



Chapter 4

THE PROGRESSIVE ANSWER IN RELIGION

THE RISE OF THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT IN RELIGION

In the evolution of religion and human development Fromm has said that man, for "hundreds of thousands of years," attempted to regress to nature and to become one with mother earth again. Some four thousand years ago, however, man came to the realization that such a process was self defeating; he saw that he could never really eliminate his humanity,¹ nor could he ever gain readmittance to the lost paradise. "Only in death and insanity can the return be accomplished--not in life and sanity."² A major change had occurred. Man realized that he had to move forward, and this could only be accomplished by the development of his powers of reason and love, by which he could obtain a new basis for unity in life--only then "by becoming fully human" could he find a new, truly harmonious relationship with nature and his fellow man.³ Although man's ancient religions had marked the transition stage between the regressive and what Fromm calls the humanist, progressively directed religions, the progressive solution was to come forth in religious developments in the period between 1500 B.C. and 500 B.C. In 1350 B.C. one of the first full appearances of the progressive striving in religion was to be found in Egypt in the religious reformation of Iknaton. In

¹Fromm, BCOI., pp. 157-158.

²Suzuki, Fromm, De Martino, ZBAP., p. 89.

³Fromm, BCOI., p. 158.



this same era Moses was working with the Hebrews. Around 600-500 B.C. the progressive thrust was also becoming part of the religious effort in the teaching of Lao-tse in China and the Buddha in India. The movement made its appearance also in the teachings of Zarathustra, and the Greek philosophers, and the Hebrew prophets. Each of these religions devised different symbols and doctrines which would express their move toward a higher unity. Iknaton's goal came to be symbolized by the Sun; Moses worshipped the nameless God of history; Lao-tse aimed at knowing the way (the Tao); and the Buddha concentrated on the achievement of Nirvanah. The Greek philosophers saw an unmoved mover behind all creation; the Persians believed their hope was to be found in Zarathustra; and the Hebrew prophets looked forward to a new era of harmony ushered in by the coming of the Messiah. The content of these religions was quite different because each had been shaped by life style, philosophic approaches to existence and socio-economic patterns of each of the lands where these religions emerged.⁴

. . . . But while the particular form in which the new goal was expressed depended on various historical circumstances, the goal was essentially the same: to solve the problem of human existence by giving the right answer to the question which life poses it, that of man's becoming fully human and thus losing the terror of separateness. . . .⁵

THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT IN THE BIBLE

Sigmund Freud believed that the prohibition against incest had done untold repressive damage throughout the ages to the erotic life of man,⁶ but the great religions of the world would all disagree because

⁴Fromm, THOM., p. 119. ⁵Ibid. .

⁶Fromm, TSS., p. 73.



they ". . . have proceeded from the negative formulation of incest tabus to more positive formulations of freedom."⁷ The Buddha set forth extreme teachings on this subject which required that a man break away from all that bound him to a comfortable familiar existence.⁸

In The Bible Fromm sees the demand to sever incestuous ties as a major concern particularly in The Old Testament. The very essence of human evolution is related to man's breaking of incestuous ties to mother, nature, blood, and soil. Man, who was originally nature's prisoner, can only gain freedom by breaking the shackles that keep him as a helpless child dependent on nature, the clan, and idols.⁹

Adam and Eve mark the symbolic beginning of human evolution. Originally they are blind to their helpless state and one with nature, enjoying complete harmony with the world. After their eyes are opened and they acquire knowledge of their condition, this original state of unity with nature is severed. In this way, says Fromm:

. . . Man begins the process of individuation and cuts his ties with nature. In fact, he and nature become enemies, not to be reconciled until man has become fully human. With this first step of severing the ties between man and nature, history--and alienation--begins. As we have seen this is not the story of the "fall" of man but of his awakening, and thus, of the beginning of his rise.¹⁰

The story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise is really a story of man's expulsion from the womb. Even before this account appears in the biblical text, there is a demand for the severing of ties to mother and father: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh"

⁷Fromm, PAR., p. 83. ⁸Ibid., p. 84.

⁹Fromm, YSBAG., p. 57. ¹⁰Ibid.



