGuire, 1953, pp. 140-141).

**Extreme Unction**

The final in this trend of avoidance Sacraments is Extreme Un­
tion, popularly called the "last rites." Since most Catholics sur­
vived Baptism and led long enough lives to suspect their condition
of being one with some unremitted temporal punishment due to sin, this
Sacrament as a "grand finale" was quite popular, though not required.
The baptized person on his death bed could tact himself as being in
one of four states: (a) with mortal sin and therefore, if unforgiven,
due for eternal punishment; (b) without mortal sin, but with some
venial sin and/or vestigal temporal punishment due; (c) either of the
above, with the possibility of committing another mortal sin in the
very last moments of life; or (d) totally free from all sin and from
all other punishment. By means of Extreme Unction the behaver could
believe he was avoiding any one of the first three conditions.
Additionally, if the avoidance response was made close enough to the
end of life, there was a heightened probability the member could tact
MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

DESIRE  WATER  BLOOD

THREE TYPES OF BAPTISM

Fig. 1
his condition as one where no last-minute mortal sin could occur.

Since the escape response of Extreme Unction almost always occurred within a stimulus situation including the variable of possible proximate death of the behaver, Extreme Unction soon became known as a Sacrament of death. McCabe makes it clear that the belief in Extreme Unction as a Sacrament of death was not a very good one: "...the popular view of this sacrament as a preparation for death finds no support in the actual rite. It is founded instead upon certain theological presuppositions and upon the practice of administering the sacrament only when the patient is not expected to ever recover (1964, p. 90)."

There are several possible reasons for the development of Extreme Unction as the Sacrament of death. First, since for entrenched sinners, lax believers, et al., the practice of even the yearly mandatory confession could be a severely aversive event, repentance was put off as long as possible. For some, it is conceivable that the final account of a sinful life, however aversive it would be, would be preferable to periodic, confessional-situated escape responding. A second reason for the development of the death linkage could be found in the instructions of the priest. The Roman Ritual even encourages this attitude in its instructions to the priest on the ministration of the Sacrament: "No matter at what hour day or night he is called upon to dispense the sacrament let him exercise his sacred ministry without delay, especially in urgent cases. On this account he will take frequent occasion to advise his people that they should call him immediately for such ministrations, regardless of the hour or any
inconvenience whatsoever (Weller, 1950, p. 213)." Finally, with regard to waiting until near death, McCabe (1964, p. 102) suggests a great deal of modeling behavior probably occurred. When the priest was not called until the last minute, the people assumed he shouldn't be; then, they called him at the last moment, etc.

The fundamental escape-avoidance nature of Extreme Unction is evident in the following passages from the *Roman Ritual*:

The purpose of Extreme Unction is the perfect healing and invigoration of the soul to the end of its immediate entry into eternal blessedness, unless it should happen that it is more expedient... that the individual recipient be restored to bodily health.

Extreme Unction wipes away all scars or remains of sin and heals the soul so perfectly that St. Thomas can conceive of it as an immediate anointing for glory, a carte blanche admittance to the beatific vision (Weller, 1950, pp. 325, 327).

The priest is further instructed that even if the person appears dead he should be annointed, so that every possible opportunity for someone to describe the avoidance response as having been made should be seized (Weller, 1950, p. 323).

Outside the context of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction proper, the priest near the moment of death is empowered by the Holy See to grant the Apostolic Blessing and with it a plenary indulgence, thus freeing the member from all temporal punishment due to sin (Weller, 1950, p. 405). This is the final possible ecclesiastically-mediated response given a man in the throes of death. Yet even when the priest himself could not facilitate this response, the Church still offered the possibility of a plenary indulgence. For example, when the priest couldn't impart the final blessing of the Church, the
dying could kiss or touch a "Happy Death Crucifix," and if he fervently recalled the name of Jesus concurrently, this believer, too, could view himself as just having gained a plenary indulgence at the time of death and thus envision immediate entrance into heaven after death.

