CHAPTER FOUR

The Theological Worlds Inventory: Discovering One's Self and One's Congregation

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There are five parts to this Inventory: I. Introduction; II. Inventory; III. Self-Rating Description; IV. Self-Scoring Sheet; V. Evaluation of Each World. Instructions will be given in each part.

I. INTRODUCTION: THE MEANING OF A THEOLOGICAL WORLD

Because we alone of all creatures can ask "Why?" we are unique. But because our answers are often unclear, we never know with certainty who we are or what we are to do. This is what makes life a struggle for meaning. Whether we recognize it or not, then, we are functional theologians, beginning months before our birth.

Rather than reflecting a perspective decided in advance, most often our answers are working assumptions carved out unconsciously through the process of living. Thus the World that results as home is often unknown to the self. There are as many Worlds as there are persons. Yet these individual Worlds overlap, forming communities—latent and manifest. Those with whom we share a World are those whom we can understand almost intuitively, able even to finish their sentences for them. There are other persons, however, with whom we live Worlds apart. These are not only the ones we have difficulty understanding, but with whom it is difficult to find a point of contact. My research has identified five such Worlds, serving as a typology of pure possibilities.

A World results from the interaction between two poles. The first is one's *obsessio*, that lived question, need, ache, or dilemma, which has its teeth into us at the deepest level. Other concerns are variations on that basic theme, standing in line behind its importance. The second pole is one's *epiphania*, that which through one or more events, moments, and/or persons brings sufficient illumination, satisfaction, or healing to provide a lived answer worth wagering one's

life upon. One's *epiphania* is what touches promisingly one's *obsessio*, either as fact or as hope.

The dynamic establishing one's World, then, is this ongoing interaction of *obsessio* and *epiphania*. One's disposition is determined by whether this dynamic is seen more from the perspective of one's *obsessio*, or if the *epiphania* is the more weighted pole. Whichever, each knows itself only in relation to the other.

Christianity does not create yet another World. Rather, those who affirm Jesus of Nazareth as *epiphania* for their World do so because of the healing pattern of meaning resulting from its unique engagement with one's concrete *obsessio*. Thus there are as many Christian Worlds as there are Christians. But they also converge in communities, resulting in five Christian variations on the themes of the universal theological Worlds.

One's theological World, then, tends to be unconscious, unknown, and/or unrecognized. Therefore, theological growth begins with first discerning the World in which one is living. This *Theological Worlds Inventory* is designed to assist in that task. As a vehicle for articulating one's theology self-consciously, it can lead one to explore what it means to live more faithfully within one's World, help sense if one's World is stifling and in need of abandonment for another one, and help one enter into dialogue with members of other theological Worlds.

II. THE THEOLOGICAL WORLDS INVENTORY

Instructions

For *each* of the following questions, choose the answer which fits you best and put a "3" next to that answer. For the same question, choose the answer that is second best for you and put a "2" next to that answer. Then choose the answer that fits third best and put a "1" next to that answer. Respond honestly to as many as you can. If a question, or its options, makes no sense to you, omit it. There are no right or wrong answers as such. An answer is "correct" if it reflects your *own* feelings. It is "wrong" if it reflects either what you *think* you should prefer, or what you *guess* may lead to a particular outcome for the Inventory. In answering, let your mind roam quickly over your life experiences. Remember your own joys and struggles, as early as you can. Let your answer characterize the "feel" of life for you over the "long haul."

1. My uneasiness increases when I feel:
_____ a. out of control
_____ b. tempted
_____ c. disconnected
_____ d. exhausted
_____ e. empty, rootless

2. Life for me is a:
_____ a. mysterious pilgrimage
_____ b. basic right
_____ c. courageous act
_____ d. new gift
_____ e. quest for self-fulfillment

3. My spiritual life is best characterized as:
_____ a. requesting forgiveness with empty hands
_____ b. meditating on ideals for my life
_____ c. praying for others
_____ d. contemplating, centering, uniting with
_____ e. ascetic, strength for the dark night

4. A scripture passage with which I can identify is:
_____ a. "We can rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance."
_____ b. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."
_____ c. "Thou hast made us but a little lower than the angels."
_____ d. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them."
_____ e. "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

5. I tend to view death as:
_____ a. a reality to be faced steadfastly
_____ b. deserved and rightful
_____ c. a foe to be resisted
_____ d. opening to another world
_____ e. part of life's rhythm