(Genesis 2:24).¹¹ There is no doubt about the meaning of this verse: cutting these ties is the prerequisite for a marriage. A healthy relationship would be impossible if the male had not made this break in order to achieve his male independence. Fromm points out this could also be regarded as a prohibition against incest.¹²

The Abraham saga marks the next step in The Old Testament story of emergence from incestuous ties. The patriarch of Israel had been told by God to leave family, clan, and soil and go to a new land which God would provide for him.¹³

After many years of wandering the Hebrews settled in Egypt. Moses, who was to lead the Israelites out of bondage, was raised in the Egyptian court away from his own parents.¹⁴

A new dimension is added--the social one of slavery--to the ties of blood and soil. Man must cut not only the tie to father and mother; He must also cut the social ties which make him a slave, dependent on a master.¹⁵

In breaking away from their Egyptian bondage the Hebrews found themselves frightened and alone in the desert, and they complained to Moses that slavery in Egypt was preferable to the hardships of the desert.¹⁶ Of this surge toward freedom Fromm states that man, finding himself a lonely wanderer in the harsh, unyielding desert of the world, wants to give up the entire struggle and return to Mother, Earth--". . . to the darkness where the light of conscience and knowledge do not yet shine. He wants to escape from his newly gained freedom and to lose the very awareness which makes him human."¹⁷ However, man must endure

¹¹Ibid., p. 58, quoting Gen 2:24.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Fromm, PAR., p. 84.

¹⁵Fromm, YSBAG., p. 58.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 70.



the suffering because "the beginning of liberation lies in man's capacity to suffer, and he suffers if he is oppressed, physically and spiritually."¹⁸ It is no wonder that in the midst of their lonely desert wanderings, the Hebrews returned to idol worship,¹⁹ and in spite of the great efforts to achieve freedom, as soon as they settled in Canaan, they returned to incestuous worship of idols, soil, and state. Fromm declares that "the central issue of the teachings of the Prophets is the fight against this incestuous worship."²⁰ The prophets proclaimed the necessity of giving allegiance to the values which had importance for the spiritual health and development of all mankind-- truth, love, and justice, and they condemned the state for failing to abide by and live up to these standards, saying that if the state continued to reject these values and placed its own existence and selfish concerns first, then the state would perish.²¹

. . . The concept that the people must go into exile again and can return to their soil only when they have achieved freedom and ceased the idolatrous worship of soil and state is the logical culmination of this principle which underlies the Old Testament particularly the messianic concepts of the Prophets.²²

The idea of breaking of ". . . 'primary ties' of incestuous attachment. . ." has been symbolically represented in traditional Jewish services and festivals.²³ Passover celebrates the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and each participant in its observance must try to imagine that he was a slave in Egypt. The unleavened bread, the matzot, which is used during the Passover week recalls the time of the frantic

¹⁸Ibid., p. 74.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 79.

²⁰Fromm, PAR., p. 84.

²¹Ibid., pp. 84-85.

²²Ibid., p. 85.

²³Fromm, YSBAG., p. 58.



exodus when there was no time to stop to use leaven. The tabernacle is only a "temporary abode" for the Jewish wanderer who left home to seek freedom. "Both the matzot and the sukkah symbolize the cutting of the umbilical cord to the soil."²⁴

The teachings of Jesus carried forward the idea of breaking ties and allegiances of fixation. Jesus declared: "For I am come to set a man at variance against father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law" (Matthew 10:35).²⁵ In this teaching Jesus was not advising people to hate their parents and relatives, but in a drastic way was demanding that man give up his incestuous ties if he ever hoped to make spiritual progress.²⁶

THE GOD IDEA IN MAN'S PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Fromm is fully aware that his thesis, which sees the major thrust of The Old Testament as one concerning the liberation of man, has been questioned on the point of the biblical demand for obedience to the father. In the Hebrew Bible the rebellious son receives punishment. Fromm recognizes that The Bible has a strong running theme on obedience, but ". . . it must be noted that obedience is quite different from incestuous fixation."²⁷ On this subject Fromm writes:

Obedience is a conscious act of submitting to authority; in this respect obedience is the opposite of independence. Fixation is an emotional tie to a person, binding one affectively to that person. . . .²⁸

Obedience is a conscious behavior while fixation is more often

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Fromm, PAR., p. 81, quoting Matt. 10:35.

²⁶Ibid. ²⁷Fromm, YSBAG., p. 58.

²⁸Ibid., p. 59.



unconscious.²⁹ ". . . The obedient person is afraid of punishment if he disobeys. The fixated person is afraid of being lost and cast out if he tries to sever the incestuous tie."³⁰ Viewed in historical perspective obedience is more pronounced in relation to the father figure, as seen in the discussion of the authoritarian character structure, while fixation tends to be directed to the mother figure.³¹ In patriarchal societies fear of the father is quite evident, but the fear of the mother always has greater depth and danger even though ". . . its intensity depends on the intensity of the fixation to her."³²

Fromm makes this further distinction between obedience to authority and incestuous fixation:

. . . By incestuous fixation we have understood fixation to mother, to blood, and to soil. Incestuous fixation is by its very nature a bond with the past and a hindrance to full development. Obedience in the patriarchal world of the biblical and later Jewish tradition is obedience to the father figure who represents reason, conscience, law, moral and spiritual principles. The highest authority in the biblical system is God, who is the lawgiver and who represents conscience. In the process of development of the human race, there was perhaps no other way to help man liberate himself from the incestuous ties to nature and clan than by requiring him to lie obedient to God and his laws.³³

Fromm makes the important statement that in The Bible obedience must not be confused with fixation. Not only are they not identical, they are in fact quite opposites of each other:

. . . Obedience to rational authority is the path that facilitates the breaking up of incestuous fixation to preindividual archaic forces. But in addition, obedience to God is also the negation of submission to man.³⁴

With the development of the human race, as previously observed,

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Fromm, SCMV., p. 77.