In a natural sense, when the person is dead, his avoidance responding is over. However, during life, he could escape anxiety by arranging for other believers to activate theological contingencies after his death. Although the separated soul could never escape from hell, it could eventually move from purgatory to heaven. Only help from the living, though, could speed the escape. The Church had high regard for praying for the dead: "The funeral Mass has first place among the Masses for the dead and may be celebrated on any day except solemnities and Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter (Sacred Congregation of Rites, 1969)." It was believed that such Masses and prayers, commodities which one could arrange before his death, both by verbal request and by financial contract, would be efficacious in loosing one from purgatory (McGuire, 1953, p. 224).

In summary, a very shrewd behaver might probably have acted thus within the sacramental system of the traditional Church: Having been baptized shortly after birth, the child would make his first Confession and Communion only, and at the proper age he would be confirmed. (If he were really wary, he would then go to Communion and Confession on the nine consecutive first Fridays, do the adjunct requirements, and be assured of the necessary graces for final repentance.) As a precautionary measure, he would arrange to have a large number of
Masses said for his soul after death. When he was about to die, he would summon a priest to have Confession and the Last Rites, receive the plenary indulgence, and die. Since the earthly trial was over, no bad behavior could occur in purgatory, and the avoidance responses arranged during life, if needed, would be maximally efficacious. Although one's place in heaven would not be the highest, theologians assured one that it would be a constant status of eternal bliss.

The believer within the traditional Church, then, might very well be likened to the organism in the experimental chamber. Throughout his sacramental life he first produced the priest, the essential response key, to set up situations which would enable him to avoid or escape self-tacts of sin.
THE POST-VATICAN CHURCH

Within the traditional Catholic Church the priest alone was the
normal administrator of the Sacraments. In a foreign tongue, rigidly
stereotyped and uniform, the sacramental system seemed to be little
more than an attempt to control men's moral behavior by facilitating
their responding so as to avoid or escape coverants of the type "I am
in sin." Additionally, the Sacraments served to further strengthen
the general repertoire of behavior which could be summarized as
"aloofness from the world."

With Vatican II's shift in the Church's mission, the sacramental
system, much like moral theology (and in response to new ideas in
moral theology), has changed. Some of the important changes are: (a)
the exclusive role of the priest in the Sacraments is in the process
of vanishing; (b) the theology of the Mass now supports a view of this
worship service as a behavior strengthener through positive reinforce­
ment; and (c) the sacramental system is being revamped to accomodate
new theological insights about the social and reinforcing aspects.

The Erosion of Priestly Powers

Pin (1969) cites the historical trends in the erosion of priestly
power. First, the priest became socially impotent; he no longer had
control over his parish's political activities. Next, the priest
became incompetent in the field of ethics. However, even when his
lack of touch with the profane denied him ethical jurisdiction, the
priest could still save souls by administering the Sacraments. Now, Pin states, the faithful are even beginning to question the priest's monopoly on sacred functions. Lay Catholics are wondering why they too cannot participate in sacramental situations as the official community agent. He states that there is a legitimate historical basis for this questioning, since at one time Baptism, Extreme Unction, Communion and Confession have all been administered by lay people. Even today it is a common sight to see male or even female lay people distributing Communion. Further support of Pin's view is offered by Bunnik and by the Vatican Council's reaffirmation of the universal priesthood of all the members (Abbott, 1966, p. 27). Bunnik says, "To offer up real sacrifices is a task imposed on all by baptism... (one) cannot distinguish the priest as offering up real sacrifices of the people... (1969, p. 39)." The Instruction on the Eucharistic Mystery (Sacred Congregation of Rites, 1967) even went so far as to say that "...it is the role of the faithful... to offer up the immaculate Victim not only through the hands of the priest, but also together with him."