6. The human condition is most characterized by:
_____ a. alienation

_____ b. pain
_____ c. personal guilt
_____ d. injustice
_____ e. invisibility

7. I am renewed when I experience:
_____ a. awe, wonder
_____ b. exoneration, justice
_____ c. fullness, self-worth
_____ d. humility, forgiveness
_____ e. compassion, integrity

8. When things are not going well, I sometimes feel:
_____ a. condemned
_____ b. powerless
_____ c. isolated
_____ d. shut out
_____ e. victimized

9. Who is Jesus?
_____ a. suffering companion
_____ b. disclosure of that which is not recognized
_____ c. a definitive human word about who God is
_____ d. God's definitive word about who we are
_____ e. foretaste of what is promised to be

10. When I experience limitations, I tend to:
_____ a. feel overwhelmed, passive
_____ b. become arrogant, self-serving
_____ c. act judgmentally, sometime violently
_____ d. feel impotent, hollow
_____ e. feel exiled, separated, rejected

11. To improve things, my efforts should focus on changing:
_____ a. structures
_____ b. attitudes
_____ c. beliefs
_____ d. relationships
_____ e. perspectives about the whole

12. That which I find painfully real in life is:
_____ a. conflict
_____ b. disappointment
_____ c. shallowness
_____ d. isolation
_____ e. judgment

13. "Center stage" for making sense out of my existence is:
_____ a. the cosmos
_____ b. the self
_____ c. the demonic
_____ d. history
_____ e. life itself

14. What is most likely to disrupt life?
_____ a. seduction
_____ b. institutions
_____ c. weariness
_____ d. homelessness
_____ e. self-doubt

15. I tend to focus on:
_____ a. elsewhere
_____ b. past
_____ c. future
_____ d. expansive present
_____ e. each day as it comes

16. I have been haunted by a sense of:
_____ a. emptiness, worthlessness
_____ b. longing
_____ c. being at fault
_____ d. being threadbare
_____ e. anger

17. Life is a joy when I feel:
_____ a. vindicated
_____ b. loved
_____ c. at rest

_____ d. harmony / unity
_____ e. cleansed

18. An image for "home" is:
_____ a. tomorrow
_____ b. spring housecleaning
_____ c. a day off
_____ d. a room of my own
_____ e. the ocean

19. In my life I have struggled most with feeling:
_____ a. unimportant, worthless, trivial, undeveloped
_____ b. guilty, sinful, incompetent, wrong
_____ c. separated, homeless, adrift, lonely
_____ d. used, hopeless, fragile, futility
_____ e. competition, injustice, inequality, exploitation

20. What tends to give you hope?
_____ a. changes in this world that will make it better
_____ b. support that encourages me to become who I am
_____ c. experiences that hint of the meaning of the whole
_____ d. trust in God's graciousness
_____ e. divine companionship to see it through together

21. I can best contribute to the Reign of God by:
_____ a. fighting for the oppressed
_____ b. being obedient to God's will
_____ c. standing with the rejected
_____ d. maximizing the potentialities in me and others
_____ e. striving for harmony between nature and humans

22. When I am not at my best, I can feel:
_____ a. trapped
_____ b. wandering
_____ c. driven
_____ d. wrong
_____ e. unfocused

23. The rhythm that best describes conversion for me is from:
_____ a. guilt to pardon

_____ b. suffering to integrity
_____ c. alienation to homecoming
_____ d. nothingness to self-identity
_____ e. oppression to liberation

24. I invest much time in efforts to:
_____ a. discover myself
_____ b. forgive myself
_____ c. realize myself
_____ d. give of myself
_____ e. be true to myself

25. The words best describing the human condition are:
_____ a. wanderer, orphan, stranger
_____ b. victim, wounded, undone
_____ c. self-doubt, impotence, ache
_____ d. duplicity, selfishness, forbidden fruit
_____ e. enslaved, oppressed, violent

26. Freedom means:
_____ a. no hunger or thirst for anyone
_____ b. going home
_____ c. a chance to start over
_____ d. to outlast
_____ e. to lose self-doubt in becoming who I am

