

(church choir singing)

- Let us offer unto God, our unison prayer of confession, and for pardon. Let us pray. Have mercy upon us, oh God. According to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin for we acknowledge our transgressions and our sin is ever before us. Create in us, clean hearts, oh God and renew a right spirit within us. Cast us not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Restore unto us, the joy of thy salvation and uphold us with thy free spirit. Amen. And hear these words of assurance, of forgiveness from the New Testament. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Jesus said, "Him who comes to me, I will not cast out" The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Therefore, be of good courage. (church choir singing) At this point in the service, we would set apart to the glory of God and for the use of the worshiping congregation, the hymnals which have been given us. And in doing so, would you turn with me to page eight, Roman numeral eight at the very beginning of the hymnal. Here you find John Wesley's directions for singing as published in the preface to sacred melody in 1761. These I would read aloud in your hearing. And you can decide for yourselves if John Wesley had a great sense of humor or none at all. Learn these tunes before you learn any others. Afterwards, learn as many as you please. Sing them exactly as they are printed here without altering or amending them at all. And if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can. Sing all. I don't think that means sing all the verses, I think it's sing, you all. Maybe the influence of Georgia upon him. Sing all, see that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or wariness hinder you. If it is across to you, take it up. And you will find it a blessing. Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep. But lift up your voice with strength, be no more afraid of your voice now, nor ashamed of it's being heard than when you sung the songs of Satan. Sing modestly. Now, I don't know how that goes with sing lustily, but I'll try both. Sing modestly, do not bawl so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony, but strive to unite your voices together so as to make one clear melodious sound. Sing in time. Whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it, but attend close to the leading voices who are here behind me and move therewith as exactly as you can and take care not to sing too slow. And the last one above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself or any other creature. And so that we may do that, let us sing one verse of a hymn. And during that, I shall take one copy of the hymnal and place it on the altar. And after that verse, remain standing while the prayer of dedication is spoken. And now let us rise and sing the first stanza of 55; praise to the Lord, the almighty, the king of creation. Fifty five, the first stanza. (upbeat music) (church choir singing) Eternal God, king of Kings and Lord of Lords, who (murmurs) by choirs of angels and archangels and who need us not, but delightest in the music of men. With gratitude to the giver, and to thy glory and praise, we dedicate these hymnals. With confidence in the working of thy Holy Spirit, which has inspired men to offer their best in music and song. We dedicate these hymnals to bear up the melody of hymn and psalm in such ways that we may go forth

from this house with joy in our hearts and resolution in our wills. We dedicate these hymnals to extol thee, worthily, harmoniously, and unanimously, we dedicate these hymnals, so that with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we may laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory, glory be to thee oh Lord most high. Amen. The lesson for the day is from the 107th Psalm verses one through eight. Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Some wandered in desert waste, finding no way to a city to dwell in, hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in. Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love. And for His wonderful works to the sons of men. May God bless this reading to our hearing. (upbeat music) (church choir singing) The Lord be with you.

Church members: The Lord be with you.