This erosion in the priestly monopoly on sacramental acts has important implications for the sacramental system proper. Among other things, the strong avoidance nature of the Sacraments will be weakened since: (a) the rites themselves are no longer stereotyped; (b) the Sacraments can be more widely available, through other people; and (c) sacramental mediation by a peer group member will result in a much greater degree of control at the peer level. The Sacraments are no longer just "aids" to escape tacts of consecration; they now can open
up to be stimulus situations which cue any number of positively regarded Christian behaviors (McCabe, 1964, p. xiii).

The Mass

The Mass, too, has become a community affair. Given the impetus of the Council, the Mass has shed some of its sacrificial character in favor of a meal-oriented nature, one where Catholics come to share their experience and be renewed:

Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic works is that all who are sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in her sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.

The liturgy in its turn inspires the faithful to become one "heart in love" when they have tasted to the full of the paschal mysteries; it prays that "they may grasp by deed what they hold by creed." The renewal in the Eucharistic covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them afire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a fountain, grace is channeled to us; and the sanctification of man in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their goal, are most powerfully achieved (Abbott, 1966, pp. 142-143).

This solemn paragraph represents the core of the Church's official teaching on the liturgy. Here we find the following intention of the Church to use a new mode of control, positive reinforcement, by: (a) instilling mental attitudes of love, rather than of fear, expiation, or awe; (b) efforts to have people reflect by their behavior the new mental attitude of love which the paschal mystery has inspired; (c) emphasis on the reception of grace (a supernatural "reinforcer") for continued work for the "sanctification of men and the glorifica-
Within the rite of the Mass itself, the Council advised priests to be wary lest it again lapse into a mere propitiatory, avoidance response: "Pastors of souls must therefore realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, more is required than the mere observance of the laws governing valid and licit celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully (Abbott, 1966, p. 143)." They stress the point even further: "The Church therefore earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at the mystery of faith, should not be there as strange or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a proper appreciation of the rites and prayer they should participate knowingly, devotedly, and actively (Abbott, 1966, p. 154)." Finally, the Mass should shape appropriate behavior between believers and with God: "Through Christ the Mediator they should be drawn day by day into even closer union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all (Abbott, 1966, p. 154)."

Another step away from the traditional avoidance characterisation of the Mass has been taken by the people with the new strides in comprehension and relevancy. The Council ordered reforms in the language of the Mass so that currently the entire service is in the language of the country (Sacred Congregation of Rites, 1967). It further ordered modifications so that the rites would be clearer and much simpler. More importantly, the rituals "should be within the people's power of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation (Abbott, 1966, p. 149)." Hence, reforms have made
the rites themselves less stereotyped and with much improved chances of being vehicles of instruction. For those whose behavior is not so easily controlled by subtle instruction or subtle verbal or symbolic reinforcement, the sermon is another source of control. The guidelines of the Council (Abbott, 1966, p. 150) state that the homily should proclaim how the mystery of Christ is "ever made present and active within us." Here, then, is an ideal mode of direct, relevant instruction regarding moral behavior and divine life.

The Sacramental System

Chapter III of the "Constitution on the Liturgy" reveals a similar change in perspective regarding the Sacraments (Abbott, 1966, pp. 146-152). The opening instruction lists the three-fold purpose of the Sacraments: (a) to sanctify men (i.e., to make their covert and overt behavior patterns correlate with accepted standards), (b) to build up the Body of Christ (i.e., to perfect the moral order), and (c) to give worship to God. The first two of these goals are really recognitions of the reinforcing nature of participation in the Sacraments today.

A few sentences later the Council recognized formally that

They (the sacraments) not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it.... They do indeed impart grace, but in addition, the very act of celebrating them disposes the faithful most effectively to receive the grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God duly, and to practice charity (Abbott, 1966, p. 158).

Major revisions have been ordered in light of the new emphasis on the Church as a shaping instrument in the life of the maturing Christian. Beautiful, flourishing ceremonies are abandoned in favor of
those "directed toward educating men in the attainment of Christian maturity (Abbott, 1966, p. 344)." In essence, the Council decreed that the Church would now through the Sacraments establish, positively reinforce, and modify behavior.