27. How does reconciliation with God occur?
_____ a. By entering the world, God conquers the forces opposing us
_____ b. Christ pays the price for our sin
_____ c. In following Jesus, we come to a closer relationship with God
_____ d. There are moments in which the veil is lifted, and we belong
_____ e. God identifies with us as companion through it all

28. Which pair of words best describes the dynamic of living?
_____ a. emptiness / fulfillment
_____ b. suffering / endurance
_____ c. separation / reunion
_____ d. conflict / vindication
_____ e. condemnation / forgiveness

29. In reflecting on my past, I remember times of feeling:
_____ a. invisible
_____ b. tempted
_____ c. engulfed
_____ d. powerless
_____ e. lost

30. Evangelism is effective if someone:
_____ a. is awakened to try
_____ b. encounters the plight of the oppressed
_____ c. finds the courage to persevere
_____ d. senses the priority of being over doing
_____ e. is brought to belief

31. God is the One who:
_____ a. brings into deeper harmony
_____ b. takes sides
_____ c. lures forth possibilities
_____ d. atones for us
_____ e. experiences our needs with us

32. Why do good?
_____ a. to make amends for my actions
_____ b. in response to the kindness and encouragement I have received
_____ c. power and energy overflowing from deep within
_____ d. empathy with others
_____ e. to fight injustice

33. I am afraid lest in the end:
_____ a. I might give up
_____ b. There won't be anything more
_____ c. Things will not have been made better
_____ d. I will be unliked/unwanted
_____ e. I will be found wrong

34. I identify with:
_____ a. Israel's forty years braving the desert
_____ b. Sara who was barren

_____ c. Adam and Eve who became homesick for Eden
_____ d. Peter who betrayed
_____ e. Moses who ran away from taking the hard stands

35. A noble purpose for my life would be to:
_____ a. evoke harmony
_____ b. obey God
_____ c. fight the good fight
_____ d. persevere with integrity
_____ e. respect each person as sacred

36. Jesus is best understood as:
_____ a. pioneer, prophet
_____ b. threshold, model
_____ c. companion, sympathizer
_____ d. illuminator, evoker
_____ e. savior, Lord

37. The problem with so many of us is that we don't:
_____ a. risk
_____ b. last
_____ c. care
_____ d. know
_____ e. confess

38. Who is the Christ?
_____ a. redeemer
_____ b. Messiah
_____ c. revealer
_____ d. suffering servant
_____ e. teacher/example

39. One needs to focus on:
_____ a. the long run
_____ b. depth
_____ c. breadth
_____ d. motivation
_____ e. goal

40. As I understand suffering:
_____ a. it can become an instrument in personal discovery
_____ b. it is wrong, to be fought
_____ c. God's ways are not our ways
_____ d. it is part of life
_____ e. it can be a testing or penance

41. Faith is trusting in:
_____ a. the future as promise
_____ b. the unknown
_____ c. a new beginning
_____ d. me
_____ e. the inevitable

42. I could be faulted for expecting:
_____ a. too much
_____ b. to lose
_____ c. to be inadequate
_____ d. to be wrong
_____ e. too little

43. I am drawn by picturing Jesus:
_____ a. alone with God in the mountains in prayer
_____ b. with the woman at the well
_____ c. overcoming temptation in the desert
_____ d. casting out the money changers
_____ e. agonizing in Gethsemane

44. Life entails:
_____ a. guilt to be removed
_____ b. victory to be won
_____ c. mystery to be unveiled
_____ d. duty to be lived
_____ e. fulfillment to be realized

45. Which of these activities would make you feel alive?
_____ a. experiencing reconciliation after a bitter fight
_____ b. helping a homeless family

_____ c. doing a retreat in the mountains
_____ d. having deep meal conversation with a friend
_____ e. being acknowledged by friends at work

46. Redemption for me comes from experiencing Jesus as:
_____ a. nurturer
_____ b. comrade
_____ c. liberator
_____ d. illuminator
_____ e. savior

47. When things get difficult, in order to survive I sometimes:
_____ a. turn secret
_____ b. turn away
_____ c. turn off
_____ d. turn inward
_____ e. go away

48. I live life as if it has about it the feel of:
_____ a. fantasy, mystery
_____ b. tragedy
_____ c. lyric poetry
_____ d. pathos
_____ e. "comedy" (successful resolution)

49. Relationships sometime become strained because of:
_____ a. intensity, heaviness
_____ b. reluctance to venture
_____ c. failure, selfishness
_____ d. factors external to the relation
_____ e. misunderstandings in communication