³²Fromm, YSBAG., p. 59.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 60.



there was a defeat of matriarchal reign and a triumph of patriarchal power and influence.³⁵ Fromm sees The Old Testament as an expression of the patriarchal religious principle.³⁶ This radical change from the matriarchal to the patriarchal structure is considered a progressive, healthy move in human and religious development.³⁷ The society which is completely matriarchal would not be conducive to human progress because the value system of the mother culture tempts man to surrender to mother nature.³⁸ This is one of the "fundamental tendencies" already in existence in the heart of man, and he needs little urging to give up and regress to the past.³⁹

The patriarchal figure came to represent reason, conscience, law, and the moral values which were necessary for man to break with his regressive inclinations.⁴⁰ If man was to emerge and progress, however, a new basis for human relationship would be required which had to be founded in his ability to love. Fromm believed that ". . . we can trace the development of maturing love mainly in patriarchal religion."⁴¹ In The Old Testament the image of God changes from that of a despotic tribal chief, who decided to drown the human race because he was displeased with it, to the loving father who was consistent with the laws of truth, justice, and love which he represents.⁴²

. . . In this development God ceases to be a person, a man, a father; he becomes the symbol of the principle of unity behind the

³⁵Fromm, TAOL., p. 68.

³⁶Fromm, TSS., p. 54.

³⁷Fromm, TROH., p. 68.

³⁸Fromm, TCOP., p. 88.

³⁹Fromm, THOM., pp. 107-108.

⁴⁰Fromm, YSBAG., p. 59.

⁴¹Fromm, TAOL., p. 68.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 68-69.



manifoldness of phenomena, of the vision of the flower which will grow from the spiritual seed within man. God cannot have a name. A name always denotes a thing, or a person, something finite. How can God have a name, if he is not a person, not a thing?⁴³

Fromm sees the biblical prohibition against making any image of God and the taking of his name in vain, as well as the naming of God in any way, as a part of the progressive movement aimed at freeing man from bondage to any person or person-like deity.⁴⁴

Religion had long been used by tyrannical rulers to keep a measure of social order and stability. As long as the masses were kept in infantile bondage, with a psychic dependence upon the ruling elite and upon some equally fearsome deity, the people could be kept in subjection. While religion suppressed psychic independence and squelched man's intellectual efforts at freedom and kept him in a passive state of infantile docility, it offered him a measure of satisfaction, rewarding him for his passivity and obedience.⁴⁵

Fromm believes that man's early "autistic wish for omniscience and omnipotence" contributes to his continued claim for the reality of a caring, protecting, heavenly father god.⁴⁶

. . . Quite obviously, the majority of people have, in their personal development, not overcome this infantile stage, and hence the belief in God to most people is the belief in a helping father-- a childish illusion. In spite of the fact that this concept of religion has been overcome by some of the great teachers of the human race, and by a minority of men, it is still the dominant form of religion.⁴⁷

For Fromm the logical development of monotheistic religion is really ". . . the negation of all 'theology,' of all 'knowledge about

⁴³Ibid., p. 69.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Fromm, DOC., p. 16.

⁴⁶Fromm, TAON., p. 70.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 70-71.



God."⁴⁸ In earlier stages the God concept was the focus of man's progressive strivings toward justice, freedom, and love. The modern progressive man continues to have faith in the principles which the God idea represented. He considers life valuable because "... it gives him a chance to arrive at an ever fuller unfolding of human powers--as the only reality that matters, as the only object of ultimate 'concern'; and, eventually, he does not speak about God--nor even mention his name. . . ."⁴⁹

Perhaps Fromm's most serious argument against any religion which acknowledges God as ground and end of his being is that man transfers his own powers onto God and surrenders part of himself, worshipping the force on which he has made himself dependent.⁵⁰ This is a major cause of man's alienation from himself which leads to a breakdown in his own sense of self-esteem and identity.⁵¹ This religious orientation, Fromm believes, is masochistic and self-destructive.⁵²

In spite of his seemingly strong cautions about the danger of theistic religion, Fromm, who holds to a non-theistic humanistic view himself, states "... I believe also that the consequences of strict monotheism and non-theistic ultimate concern with the spiritual reality are two views which, though different, need not fight each other."⁵³

In discussing the question of the possible pathology involved in theistic belief, in our conversation in Cuernavaca, Fromm stated that all theism is not sick. Theism is one thought category for the expression

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 71.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Fromm, PAR., p. 53.