The rite of Baptism has been almost completely revamped. In accord with Conciliar mandates, the rite for infants was rewritten to place more emphasis on the real situation: namely that the parents, friends, and relatives were assuming roles as primary religious controllers for the new-born member (Abbott, 1966, p. 160). A further change involved restoration of the adult catechumenate. For a period of time the convert now is instructed into the mysteries of the faith and at successive intervals is sanctified by sacred rites and gradually received into the Church. The former haste to baptize is gone. The opportunity exists to employ better shaping procedures to the end of establishing important verbal behavior and of arranging for the new convert to come under the moral consecration believed inherent in all acts. On the basis of these two reforms, revision of the infant Baptism ceremony and restoration of the adult catechumenate, it is evident that the avoidance nature of Baptism is being downplayed officially.

The understanding of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction has also changed away from the earlier final avoidance view. In changing the name from Extreme Unction (last anointing) to Anointing of the Sick, the Council reflected a new emphasis on the Sacrament as a possible cure for natural illness as well as supernatural. The attempt is to make the administration of the anointing a stimulus which not only
sets the situation for physical recovery of the person, but also one which strengthens any non-organic tendencies to improved health.

Further, the Bishops decreed that as soon as the danger of death begins to appear (from sickness or even old age), the time for anointing has arrived. McCabe (1964, p. 106) further cites a growing trend to view Viaticum (final Communion to the dying) as the last sacrament and the anointing as a preparation for it.

This analysis of the role of the priest, the Mass, and the Sacraments in both the traditional and contemporary Church has provided additional evidence to support the switch from avoidance responding as a means of control to positive reinforcement. The priest, once the absolutely essential response medium, has a more diminished role. The Mass, once popularly viewed as a propitiatory sacrifice necessary to avoid eternal damnation, has been revised for use as a means of shaping and maintaining new behaviors. Finally, the sacramental system, once a set of rituals meant to induce behavior change by a system of negative reinforcement and punishment, has been changed to modifying behavior by verbal instruction and reinforcement.
PART III: THE PARISH
THE PARISH OF THE PAST

All the earlier discussion about the shifts in moral and sacramental theology can perhaps best be summarized and understood by contrasting the operation of the past and future parishes in America. The parish, the local unit of the Church, is a framework wherein the diverse elements previously discussed interact. Here a macroscopic analysis of the past and future modes of control the Church employs and the roles of the controller and controlled can be made.

The Priest

Within the traditional Church the priest seems to have been the main controlling agent. The great respect and power he commanded are somewhat reflected in Nuesse and Hart's quote (1959, p. 10) of the Vatican saying: "The priest is a minister of Christ, an instrument, that is to say, in the hands of the Divine Redeemer.... Thus the priest is 'another Christ,' for in some way he is himself a continuation of Christ." Given the primacy of the priest, then, as a religious behavior controller, it is possible to look at the management system of the priest in the parish of the past.

In what way did the parish priest serve as a controller of behavior? Nuesse and Hart (1951, p. 5) quote Canon 464, No. 1, as formally defining the duty of the pastor and the aims of the parish as the "cure of souls," as if to indicate the souls of the faithful were plagued by the perpetual malady of sin. Pin (1969, p. 53) lists the past duties of the parish priest in a more detailed fashion as:

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(a) sacralizing the familial, local, and national events; (b) preaching the Gospel, teaching theology and catechism, and giving instruction in moral law and philosophy; (c) supervising schools; (d) counseling people in spiritual, psychological, and pedagogical matters; and (e) administering various persons and properties in the Church. Given a list such as Pin's, it seems clear that the actual range of the priest's work was so diverse and large in nature that he would not only be inadequately prepared but also without sufficient time to properly execute these duties. The only possible way for a priest to carry out the huge amount of administrative duties and yet still function sacramentally was for him to work within a management system which allowed for control of large numbers of people by a minimum of personnel in a minimum amount of time. Of course, very little generalization and few new behaviors were engendered or even desired. Of course, shaping new behaviors would be in conflict with the exigencies of the efficient behavior management system which allowed the priest time for his administrative tasks.