50. God is the One who:
_____ a. identifies with us
_____ b. forgives us personally
_____ c. promises a new earth
_____ d. draws us into union
_____ e. adopts us as family

51. One must learn how to deal with:
_____ a. one cause at a time
_____ b. one world at a time
_____ c. one day at a time
_____ d. one life at a time
_____ e. one episode at a time

52. A biblical image that appeals to me is:
_____ a. Jesus and the woman accused of adultery
_____ b. Job's patient strength in adversity
_____ c. The Emmaus reunion
_____ d. Exodus to the Promised Land
_____ e. The thief forgiven on the cross

53. I need:
_____ a. approval
_____ b. strength
_____ c. to experience myself as part of a greater Whole
_____ d. to become worthy
_____ e. to have a cause

54. I can identify with the Psalmist who said:
_____ a. "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God."
_____ b. "Parent of the parentless and protector of widows, you lead out the prisoners to freedom."
_____ c. "In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, 'til the storms pass by."
_____ d. "Too heavy for us are our offenses, but you wipe them away."
_____ e. "You have made us little less than a god; with glory and honor you have crowned us."

55. Sin is:
_____ a. a condition that defines us even before we act
_____ b. misdirected good
_____ c. part of life's struggles
_____ d. closing one's eyes to the mystery
_____ e. compromising too soon

56. The ideal Christian is a:
_____ a. martyr
_____ b. saint
_____ c. witness
_____ d. visionary
_____ e. spiritual mentor

57. My experience of sin is:
_____ a. unrealized potential
_____ b. separation
_____ c. indifference
_____ d. perversity
_____ e. weakening

58. The gospel means:
_____ a. remaining faithful to the end
_____ b. denying myself for others
_____ c. giving myself for a cause
_____ d. learning to love myself
_____ e. losing myself in God

59. It is fine to:
_____ a. enjoy
_____ b. try
_____ c. begin again
_____ d. soar
_____ e. win

60. A worthy end for my life would be:
_____ a. to reunite with all of life
_____ b. to change the way things are
_____ c. to endure, with integrity
_____ d. to become a whole person
_____ e. to do good

61. Christian experience centers in:
_____ a. "mystic" oneness
_____ b. focused growth
_____ c. strength to persevere

_____ d. common cause
_____ e. new birth

62. It is important for persons to:
_____ a. get in touch with their feelings
_____ b. keep on keeping on
_____ c. confess their shortcomings
_____ d. risk the unknown
_____ e. get involved

63. A group of words that characterizes Christ's work is:
_____ a. vision, victory, completion
_____ b. justification, reprieve, salvation
_____ c. survival, sojourner, companion
_____ d. unity, homecoming, oneness
_____ e. model, wholeness, freedom to be

III. THE THEOLOGICAL WORLDS DESCRIPTION AND SELF-RATING

Instructions

Before scoring the inventory you have just taken, read the descriptions of the five Theological Worlds below. Then put the number "1" next to the World that best fits your perspective, a "2" next to the one that fits second best, and so on, through all five descriptions. This will give you an opportunity to select a World and give an order of preference for the other Worlds. A comparison of your choices here with your scores (as determined in Section IV) will help indicate your degree of theological self-awareness.

____ WORLD ONE: SEPARATION AND REUNION

For inhabitants of this World, there is often a sense of abandonment. Within this huge cosmos, we feel isolated, small, lonely, a speck in a vast and staggering space. At times we seem to be aliens, or orphans. Life tends to be a quest to understand the mystery of this Whole. Our longing is to find our way home, as it were. We yearn wistfully for a harmony to all things, while being haunted by the sad thought that there may be nothing behind it all. Resolution as the promise of homecoming can begin through experiencing the fact of our existence as itself a gift. In sensing this mystery of being, one can

be touched with awe. Such sensitivity often comes in sacramental moments in which we are grasped in oneness with the ground of our being. It is as if a veil is lifted, if only for a moment, and we know that we truly do belong. Such moments serve as center point for the turning wheel, the unchanging in the changing, the eternal in the flux.