⁵¹Fromm, BCOI., p. 56.

⁵²Fromm, PAR., p. 53.

⁵³Fromm, TAOL., p. 52.



of faith, and there is always the possibility of a dependence, in varying degree, on a father figure. Actually, man seems to find it very difficult to live without some symbol, but Fromm's greatest concern with the worship of God is that the monotheistic deity has become an idol to which man submits in fear because it is a good idea to be on the right side of some great ruling supernatural power.⁵⁴

THE PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS ANSWER: HUMANISTIC RELIGION

"Only the complete eradication of incestuous fixation," declares Fromm, "will permit the realization of the brotherhood of man."⁵⁵ There can be no right judgment, no grasp of the real issues which separate and divide man, no love, no new basis for harmony and relationship with one's neighbor or oneself as long as man refuses to cut the emotional umbilical cord.⁵⁶

The primitive forms of incestuous ties to mother, soil, race, etc., of benign and of malignant ecstasies can disappear only if man finds a higher form of feeling at home in the world, if not only his intellect develops, but also his capacity to feel related without submitting, at home without being imprisoned, intimate without being stifled. . . .⁵⁷

The alternatives to the regressive, incestuous solution is the progressive solution which involves discovering a new harmony ". . . by the full development of all human forces, of the humanity, within oneself."⁵⁸

The great religious leaders of the world ". . . in that remarkable period of history between 1500 B.C. and 500 B.C." began to

⁵⁴Statement by Erich Fromm, personal interview, May 5, 1971.

⁵⁵Fromm, PAR., p. 82. ⁵⁶Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁷Fromm, TROH., p. 69. ⁵⁸Fromm, THOM., p. 118.



have visions of this progressive, humanistic solution.⁵⁹

But as soon as man had heard the message he began to falsify it; instead of becoming fully human himself, he idolized God and dogmas as manifestations of the "new goal," thus substituting a figure or a word for the reality of his own experience.⁶⁰

Humanistic religion, as Fromm envisions it today, affirms that man can

... feel at home in the world and overcome his sense of frightening loneliness; that he can achieve this by the full development of his human powers, of his capacity to love, to use his reason, to create and enjoy beauty, to share his humanity with all his fellow men.⁶¹

Humanistic religion is concerned then with the self-development of man's own powers apart from any outside supernatural control or interference.⁶²

The progressively oriented man is also Fromm's "productive man."⁶³

The productive man has "... a mode of relatedness in all realms of human experience."⁶⁴ He is open to his own feelings and sensory perceptions, to those of others, and also to things. He is aware of his human powers and potential. "If we say he must use his powers we imply that he must be free and not dependent on someone who controls his powers. . . ."⁶⁵ Furthermore, reason must guide productive man in all of his actions. Without reason man will not even realize his human potentiality; he would not be able to recognize his powers, or understand how they should be employed. The productive person "... experiences himself as the embodiment of his own powers as the 'actor.'⁶⁶ He is in touch

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 119.

⁶¹Fromm, TROH., pp. 69-70.

⁶²Fromm, PAR., p. 49.

⁶³Fromm, SCMV., pp. 71-72.

⁶⁴Fromm, MPH., p. 91.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Fromm, MPH., p. 91.



with the dynamic forces of strength, energy, and vision within him.

These forces are not hidden or alien to his experience, and the productive man has no need to transfer his inherent strength to some ". . . idolized object, person, or institution."⁶⁷

"The productive person gives birth to his own faculties and gives life to persons and to things."⁶⁸ His approach to life is rooted in love and love of life (biophilia), not in receiving, nor in possessing and controlling. This person is in tune with himself and is not driven by irrational passions.⁶⁹

In humanistic religion, which is the faith of productive man, "god is not a symbol of power over man but of man's own powers."⁷⁰ He is not ". . . the sole possessor of what was originally man's: of his reason and his love. . . ,"⁷¹ as in authoritarian religions, (but God is ". . . the image of man's higher self, a symbol of what man potentially is or ought to become. . . ,"⁷²

FROMM'S CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCHES

Fromm has written in The Heart of Man:

. . . Almost everybody can regress to the archaic orientation, or progress to the full progressive unfolding of his personality. In the first case we speak of the outbreak of severe mental illness; in the second case we speak of a spontaneous recovery from mental illness, or a transformation of a person into full awakening and maturity. It is the task of psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and various spiritual disciplines to study the conditions under which the one or the other development occurs and, furthermore, to devise methods by which the favorable development can be furthered and the malignant

⁶⁷Fromm, SCMV., p. 71.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 72.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 73.