Duquesne (1969, p. 156) says the Post-Tridentine Church was like a fortress in which the clergy controlled not for conversion to the faith but for the conservation of the faith. The absolute norms of the Church existed; the clergy became permanent agents who functioned to consequate deviant behavior.

Roles and Structure in the Parish

The structure of the parish community basically reflected the mode of control employed, that is, consecuation of deviance. Nuesse
and Hart state that "The official structure of such a group as the parish may be viewed, therefore, as a system of formally defined statuses or offices and their corresponding roles (1951, p. 7)." They go on to chart the defined parish relationships (See Fig. 2). The "formally defined offices" and "roles" were the natural result of a deviance-consequating system.

A hierarchical, fixed-role form of the parish evolved to maximally implement the system. Nuesse and Hart (1951, p. 82) state that groups and individuals had to interact in certain established ways; they in effect played roles, the particular role varying with the players. That the roles were stereotyped and well defined is evident in the following: "Relating to the parish curates, the status of the pastor is analogous to that of a higher staff officer over his subordinate military leaders (Nuesse and Hart, 1951, p. 87)." From the viewpoint of the laity, Hasley (1949, p. 146) wrote, "To accept with joy the basic verities is one thing. To think, act, smell, talk, and feel like a Roman Catholic is quite another." Whenever people stepped out of roles, the pastor could consequate; whenever the pastor stepped out of line, the bishop could consequate. Since the social roles were almost absolutely defined and left no room for change, there resulted little use or need for positive reinforcement and very efficient control through punishment-avoidance.

One reason for the perpetuation of this hierarchical, legalistic system was the feedback index the priest attended to. Blomjous (1969, p. 92) and Nuesse and Hart (1951, p. 76) say the crucial feedback variables the priest attended to were the attendance at Mass,
The Parish Structure

Fig. 2.
(from Nuesse and Hart, 1981, p.88)
the numbers receiving the Sacraments, and other overt ritual behaviors. The result has been, in the words of Currier, that the Church has been seen to be little more than a spiritual gas station (1971, p. 11).
Three major factors seem to be working to change the priest in the post-Vatican II American Church. First, there is an increasing imbalance in the ratio of priests to laity. Second, many are looking to the priest to move away from his role as ritualistic mediator. Third, priests themselves are reassessing their priorities vis-à-vis the time they spend at certain tasks. In 1939 there were about 21,436,507 Catholics and 33,586 priests, a ratio of about one priest to every 640 Catholics (Kennedy, 1939). In 1972 there were about 48,390,990 Catholics and 57,421 priests, a ratio of about one priest to every 860 Catholics (Kennedy, 1972). Of the priests today, about forty-five per cent are over the age of forty-five (Greeley, 1972, p. 24). If this trend continues, it seems clear from a statistical point of view that something drastic must happen if the Church is to function as it has.

A second factor operating to change the priest's role is that more and more of the laity are becoming educated and learned, and more and more of the clerical duties are being usurped by the laity, so that slowly many are beginning to take a view that the priesthood should not necessarily be seen as a permanent vocation. The priesthood is in a sense now being undeified. Duquesne states, "That a person should remain a minister all his life is apparently more a socio-historical de facto phenomenon than a theological necessity
Further he says:

For the minister has no activities proper to him as regards their content: he performs the acts which every Christian performs (to offer, to proclaim, to promote the internal life of the Church), but he does so in a characteristic manner, his acts have a different import, a different authority of the Lord himself. It is the formal aspect only that enables the minister to the things the layman cannot do (1969, p. 69).