The cycle of nature reflects, almost liturgically, the cycle of life itself: birth, death, rebirth. Experiences of this ongoing rhythm are foretastes of a hoped-for cosmic harmony, that final reunion of everything that is separated. Even on this side, touches of paradise can be sensed around us. It is when we do not understand this, or forget, that we get in the way. But we are nonetheless bitten by eternity, so that neither this life nor this earth can ever really feel like home. The meaning of our craving is to return from whence we came, losing ourselves in God. Day by day authenticity is in becoming transparent to that God, living so that we point beyond ourselves to the Power of Being in which we are all grounded.

____ WORLD TWO: CONFLICT AND VINDICATION

In this World, history and its various institutions are tainted with self-interest. Conflict seems to be at the heart of life, even of nature, with many persons deprived of the means needed for living. Wherever one turns, the scene is a drama of winners and losers. Death is the final enemy, symbolizing the hostility that resists the crucial goal of humanizing this world. The foe is widespread, for even the cosmos is beset by entropy, so that such hemorrhaging seems to give to each part a sense of being violated. Thus threatened by the possibility of chaos, persons are tempted to grasp for power, escalating into a threat of nuclear destruction. Nations seem willing to "bring it all down" rather than lose. At one level or another, then, one keeps being pushed into being a warrior or a victim. Our reaction is often one of anger, sometimes even rage. Reform is called for, even rebellion. Yet even though one is determined to change the world, such efforts sometimes feel like a never ending defeat.

Hope for resolution is rooted in the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, to be realized as liberation within history. In Shakespeare's words "all's well that ends well." Otherwise, history is "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Since death in all forms is God's foe, resurrection provides promise

not only to the individual but to history itself. In behalf of that goal, God takes sides, being committed to the poor, the captive, the blind, and the oppressed—and so must we. God calls us to be cocreators in this completion of creation. History will be vindicated by its completion, flowing back to give meaning to each part as means to that end. "Thy Kingdom come on earth, as it already is in heaven." One way to work toward that vision is to live as if the end were already here. Such hope in the God of the future makes us never satisfied with what is. This is why the prophet believes in a hope worth dying for.

____ WORLD THREE: EMPTINESS AND FULFILLMENT

Those who inhabit this World are concerned with the self, for the dilemma that has taken hold of them is self-estrangement. One is uneasy that "if people really knew me, they wouldn't like me. It isn't so much that I'm bad, it's as if there may not be much there. If my mask were to slip, it would all be over. But perhaps that wouldn't change things much after all, since often no one seems to care." The problem for many of us in this World is that often we are made to feel invisible, impotent, unheard, or insignificant. We are afterthoughts, like outcasts, as it were. And inside there is this emptiness, a void, an ache that resides in one's mid-section—the fear of being nobody, which in turn hinders action for fear of being rejected. "So I try to be who others want me to be, until I don't know who I am. And yet still, I don't belong. My life seems like a deception, as I become increasingly alienated even from myself. The result is a paralysis, an aimlessness, a floundering—trapped by myself within myself. My reward is a strange comfort in inertia, where it is too late for action, too soon for regrets."

Resolution begins by being awakened to one's possibilities, usually by the support and promise of a caring friend or group. In being accepted, one is lured toward wholeness and fulfillment. For the Christian, such meaning emerges not only through the nurture of a Christian community, but through the One who in scripture models life as giving and receiving love. In being loved for who I am, I can be and can become my true self. Knowing from within that real selfhood means to love and be loved, I am empowered to realize my potential. Such faith involves believing in myself so that I dare to feel again, unable to love others if I do not love myself. The delicious mystery of living is growth, expansiveness, fulfillment—the dynamic of

redeemed life. It entails a cycle that nature models for us. Death is part of the life process, just as rebirth is part of the death process. Throughout, the focus is self-discovery, self-growth, self-risk. Therein God is not distant, but experienced as present in a world that becomes friendly in its orderliness and hospitable in its potentiality.

____ WORLD FOUR: CONDEMNATION AND FORGIVENESS

This World is characterized by the struggle with temptation and sin. Within each of us is a tendency toward arrogance, to play god by idolizing who we are and what we possess. While we prefer to see our questionable behavior as rooted in ignorance, more often than not we deliberately choose what is wrong, often because it is "forbidden fruit." In the silent hours, it is hard to quiet a sense of guilt, evoked often by fear of judgment. We can feel like fugitives. This condition has to do not simply with what we do, but with an inner disposition. In trying to change, we experience an impotence to be otherwise, as if we are diseased. It is as though there is a deep need within me to justify my life, to convince myself and others that I am worthy of being alive. Thus life becomes an unending chore to be done. Yet I can never do enough, and so this drive flirts heavily with self-deception—in regarding myself as being far better than I am. But the truth is that the good I want to do, I don't do; and what I shouldn't want to do is precisely what I end up doing. So I am caught, with even my efforts at selflessness being selfishly motivated.