⁷⁰Fromm, PAR., p. 49.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 49-50.

⁷²Ibid., p. 49.



development stopped. . . .73

In this statement Fromm has given a major challenge to psychologists and religious leaders. The greatest problem which is posed by his challenge is that the sickness of incestuous ties may not be recognized. Fromm has warned that:

The vast majority of people in our culture are well adjusted because they have given up the battle for independence sooner and more radically than the neurotic person. They have accepted the judgment of the majority so completely that they have been spared the sharp pain of conflict which the neurotic person goes through. While they are healthy from the standpoint of "adjustment," they are more sick than the neurotic person from the standpoint of the realization of their aims as human beings. . . .74

It is difficult to move people from some state of security to a position which may cause them great anxiety. The man who remains strongly bound by primary ties to mother, family, clan, or mothering church feels protected and safe and is extremely reluctant to consider alternatives.⁷⁵ He does not want to upset this relationship, nor does he wish to be made aware of it. To make him aware is to bring forth his wrath and hostility which is exactly what the biblical prophets received for their great efforts in this direction.⁷⁶

The religious leader today must not fail to study intensively the psychopathological structures within human nature which prevent man's freedom and thwart his development. The religious leader cannot be content to talk theoretically about salvation and neglect the meaning of those malignant, often unconscious, psychopathological orientations which block man's efforts to form constructive, positive relationships.

The problem of incestuous ties is not a theoretical one which

⁷³Fromm, THOM., p. 123.

⁷⁴Fromm, PAR., p. 83.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 80.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 84-85.



can be ignored without severely damaging man's spiritual and emotional life. Fromm has said: "To cut through the naval string, not in the physical sense, but in the psychological sense, is the great challenge to human development and also its most difficult task."⁷⁷ If this statement is taken seriously the religious leader cannot be content to allow people to think of God as one who effects magical change if the worshipper or devotee is willing to remain in a passive, docile, and childlike position.

Fromm's interpretation of Freud's book, The Future of an Illusion, is that religion keeps man in bondage and prevents his freedom.⁷⁸ According to Fromm, Freud believed that "man copes with threatening forces in the same manner in which, as a child, he learned to cope with his own insecurity by relying on and admiring and fearing his father."⁷⁹ Religion developed at a time in human evolution when man had not learned to use his reason to deal with frightening interior and exterior forces, therefore, he coped with his anxieties by repression or reliance upon the supernatural.⁸⁰

Freud's and Fromm's deepest fears will be realized if man is kept in a morbidly dependent religious position in which his own efforts to use his reason and develop his understanding of the inner workings of his own soul are discouraged or defeated. Such a position may reinforce and strengthen the primary ties to mother and mother church, but it does not open the door to human freedom.

In our interview in Cuernavaca Erich Fromm stated that people

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 80. ⁷⁸Fromm, PAR., pp. 82-83.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 11. ⁸⁰Ibid.



often express a wish to be cured, but deep in their hearts they have no real wish to be changed. Who wouldn't want to be cured, but who really wants to be changed?⁸¹

Fromm's observation seems to be quite correct. People often express a great desire to be cured, but they do not want to delve into the deeply set, intimate problems and relationships which must be examined and understood if any change is to be affected. Fromm says "only by going through the process of alienation can man overcome it and achieve a new harmony. . . ." ⁸² It is not our task as religious leaders to help man cover his anxiety, or to escape it, but to help him come to a sense of awareness of his condition. The minister who fails to study the inner condition of his own life, or who fails to see the depth and complexity of man's psychological disorders as they relate to religious experience, makes the serious mistake of giving spiritual prescriptions without an examination or diagnosis.

Fromm sees his own mission as an effort to help people become aware of their psychological condition. It is his belief that we must always confront human beings with reality. Old fashioned preaching threatened people with the possibility of their going to hell; today we must show that they are not going to hell--they are in hell.⁸³

If the religious leader has any claim of spiritual authority it comes not merely by virtue of ordination, but through his willingness to

⁸¹Statement by Erich Fromm, personal interview, May 5, 1971.

⁸²Fromm, YSBAG., p. 71.

⁸³Statement by Erich Fromm, personal interview, May 5, 1971.



face the darkness, the anxiety, the pain, the sickness, and the suffering in human life. Only as he faces the darkness within himself can he hope to be of any assistance in leading others to discover the light.⁸⁴

⁸⁴The process of informing clergy and laity of the seriousness of incestuous attachments should be the subject of further investigation in another thesis.



Chapter 5

SUMMARY

This paper has examined Erich Fromm's concept of incestuous ties and the affect of this psychopathological orientation on man's religious life.