Greeley's work (1972, p. 88) on charting priests' attitudes reveals that only slightly more than half of the priests under forty-five in his sample say that "ordination confers on the priest a new status or permanent character which makes him essentially different from the laity within the Church."

Within the undeification move, along with this feeling of non-permanency, comes a growing disenchantment with the priest as "cult" man (Abbott, 1966, p. 527; Ference et al., 1965, p. 569). The priest is not just the agent of the magic transformation rituals. Kasper says that at the time of the Reformation Luther attacked the special priesthood. He sought to establish a universal priesthood of believers. As a consequence of the heretical Luther's claims, the post-Tridentine Church placed overriding emphasis on the special priesthood of those consecrated by bishops. Almost no attention was paid to the still valid concept that all baptised people have the character of the priesthood, even though they are not ordained (Kasper, 1969, p. 18). He further makes the point that current theological opinion holds that the non-ordained can at least to some degree effect the Real Presence in a para-liturgical worship service not attended by clergy (Kasper, 1969, p. 31).
One last factor working to change the role of the priest is the fact that most priests do not see their time being used as it should be. Greeley (1972, p. 98) reports that seventy-eight per cent of the priests under thirty-five and sixty-four per cent of the priests between thirty-six and forty-five find God "principally in relationships with others." Figures 3 and 4 are also from Greeley's study (1972, p. 165) and compare the importance of certain major sacerdotal activities to time allocation. (See Figs. 3 and 4.) The tables clearly show that the priest today is too occupied with administration to really manage a large scale, institutional behavior development program. Ferrence (1972, p. 512) feels that this general lack of time leads to mediocre management of spiritual development. Even if they were involved in the preferred "people developing" activity, most priests would probably not feel competent. Greeley reports that sixty-four per cent of the priests questioned feel their seminary preparation inadequate or irrelevant to pastoral needs. Yet only thirty per cent have earned any degree after ordination (1972, p. 45).

These three factors (the dwindling number of priests, the disenchantment with their unique sacramental role of mediation, and priestly dissatisfaction with their current major duties) will probably lead to some radical changes in the nature of the priesthood. Certainly these three factors suggest that the old system can no longer function. There are no longer adequate numbers of personnel, the priest is losing some of his prestige (and hence ability to control), much sacramental, cultic mediation no longer seems relevant, and priests want more work with people and less with institution
IMPORTANCE AND TIME ALLOCATION TO MAJOR ACTIVITIES

The Pastor

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<th>Time Allocation</th>
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<td>Seeing parishioners</td>
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<td>Participation in Conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration of Parish</td>
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(1 denotes most important; 5 is least important)

Fig. 2.

(from Greeley, 1972, p. 165)
IMPORTANCE AND TIME ALLOCATION TO MAJOR ACTIVITIES

The Curate

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(1 denotes most important; 5 is least important)

Fig. 3.

(from Greeley, 1972, p. 165)
and administrative concerns. Thus, the bases of the old behavioral management system have been undermined.

Bunnik (1969, p. 202) feels that no "right" portrait of the future ministry can be given since the service-witness mission of the Church entails flexibility to changing needs. However, Pin envisions a future ministry in which the priest's role would be separated from that of the theologian, the counselor, and the ecclesiastical functionary. The priest would serve as an overseer of the community and would lead the Mass (1969, p. 213).

The Structure of the Parish

As has been seen above, external cultural and other variables are causing changes to the envisioned and actual role of the priest, the cornerstone of the religious behavior management system. Changes in his role are bringing about changes in the larger unit he works within, the parish. Within the realm of the parish, it is important to investigate: (a) the structure of the present transitional parish and the behaviors it hopes to engender, and (b) some possibilities for structures of future parishes, with an overview of their control systems.