Since I cannot get out of my own way, resolution becomes possible only through God's intervention, centering in the gift of forgiveness. Repentance, leading to conversion, exhibits faith as trust that we have received reprieve, even though in no way do we deserve it. In spite of our unacceptability, God adopts us, not simply as children, but as heirs of life eternal. This is why the word "grace" is so important, for the gospel is the miracle of the empty hands. The Christian's life is one of paradox in which God forgives the unforgivable, loves the unlovable, and accepts the unacceptable. Our call is to respond in faithful obedience to this proclamation. Emphasis is not on self-realization but on self-sacrifice. Good works are done not in order to receive, but are spontaneous and joyous responses to being already justified by God's graciousness. Thus life becomes the ongoing pendulum between repentance and forgiveness, characterized by thankful humility.

____ WORLD FIVE: SUFFERING AND ENDURANCE

The dilemma that focuses life for citizens of this World is life itself, the way things are. There is a heaviness to daily living, so that it seems that whatever can go wrong, will. And whatever was troublesome yesterday will surely happen again and again. While the characters and settings change, the plot remains basically the same, as variations on the theme of "victim." Whether the examples are a poor person who knows deprivation from without, or a successful one who is being eaten by cancer from within, there is the same sense of being engulfed, controlled, wronged—as if a refugee. Suffering is the one constant, the sign of living near the edge. Unable to exist without being scarred, one often feels like life is a predator. So one is tempted not to feel anymore, to trade in trying for a cynical fatigue. Worn down in one's courageous fortitude, distrust is often the best defense against being done in. This is a hard world, one not readily chosen, for sadness edges even the joys.

Although one cannot really change the way things are, one does have a choice of how to live life. Resolution, ironically, can come through suffering, as a refining fire, as it were. Travail, rightly faced, can bring healing, in which integrity is birthed. Integrity is a determined willingness to outlast, to persevere, no matter what. Spirit is that strange power which strengthens one to press on, even when one can think of no better reason than just keeping on keeping on. For the Christian, such faithfulness, no matter what the consequences, is rooted in the belief that we are not in it alone. Because the companion God is suffering with us, we can endure to the end. On Golgotha, God screams in agony with us, drinking deeply of all that we too go through. Therefore nothing can separate us from the love of such a God.

Redeemed life has little to do with grand designs or miraculous reversals. It is the integrity born of tenacity on the daily road, respecting the small and the commonplace. A knowing glance and a sharing hand are the manna which feed. What gives dignity to life is the quality of never quitting, facing without deception whatever happens so that it becomes a moral victory. What matters is not the quantity of life but the quality of living. Thus life is to be drunk to the dregs, for one only goes around once. This can be done if one takes life "one day at a time."

IV. SELF-SCORING THE THEOLOGICAL WORLDS INVENTORY

Instructions

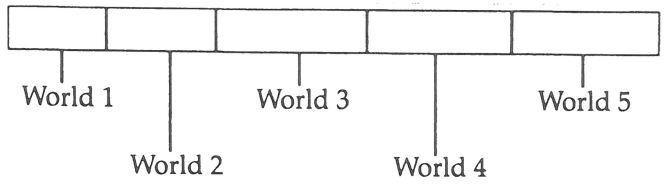
Transfer your responses to each question onto this page. Note that the letters a, b, c, d, e are NOT in alphabetical order. Then total each column. The highest number indicates the theological World which most fits you; the second highest indicates the second best fit, and so forth. Compare the results with your "Self-Rating."