THE HUMAN SITUATION

1. The evolution of man from a purely animal state to a higher form with the capacity to reason brought him to a confrontation with the severe existential and historical dichotomies which threatened his existence.

2. Man came to sense that he is part of nature and yet he transcends it. As "a freak of the universe," an anomaly, an eternal wanderer unable to return to the prehuman, animal state which existed before his reason emerged, he is conscious of his mortality, loneliness, and fear and is driven to seek new solutions for his inner contradictions.

3. Fromm sees the most crucial psychological problem of man as being the way in which the individual relates to the world, his fellow man, and himself.

4. The best and the worst in man are not the result of a fixed biological nature. Man is a product of the social process; he is created by it. Man is made by culture and history, but culture and history are also made by man.

5. Although man has basic physiological needs in common with all animals, he has specifically human needs which require fulfillment: the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a



a sense of identity, and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion.

6. Man must attempt to give an answer to the questions posed by existence. Either an individual gives up the struggle to answer the questions, escaping by regression to some earlier form of symbiotic existence, or he goes through the pain of being fully born as an individual with the capacity to love and to reason.

THE ORIGIN AND DESCRIPTION OF INCESTUOUS TIES

7. In an effort to hide from the conflicts of existence, man may succumb to what is probably one of his greatest temptations--the desire to return to the security and protection of mother or her surrogates: blood, clan, soil, nation, or church. Such an escape forms the basis of Fromm's concept of incestuous ties.

8. Freud gave great importance to the Oedipal (sexual) strivings of the child, but Fromm reinterprets Freud's doctrine of the Oedipus Complex shifting concern to the pre-Oedipal attachments of the child to the mother.

9. A doting but domineering or seductive mother and a weak, ineffective father, may combine their negative influences causing a boy to remain emotionally dependent upon his mother. A necrophilic mother can also cause severe regressive tendencies in a child.

10. Fromm seems to suggest that all people are tempted to seek a regressive security for their lives.

11. Within the incestuous complex there is a continuum which ranges from a benign form to the most malignant, levels of incestuous fixation which Fromm calls "incestuous symbiosis."

12. In the "syndrome of decay" three vicious orientations converge in their most malignant forms. They are incestuous ties,

necrophilia, and malignant narcissism. In the personality of Adolf Hitler Fromm sees a perfect example of this convergence.

INCESTUOUS TIES AND RELIGION

13. Religion may encourage regressive tendencies by having man avoid the challenges of growth and development which life presents, and by blessing his unyielding attachment to mother.

14. The history of religions bears witness to great struggles between matriarchal and patriarchal societies. The matriarchal society, concerned with preserving female social and religious values, was eventually challenged and defeated by a patriarchal system.

15. The negative aspect of the matriarchal order is seen in man's failure to break his incestuous ties.

16. Social repression forces people into a dependent position with the effect of developing mother fixations and of forming regressive religious dogmas which provide psychic gratification.

17. Even when man achieves freedom from social repression he is afraid to use it and reverts to clan idolatry, or its more familiar expression, nationalism. He thereby forfeits his freedom and returns to bondage in the form of incestuous worship.

THE PROGRESSIVE ANSWER IN RELIGION

18. For hundreds of thousands of years man, in his religious strivings, attempted to recover his unity with mother earth. Four thousand years ago he began to abandon this regressive effort and attempted to develop his humanity by seeking a new basis for unity in life. This progressive effort in religious developments evolved during the period 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.

19. In The Old and New Testaments there are numerous challenges



to man to break primary ties and to move forward to freedom.

20. In the evolution of religion Fromm concedes that man was probably unable to break his incestuous ties to mother without the force of the idea of obedience to a patriarchal God, but to continue today to submit to the belief in a benevolent paternalistic god is a childish illusion.

21. According to Fromm, the full, progressive religious answer is found in humanistic, non-theistic religion which is concerned with man's self-development apart from any outside supernatural control.

22. In humanistic religion God is a symbol of man's powers.³

23. Fromm's study of incestuous ties presents a serious challenge to the churches.

24. The danger of incestuous ties may not be recognized by the Church.

25. It is difficult to get people to face their incestuous inclinations.

26. The religious leader cannot talk theoretically about salvation. If he neglects the study of man's subconscious, pathological orientations he fails to understand the forces which thwart man's spiritual and emotional development.

27. The Church can unwittingly strengthen man's regressive ties and thereby close the door to human freedom.

28. The minister's mission, like Fromm's, is to help people become aware of what is going on in the depths of their minds so that they can develop their greatest potential.