- Let us pray. Let us offer unto God, a prayer of Thanksgiving. We do praise and thank you God, for all great and simple joys, for the gift of wonder and the joy of discovery, for the everlasting freshness of experience. For all that comes to us through sympathy and through sorrow. and for the joy of work attempted and achieved, for musicians, poets, and craftsmen, and for all who work in forum and color to increase the beauty of life. For the likeness of Jesus in ordinary people. Their forbearance, courage and kindness, and for all obscure and humble lives of service. For all these great and simple joys, we give thee humble and hearty thanks. And let us offer a prayer of intercession for the world. Almighty and eternal God, who did so love the world that thou gave us thine only son for its redemption, grant unto us, such goodwill to all thy creatures that we may continue thy work of reconciliation, bringing to lost souls, the love of the cross and the power of the resurrection for their ever lasting salvation. And on this reformation Sunday, let us offer a prayer For the church. Not just for the reform church, but for the ecumenical church. Most gracious father, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic church, fill it with all truth, in all truth, with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purge it. Where it is in error, direct it. Where anything is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen and confirm it. Where it is in want, furnish it. Where it is divided and rend asunder, do thou make up the breaches in it for the sake of thy son whose church it is. And let us offer a prayer of supplication for ourselves. Eternal God, in whom is our health and our peace, how may we utter our need of thee? Our minds need thee, to give them poise. Our wills need thee, to give them strength. Our hearts need thee, to give them quiet. We need thee as we worry about a better world. Very urgent is our need of thee, if we are to face persistent evil with hopeful determination. Oh thou, who understandest us better than we do ourselves, grant unto us a healing, heartening consciousness of thy presence as revealed in Jesus Christ, our Lord. And now as our savior Christ hath taught us, we humbly pray together saying, Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen. There is a puzzling, seemingly contradictory divergence in student life. On the one hand, there is radical concern about personal identity. While on the other hand, there's radical political interest and action. Perhaps this was first clearly exhibited at Berkeley. The campus resounded with student demands for

complete freedom. Every impingement of external authority was opposed. At the same time, the same students were organizing freedom rides to Mississippi and struggling to change the university structures. More recently, one can find the same divergence on nearly every campus. Concomitant with a demand for society to remove its pressure is an attempt to gain control or power in society. Along with rejection of all values except those which are personally derived, is an imperialistic attempt to force those values upon others. These two directions of self projection seem to run counter to one another. The quest for self identity tends to force one into introspection and isolation. Here, the search for self and personal meaning takes place within the confines of the self. And every intrusive factor from the outside is roughly excluded. The political interest draws one out of himself. It leads one, not only into the arena where others live, but also to an interest in changing, and at times perhaps even manipulating the ways in which men relate to one another. To put this another way, the identity crisis is taken to be an inward crisis. One is driven to the deepest recesses of his own spirit. The political crisis is taken to be an external crisis. One is driven to explore the most far ranging dimensions of social interrelatedness. The divergent movement of these two primal concerns only adds to the general anxiety which the student feels and sometimes leads to rather surprising modes of thought and action. Let me attempt to describe the situation. A person comes to maturity in a traumatic fashion. He has his beginnings in a family with which he must struggle, both in terms of relating positively and of rejecting inordinate influences, which attempt to shape him arbitrarily. He fights for his distinctiveness, while he carries a deep longing for meaningful and increasingly adult relationships. The strength of the family impingement is such however that most often, he finds himself seeking a safe distance. He needs to say no and insist upon his own integrity. Increasingly, he keeps others at arms length, demanding his freedom and a right to establish and live by his own values. This desire for individuality, the young person soon learns must be asserted not only against the immediate family, but also against every institution which would function as an external control upon him. Hence he resents the university, which would stand in loco parentis. He's antagonistic toward every political structure that would commandeer his thought or action. He fights every external authority, which would impose itself as an alien sovereignty. Psychologists speak of negative identification, a concept which has relevance here. In negative identification, a person defines himself in terms of what he is not. He throws away the values and perspectives of his context, simply because they're making claims upon him. In such a case, a person knows who he is not although he may have no clear positive indication of who he is. (murmurs) in a recent column, illustrated this beautifully. When he suggested that the national elections this year should take place in such a manner as to allow everyone to vote for the candidate which he opposes. Because this one political certainty was the only one most Americans possess. In personal terms, negative identification works the same way. One knows more certainly who he is not, than he knows who he is. Perhaps we can explore how such a tendency develops. For in the effort to claim his own individual distinctiveness, the maturing person tends to isolate himself. In order to discover who he is, he closes more and more upon himself. He becomes captive to the centripetal forces which propel an attempt to define himself not only for himself, but in himself. He knows the anguish of loneliness. He knows the travail of solitude. He even has a sense of the impossibility of finding himself simply in terms of himself. But this is his situation. And he is driven, even as he carries himself to isolation and looks inward with a despairing hope. At the same time, maturation brings with it a kind of public or political consciousness. For self identification takes place in a situation of multiple counterclaims, a man is a social animal. Man is a political creature and this he can never forget. Sometimes his awareness of such a public dimension is simply an extension of the problems he has already faced.