1.	c____;	a____;	e____;	b____;	d____
2.	a____;	b____;	e____;	d____;	c____
3.	d____;	c____;	b____;	a____;	e____
4.	e____;	d____;	c____;	b____;	a____
5.	d____;	c____;	e____;	b____;	a____
6.	a____;	d____;	e____;	c____;	b____
7.	a____;	b____;	c____;	d____;	e____
8.	c____;	b____;	d____;	a____;	e____
9.	b____;	e____;	c____;	d____;	a____
10.	e____;	c____;	d____;	b____;	a____
11.	e____;	a____;	d____;	c____;	b____
12.	d____;	a____;	c____;	e____;	b____
13.	a____;	d____;	b____;	c____;	e____
14.	d____;	b____;	e____;	a____;	c____
15.	a____;	c____;	d____;	b____;	e____
16.	b____;	e____;	a____;	c____;	d____
17.	d____;	a____;	b____;	e____;	c____
18.	e____;	a____;	d____;	b____;	c____
19.	c____;	e____;	a____;	b____;	d____
20.	c____;	a____;	b____;	d____;	e____
21.	e____;	a____;	d____;	b____;	c____
22.	b____;	c____;	e____;	d____;	a____
23.	c____;	e____;	d____;	a____;	b____
24.	a____;	d____;	c____;	b____;	e____
25.	a____;	e____;	c____;	d____;	b____
26.	b____;	a____;	e____;	c____;	d____
27.	d____;	a____;	c____;	b____;	e____

28. c____; d____; a____; e____; b____
29. e____; d____; a____; b____; c____
30. d____; b____; a____; e____; c____
31. a____; b____; c____; d____; e____
32. c____; e____; b____; a____; d____
33. b____; c____; d____; e____; a____
34. c____; e____; b____; d____; a____
35. a____; c____; e____; b____; d____
36. d____; a____; b____; e____; c____
37. d____; c____; a____; e____; b____
38. c____; b____; e____; a____; d____
39. b____; e____; c____; d____; a____
40. c____; b____; a____; e____; d____
41. b____; a____; d____; c____; e____
42. a____; b____; c____; d____; e____
43. a____; d____; b____; c____; e____
44. c____; b____; e____; a____; d____
45. c____; b____; e____; a____; d____
46. d____; c____; a____; e____; b____
47. e____; b____; d____; a____; c____
48. a____; e____; c____; b____; d____
49. e____; d____; b____; c____; a____
50. d____; c____; e____; b____; a____
51. b____; a____; d____; e____; c____
52. c____; d____; a____; e____; b____
53. c____; e____; a____; d____; b____
54. a____; b____; e____; d____; c____
55. d____; e____; b____; a____; c____
56. e____; d____; b____; c____; a____
57. b____; c____; a____; d____; e____
58. e____; c____; d____; b____; a____
59. d____; e____; a____; c____; b____
60. a____; b____: d____; e____; c____
61. a____; d____; b____; e____; c____

62. d____; e____; a____; c____; b____
63. d____; a____; e____; b____; c____

TOTAL:



World 1: Separation and Reunion
World 2: Conflict and Vindication
World 3: Emptiness and Fulfillment
World 4: Condemnation and Forgiveness
World 5: Suffering and Endurance

V. THEOLOGICAL WORLDS: AN EVALUATION

Each theological World can be a valid arena in which to live, move, and have one's being. No one World, as such, is better or more true than another. Neither can these Worlds be arranged so as to view some as elementary, others as more mature. The first task enabled by this inventory is to identify the World in which you already live. The result may be a feeling of satisfaction, for your self-identity may be as you would want. Thus you are ready to understand that World more coherently, furnish it more fully, articulate and share it more fluently, and live it more faithfully. Or you may be surprised by the result and enjoy exploring that World. On the other hand, you might receive the description of your self-identity with negative feelings. This might mean that you are living in an inherited World rather than residing in your own home. Or you may be living your World at its weak edges. Or, in seeing your World rendered self-conscious, you may begin to experience it as suffocating or inhibiting, inviting the honesty of crisis.

Whichever your reaction, the next task is to explore the alternative Worlds. This may be done for several reasons. It can enrich your own World by incorporating coherently dimensions of the others. It may well test the viability of other Worlds as the beginning of your own conversion. It can help you understand better other persons, and

why you and they interact as you do. It can help to provide a profile for a particular congregation, giving clues to its inner dynamics. Or it may provide the base for restructuring your church.

What follows is an invitation to begin such a dialogue, indicating a few of the strengths and weaknesses possible within each World.