29. Only as the minister faces the darkness (anxiety, pain, and sickness) within himself and in others, can he dare to make himself



available to lead other people in the development of their spiritual
lives.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Single Volume Books

- Fromm, Erich, The Art of Loving. New York: Harper & Row, 1956.
- _____, Beyond The Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1962.
- _____, The Crisis of Psychoanalysis. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1970.
- _____, The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology and Culture. New York: Anchor, Books, 1963.
- _____, Escape From Freedom, New York: Avon Books, 1969.
- _____, The Forgotten Language, New York: Grove Press, 1951.
- _____, The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964.
- _____, Let Man Prevail: A Socialist Manifesto and Program, New York: The Call Association, (n.d.).
- _____, Man For Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics. Greenwich: Fawcett Publications, 1969.
- _____, Marx's Concept of Man, With a Translation From Marx's "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts", trans., T. B. Bottomore. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966.
- _____, May Man Prevail? An Inquiry Into The Facts and Fictions of Foreign Policy. New York: Anchor Books, 1964.
- _____, Psychoanalysis and Religion. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.
- _____, The Revolution of Hope: Toward A Humanized Technology. New York: Bantam Books, 1968.
- _____, The Sane Society. New York: Premier Books, 1955.
- _____, Sigmund Freud's Mission: An Analysis of His Personality and Influence. New York: Grove Press, 1959.
- _____, and Michael Maccoby. Social Character In A Mexican Village: A Sociopsychanalytic Study. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970.



_____, You Shall Be As Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and Its Tradition. New York: Fawcett Premier Books, 1966.

_____, D. T. Suzuki, and Richard De Martino. Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis. New York: Grove Press, 1960.

Books Edited By Fromm

_____, and Ramon Xirau (eds.). The Nature of Man. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968.

_____, (ed.). Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium. New York: Anchor Books, 1965.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Single-Volume Works

Alexander, Franz G., and Sheldon T. Selesnick, The History of Psychiatry. New York: The New American Library, 1968.

Allport, Gordon W. The Individual and His Religion. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950.

Blakney, Raymond B. (trans.). Meister Eckhart. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1941.

Bowers, Margretta K. Conflicts of the Clergy: A Psychodynamic Study with Case Histories. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963.

Brown, J. A. C. Freud and The Post Freudians. London: Penguin Books 1964.

Brown, Norman O. Life Against Death. New York: Random House, 1959.

Bullard, Dexter M. (ed.). Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy, Selected Papers of Frieda Fromm-Reichmann. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959.

Evans, Richard I., Dialogue with Erich Fromm. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

Fenichel, Otto. The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis. New York: W. W. Norton, 1945.

Freud, Sigmund. Moses and Monotheism; An Outline of Psycho-Analysis, and Other Works; trans. and eds., James Strachey et al. The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXIV. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964.



- Freud, Sigmund. Two Case Histories: "Little Hans" and The "Rat Man"; trans. and eds., James Strachey and et al. The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. X. London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1964.
- Fromm-Reichmann, Frieda. Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950.
- Glen, J. Stanley. Erich Fromm: A Protestant Critique. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966.
- Hammond, Guyton B. Man in Estrangement. Nashville: Vanderbilt Press, 1965.
- Horney, Karen. New Ways In Psychoanalysis. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966.
- Jones, Ernest. Hamlet and Oedipus. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1949.
- Josephson, Eric, and Mary Josephson (eds.). Man Alone: Alienation In Modern Society. New York: Dell Publishing, 1962.
- Kenniston, Kenneth. The Uncommitted. New York: Dell Publishing Co. 1965.
- Linn, Louis, and Leo W. Schwartz. Psychiatry and Religious Experience. New York: Random House, 1958.
- Lohse, Bernhard. A Short History of Christian Doctrine, trans. F. Ernest Stoeffler. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Loomis, Earl A., Jr. The Self In Pilgrimage. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.
- Marcuse, Herbert. Eros and Civilization. New York: Vintage Books, 1955.
- May, Rollo. Man's Search For Himself. New York: Signet Books, 1953.
- Mullahy, Patrick. Oedipus, Myth and Complex. New York: Grove Press, 1948.
- Outler, Albert C. Psychotherapy and the Christian Message. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1954.
- Oates, Wayne E. What Psychology Says About Religion. New York: Association Press, 1958.
- Pattison, E. Mansell (ed.). Clinical Psychiatry and Religion. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1969.
- Salzman, Leon. Developments in Psychoanalysis. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1962.



- Schaar, John. Escape From Authority. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1961.
- Roberts, David E. Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man. New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1950.
- Schacht, Richard. Alienation. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1970.
- Spinks, G. Stephen. Psychology and Religion. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.
- Suzuki, D. T., Erich Fromm, and Richard De Martino. Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis. New York: Grove Press, Publisher, 1960.
- Suttie, Ian D. The Origins of Love And Hate. New York: The Julian Press, 1952.
- Thompson, Clara, and Patrick Mullahy. Psychoanalysis: Evolution and Development. New York: Grove Press, 1950.
- Tillich, Paul, The Courage To Be. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
- Walker, Kenneth, and Peter Fletcher. Sex and Society. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955.
- Wells, Harry K. The Failure of Psychoanalysis: From Freud to Fromm. New York: International Publishers, 1963.