Problems which caused him to turn upon himself in the first place. Because he's had to struggle against external pressures, which attempted to make him conform to arbitrary standards, he now turns to fight the sources of those pressures. He strikes out against his father or his mother Who attempt to impose their values upon him. He fights the school, which assays to set the frame in which he must live. He fights the civil orders, which would tell him what he must think or how he must express his thoughts. Sometimes the maturing youth becomes political in order to reinforce his effort, to gain his personal freedom. At other times, the political interest results from the universalizing of his own situation. He sees the limitations which are placed upon him as also affecting others. So he identifies with those who are struggling for their freedom. He stands beside them, he argues their cause, he fights their fights. If this analysis is correct, then perhaps the reaction to the draft, or Vietnam, or poverty or civil rights or discrimination because of race may be better understood at least in part. For in each case, one of the issues which is at stake is a person's freedom to find himself. What is at the heart of the struggle is a person's desire to establish his own values even as he attempts to utilize his sources of power in his political context. At its worst, this dual concern to be himself, even as he's caught in the web of societal controls, results in what one might call a skeptical fanaticism. That is, the person becomes skeptical of every external force, every authoritative pressure, every social frame. Hence he demands his freedom in an absolute way. He will trust no other person. He will give no other person any prerogative over him. He will now allow no external intrusion into his own life. If at the same time, he continues his concern for society, is often expressed in a fanatical manner. He sets out to change society by overthrowing the whole thing. He does not reason. For values which have been derived independently and in an isolated fashion, provide no basis for political consensus. With a kind of hate for everything that limits him or other people, he becomes political but in a fanatical way. He gives up the struggle to change his context by slow, internal transformation for he shares little with that context. Consequently, whether the opposing structure be family or school or government, he sets out to destroy what he feels to be an insensitive authority in hopes of bringing in a new day with a fresh possibility of personal freedom. It is no surprise therefore, that the freedom movements which they start as a demand for individual freedom on the college campuses, end as political confrontations on the city streets. And in a more moderate form, the dual concern for personal identity and common freedom does not reach the extremes of thorough skepticism or fanatical action. In most cases, the struggle for individual personhood takes place within the context provided by surrounding authorities. It is in situations of this type, that one hears voices calling legitimately I think, for participatory democracy, for a modified self determinism, and for an authentic place in one society. But where the pressures which enforce conformity have been strong. And where the resulting reaction, which has sought freedom has been strong, any balance of order is difficult to keep. Most students, I'm convinced, know the intensity and the difficulty of the search for personal identity. Most students know the continual pressures for inter-involvement with family, with school, with church or government. Students know the tensions, they experience the anguish. And yet they would like to keep the balance between self searching and relating to others. Have I misjudged you, students? Do I not hear you say two things at once? I want to be myself, but I want to learn to relate to others. I want my freedom and I want others to have their freedom, but I also want to acknowledge the legitimate claims, which each of us makes upon the other. I think most students are saying this and I think they're right in saying this. On the personal level, you know the importance of saying no, as well as yes, to your family or friends. Most of us sense that a person never truly finds himself only in himself. One finds himself in relationships. In this, Martin Buber was correct. "Life is relationships." We become a self by