The Present Parish

Blomjous (1969, p. 24) finds that the present crisis in the parish is trying to find a balance between the horizontal relationship (men--men) and the vertical relationship (God--men). In an attempt to find this balance the Church is slowly switching from a hierarchical,
military-like pre-Vatican II structure to a collegial one where the pastor and the laity work together (Abbott, 1966, p. 536; Ference, 1971, p. 523). There is a growing trend to reject the fourth century Constantinian notion of the Church as an "army of soldiers marching as to war (Currier, 1971, p. 36)." Instead, many like Currier see the Church as an aid, a prerequisite behavior builder for men to enter into a fuller relationship with God (1971, p. 21).

In moving to this goal of building prerequisite behavior the role of the priest has changed from an authority to a guide. Before, the priest reinforced certain standardized, stereotyped chains of behavior since an individual's response to mundane "temptation" situations could not be avoided (Vernon, 1962, p. 81). The objective was primarily to get the believer to stay in conformity with established patterns. The new objectives have changed. The modern Catholic in the horizontal "men-men" relationship cannot simply avoid situations. When faced with the constantly changing, novel stimulus situations of daily life he can no longer be counseled to make the traditional escape response. Now the priest is in a position where socially he can program and reinforce creative, Christian, generalized responses to these situations. By suggesting certain general guidelines the priest can socially reinforce novel applications in the individual's environment that occur in accord with the suggested guidelines (Vernon, 1962, p. 81).

If such be the case, the Church can no longer rely on consequence of "errant" behavior. Although it could continue to use escape from the aversiveness of "being in sin" to shape and reinforce new
behavior, its use would be highly unlikely for a number of reasons. First, no universally applicable, well-defined models of behavior are available for Catholics in today's world. Most of the saints lived centuries ago, in a world without today's complex dilemmas. Even then, the greater part of the saints were recluses. Second, the verbal goals of the Church often include talk of love, peace, heaven, etc. Use of punishment-avoidance to attain such goals might be considered inconsistent. Third, where no absolute, established norms exist, it is often difficult to justify punishment, thus reducing the credibility and effectiveness of the punishment mediator. Certainly a sliding scale, where Mr. Jones had to tact his behavior as sinful yet Mr. Smith would not because of his "slow development" or other environmental factors, might involve quite a bit of verbal hostility and reduce the credibility of the Church for the person.

The Future Parish

The transistional parish of today, still in flux, then, is clearly in the process of creating a new system to establish new religious behaviors. What the eventual structure will be is of course still open to speculation. Perhaps so shortly after the Vatican Council an adequate portrayal of the future parish cannot be given. However, two proposals of the kinds of structures that could emerge will be outlined here in an attempt to see at least partially where the institutional Church may be heading. It seems clear that whatever the parish of tomorrow is like, there will have to be: (a) an increase in the number of priests or the number serving in a mini-
sterial role, or (b) much smaller parish units with the priest only minimally interacting as a systems manager. One or both of these alternatives seems to be called for due to the fact that with the fall of absolute moral norms and consequation for deviance, the priest must be much more intimately involved with parishioners if a relevant program of behavior change is to be developed and utilized for individuals.

Reitz (1969) has written a book about the Church where all the people serve in a sort of ministerial role. In his system people would be worked with not in the parish but in the outside world, in the midst of their daily pursuits. He calls this activity "functional ministry," and his book basically deals with the various forms functional ministry can take. Basically Reitz presents a tripartite shaping program to be used by those engaged in functional ministry. First, the "minister" reaches an individual at the "personality-focal level." At this stage personality is developed, and a balanced relationship between religion and the growing personality is sought. The second stage, the "sociopolitical" involves inducing the individual to become socially involved in the world. The third level, the "artistic-cultural," is a synthesis of the first two. The individual now learns to be religious within a social setting (p. 103). At each of the three stages in Reitz's system there are specific behavioral objectives which a person works toward before moving on to the next stage.