Classical Works

- Sophocles I: "Oedipus the King;" "Oedipus at Colonus;" "Antigone," eds. David Grene and Richard Lattimore. New York: Washington Square Press, 1954.

Microfilmed Work

- Lee, L. C. An Investigation of Erich Fromm's Theory of Authoritarianism. (Unpublished thesis.) Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1971.

Periodicals

- Bartimier, Leo H., "Healthy and Unhealthy Patterns of Religious Behavior," Journal of Religion and Health, IV (July, 1965), pp. 309-314.
- Brams, Jerome, "From Freud To Fromm," Psychology Today, I (February, 1968), pp. 32-35, 64-65.
- May Rollo, "Humanism and Psychotherapy," Pastoral Psychology, XIX (April, 1968), pp. 11-17.



Meserve, Harry C., "Editorial: Healthy and Unhealthy Religion," Journal of Religion and Health, IV (July, 1965), pp. 295-301.

Miller, Samuel H., "Religion: Healthy and Unhealthy," Journal of Religion and Health, IV (July, 1965), pp. 295-301.

Schoenfield, C. G., "Erich Fromm's Attack Upon the Oedipus Complex -- A Brief Critique," The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, CXXXI, 5 (1966), pp. 580-585.



KEY TO FOOTNOTES

- TAOL. - The Art of Loving
- BCOI. - Beyond The Chains of Illusion
- TCOP. - The Crisis of Psychoanalysis
- DOC. - The Dōgma of Christ
- EFF. - Escape From Freedom
- TFL. - The Forgotten Language
- THOM. - The Heart of Man
- MFH. - Man For Himself
- PAR. - Psychoanalysis and Religion
- TROH. - The Revolution of Hope
- TSS. - The Sane Society
- SCMV. - Social Character In A Mexican Village
- YSBAG. - You Shall Be As Gods
- ZBAP. - Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis



GLOSSARY

These terms are used throughout this paper and represent Fromm's own definitions.

Biophilia: A love of life, characteristic of the mentally healthy, progressive person who desires to affirm all that is humanly productive, creative, and life giving (THOM., p. 47).

Incestuous Ties: These ties are not to be understood as genital relationships or sexual desires of children for parents, but as strivings of a pre-genital nature which represent a reluctance or inability on the part of persons of either sex to break dependency ties with the mother or father (THOM., pp. 97-98).

Narcissism: The inability to focus on anything other than oneself, or the lack of genuine interest in anything other than oneself (THOM., p. 71).

Necrophilia: This psychopathological orientation involves a fascination with sickness, death, and decay, and the necrophilous person is driven by a desire to transform the organic into the inorganic (THOM., p. 41).

Oedipus Complex: Fromm does not define this complex as "... a sexual craving for members of the same family," but sees it as an expression of a deep wish to remain attached to mother (PAR., pp. 79-80).

Primary Ties: A form of relatedness appropriate for the infant as he relates to his mother but inappropriate for adults who continue an unbroken attachment to mother, father, soil, clan, nation, and religion (TROH., p. 68).

Receptive Orientation: The passive position maintained by those who believe that the source of all good comes from outside of them and few needs can be met by their own efforts (SCMV., p. 69).

Religion: "Any system of thought and action shared by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion" (PAR., p. 20).

Symbiosis: Describes a relationship in which one person attaches himself to a host person and by a process of psychological fusion attempts to become a part of the host person (THOM., p. 104).

Incestuous Symbiosis: This is the deepest level of regression in the incestuous fixation syndrome (THOM., p. 101).

The Matriarchal Principle: A concept originated by J. J. Bachofen who held that strong maternal values of life, unity, and peace developed in societies in which maternal rule was dominant (TSS., p. 50).



The Patriarchal Principle: A concept emerging from societies ruled by fathers (patriarchal) in which the father's values of law, order, and hierarchy are stressed (TSS., p. 50).

The Productive Orientation: "Productiveness is man's ability to use his powers and to realize the potentialities inherent in him" (SCMV., p. 72).

The Progressive Solution: This positive action on the part of man to establish harmony by the full development of his human powers stands in contrast to the regressive position whereby man seeks to find peace by means of escape (THOM., p. 118).

The Regressive Answer: In seeking a solution to the problems of his existence man can be freed of his loneliness and uncertainty by trying to return to mother, to nature, or to his ancestors (THOM., p. 118).