interaction, both positive and negative, with others. We become a self by an evaluation, which arises out of these relationships with others. Their evaluation of us and our evaluation of ourselves in relation to their evaluation. The one who retreats into absolute isolation or solipsism, loses the possibility for self finding. For self knowledge is gained only in the context of other persons, only in living interaction with neighbors. If this is so, then the importance of family and friends becomes evident. The ability of others to allow us to be, to be ourselves, even as they make their just claims, is a necessary ground for our self acceptance and self affirmation. Where one has not known such acceptance, he finds it difficult to accept himself, But where a person has known such acceptance, he finds self identification, immeasurably enhanced. In short, as persons, we live in a mixed situation of acceptance, rejection, of granted freedom and demanding authority. And self-identification has to be achieved in just this ambiguous context. And what is true on the personal level is also true in the web of relationships as these are enlarged. Not only must one find his sense of freedom and awareness of his determination and personal relationships, he also has to ask about a viable political environment in which he and others may live. The contexts are multiple and different for each of us. But each of us as a person, finds his personhood only as he finds it with other persons in the context of political involvement. Nevertheless, there are always problems and these problems remain. Relationships are never finished. Maturation is open ended. It is a process, not an accomplishment. Consequently, every new encounter with another person, every new government regulation, every new university policy creates a new tension and requires a fresh self interpretation. Some encounters and some events are more traumatic than others and require greater resourcefulness and flexibility. But every new relationship in its own way, every political context in its own way requires a new appreciation of one's self as relating to others and a fresh self affirmation in that relationship. And so for the analysis, looking back, perhaps all we feel able to say is that of all knowledge, none is so difficult to come by as knowledge of the self. Of all action, none is more difficult than the action and interaction of oneself with other persons. Of all tensions, none is more threatening or promising than that of the self in relation. And this matter of self finding is also a recurrent theme in biblical writing and in Christian theology. Man is created by God with the possibility for matured personhood. He has an incipient integrity, which sets him apart, both from God and from other persons. Yet he also lives in a society and has a responsibility to husband the world. This general condition only offers to men, to you and to me, the possibility for maturation, the possibility of being a person and a person in community. Yet as we mature, we tend, it seems inevitably to attempt to define ourselves in unfulfilling and limiting ways. We tend to become self isolating, reject all claims upon us, or we tend to become so engrossed in society that we lose our self identity. These are the conditions are false to human life: the inordinate love of self or the inordinate loss of self. And they're are conditions which theologians have called sin. For sin in its essence is the failure to relate properly to the claims of God, of our society, and of ourselves. Sin is the failure to live creatively within the tension between our self determination and our being determined as a self. Hence, sin is usually expressed as a dollar tree of one's own self, which denies all others, a dollar tree of an object which demands the denial of the authenticity of the self. The sin of self affirmation to the exclusion of others, exerts itself in relationships, both personal and political. A manipulative control in the utilization of persons and situations for one's own end. The sin of self negation or weakness manifests itself in refusing to make claims upon one's context and challenges neither the other person nor the political system. If any claim has been made for Christian faith in a continuous way, it is the claim that such faith does two things at the same time. It draws a man out of himself, even as it reinforces him in himself. Religious faith works in this fashion because it understands man as being in a context in

which he is addressed by God. Man is evaluated even as he evaluates himself. Man's personhood is affirmed even as he is laid under obligation to relate to the one who affirms him. Now, we often fail to actualize this possibility and we sin. But the possibility by grace is continuously offered. If man begins to realize this potential for giving and being given to, he finds that his obligations begin to move like concentric circles. He must relate to others as individual persons. He must relate to others through the medium of political organization and action. But always with the intention of establishing the authentic integrity of the other. The Grace of God which is given to us life, in relationship, becomes the gift which is shared and sets the character of that sharing. If man only finds himself in relationships then, the word of grace is the word of that primary and ultimate relationship which encompasses all of us. It's the word of God which evokes our response. And such a word, God has spoken in Jesus Christ, who came to us, that we in response might relate to him. Let us pray. Dear God, who has come to us in Jesus Christ and who has given to us the opportunity for relationship which will both, establish us as persons and bring us into creative involvement with other persons. Help us to respond to thy acceptance with our love. In Jesus name. Amen. (church choir singing) (slow melodious music) (church choir singing) Here we offer and present unto thee, oh Lord, this symbol of ourselves to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto thee through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And now unto God's gracious mercy and protection do we commit you. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his grace to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his (murmurs) upon you and give you peace, this day and forever more. (church choir singing)