With his system Reitz is not calling for major revisions of the current parish structure. What is needed is simply a larger mini-
The advantages to Reitz's vision seem to be: (a) a smaller ratio of modifiers to clients than in the traditional setting (with a consequent higher probability that more individual behavior can be shaped efficiently and well); (b) a behaviorally defined program for arriving at certain terminal behavior patterns; and (c) not expecting a full repertoire of Christian behaviors immediately, but proceeding in small steps. The probable disadvantages include: (a) little relation of the "mission" effort to the parish structure, a "necessary evil" of a larger institution; and (b) the difficulty in coordinating all the various facets of the ministry, since Reitz suggests no division or coordination of his management program.

Currier's program (1967, 1971) for revision of the parish structure is much more complete and well defined. Already in use experimentally for several years, the program is really a relatively intricate contingency management system. Currier's model is fundamentally in agreement with Grichting: "pluralistic parishes are preferable because these parishes are more likely to reflect the complex matrix of everyday life in the secular enterprise (1969, p. 183)." Further Currier agrees with Grichting that the optimal parish structure would have an elite concerned with goal activities which would supervise the activities of the "means-oriented" people.

To achieve these two goals Currier has broken the parish down into neighborhood churches (1971, pp. 57-59). Each neighborhood church contains ten families in close geographical proximity who meet at least weekly for religious activities. One of the ten families serves as a mediator family for the others. All of the mediator...
families meet weekly with the priests.

Several principles should operate within the neighborhood church. First, each person must contribute (i.e., participate in the functions of) in the church. Second, worship should become family-oriented as in the Jewish tradition (p. 53). Third, mutual witness is necessary for spiritual advancement (p. 100). Fourth, everyone should not be loved in the same way, but for himself, with a view to helping others grow (p. 40).

There seem to be many advantages in Currier's system. First, there is much more opportunity for the occurrence of religious worship behavior. Second, since religion becomes really centered around one's geographic neighbors, there is a much greater amount of observation and possibility of social reinforcement for Christian, socially-oriented behaviors. Third, instead of dealing with individuals, the priest can direct the long-range activities of the whole parish. He can, in effect, be constantly evaluating whether group activities are proper or effective steps in reaching terminal behavioral goals. Fourth, the priest has the possibility for more insight into the religious activity of each member. He might come to know them well enough to greatly enhance the reinforcing value of his attention, which might help him deal with individual problems more efficiently. Fifth, the priest is freed to concentrate on individual problems of a pressing nature which before were neglected due to a general lack of time. Finally, the more active role of the mediator families would lead to a strengthening of their religious behavior repertoire since so much peer group and priestly
observation would be focused on them. The mediator families would in turn serve as models for appropriate behavior for the families they serve. Under Currier's model, the large conglomerate parish would become an intermediary between the institutional Church and small groups of people.

An analysis of the priest and the parish structure has shown a change from a hierarchical to a collegiate parish. The role of the priest in the community is in the process of changing from that of an ultimate authority and moral norm setter to perhaps a counselor/contingency manager in the mode of Currier or of Reitz. Certainly within the parish the priest's main power has changed from his ability to release people from having to tact their condition as aversive to social control consisting to a large extent of positive reinforcement.
SUMMARY

In summary, this paper has tried to show that the pre-Vatican II view of the priest as a facilitator of escape or avoidance of self-tacts of being in serious sin has changed to that of a mediator of positive reinforcement. An analysis of moral theology showed that before the priest relied mainly on threats of eternal damnation to control behavior. He succeeded in reducing deviance from established norms by increasing the credibility of theological descriptions of punishment contingencies for inappropriate behavior. In the post-Vatican II era the priest tries to gradually shape ideal Christian behavior through positive reinforcement.

Sacramentally the Church has moved from highly stereotyped rituals mediated by the priest which allowed the believer to escape or to avoid potential aversive self-descriptions to sacraments which positively reinforce or provide the stimulus conditions for behavior at appropriate intervals in life.

Finally, within the parish, the priest has changed from the hierarchical, ultimate authority to a collegial, contingency managing one. The parish structure has changed from one of highly fixed roles with religious behavior controlled almost exclusively by the priest to one of increasing lay control.
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