WORLD ONE: SEPARATION AND REUNION

Strength: Persons inhabiting this World are attracted by wholeness and harmony, valuing the inclusiveness of all. The cosmos and nature share this organic and mysterious totality. There is a quiet and often patient acceptance of human foibles by placing things within this larger perspective. There is a tendency to be sacramental, whether in the formal sense or through delight in participating in the rhythms of nature. Whichever, meaning is celebrated in the simple gift of existing. Although life is often experienced in terms of polarities or dualities, ultimately these are unreal. Unity is rooted in God, in whom we live and move and have our being. Because God, as all in all, grounds and holds all things in being, it is possible to transcend the separation of subject and object in contemplation and the mystic experience. This may make one sympathetic to Eastern thought in particular and the unity of all religions in general. The basic posture in this World is to stand before life as mystery, invited to live as a reverent guest. The Reign of God means the unifying of all things in God, experienced now in foretaste, as moments of transparency. In such timeless moments, one is touched by the still point of the turning wheel. Ethics emerge from this organic vision, ecologically sensitive that "in as much as you do it to the least of these, you do it to me."

Weakness: Mystic experience can undercut the passion for action. Becoming resigned to the rhythms of separation and reunion, one can overlook destructive problems by seeing them as relatively insignificant from the perspective of eternity. Social, economic, and political dimensions of life can be treated as if they are not fully real. Since harmony is intuited as cyclic rather than linear, history can take on an uneasy status, or be reduced to inevitable pattern. Furthermore, the propensity to see things symbolically can undercut the concreteness of life, with transparency sacrificing the uniqueness of each thing. Individuals in this World tend to feel alone, and as a neglected minority in modern society can be encouraged to adopt an individualistic posture toward life and others.

WORLD TWO: CONFLICT AND VINDICATION

Strength: Persons who reside in this World tend to be committed to issues of justice and freedom. They are often willing to risk personal security and gain in order to join God in the fight for vindication of what is right. This leads many to protest against the individualism and privatization characterizing current life in the United States. They appreciate the physical ingredients of common day existence, which accounts in part for their anger when the necessities of life are denied to anyone. There is a firm awareness of the corporate nature of life, and thus of the degree to which evil is basically systemic. These people tend to have a finely honed social conscience and are committed to the cost of discipleship.

Weakness: Often such persons have a difficult time enjoying life, drawn to "doing" far more than to "being." Not only are they often driven people, but there is a tendency to regard things more as means than ends. They live more for the future than the present. As a result, there can be a shallow and nonspiritual activism, on the one hand, or, on the other, a sacrifice of relationships in behalf of results. Ironically, passion for one's particular cause does not always bring with it a sensitivity to other oppressions. Anger against death can lead to an avoidance of death. There can be a cleavage between humans and nature, bringing an insensitivity that sacrifices the ecological whole to a rectification of economic impoverishment. Furthermore, the emphasis on corporate and systemic injustice can be made so central that the sin residing deeply in the self may be neglected. Likewise, concern for people can lead to a neglect of the person. Self-righteousness can also be a temptation, leading one to simplify issues by dividing groups into "good" and "bad." This can result in crusades, where the means for victory can contradict the values entertained as goals. Finally, this emphasis on goals can lead to utopianism, both in program and in personal calling, leading to burnout and/or capitulation.

WORLD THREE: EMPTINESS AND FULFILLMENT

Strength: There is a keen sensitivity in this World to how socialization can scar and marginalize the person. Inhabitants of this World understand how individuals can be lost in any structure, resulting in the self being alienated from itself. They tend to have a healthy regard for *eros:* for vitality, for feelings, for deep sharing, for a lyric love of living. Dualism is opposed, insisting, for example, on inte-

grating right and left brain thinking, and regarding mind and body as a whole. This World is populated with persons whose eyes are honed to see possibilities, becoming awakened to one's environment as positive and hopeful. "Becoming" is a key term, with growth regarded as the natural state of things. The precious moments are often characterized by a lyric childlikeness, fascinated with the new and imaginative.

Weakness: In the passion for fulfillment, there can be a tendency to neglect or even exclude persons who are not part of one's support. There can be excessive pride in one's stage of "maturity," needing the "less enlightened" with whom to compare oneself. Because citizens of this World are often from more privileged classes, there is a tendency to overlook the negative impact of systems and the need to use power in changing dehumanizing systems. Seeing life in terms of potential, there can be a tendency to identify "winners" with personal effort, "losers" with failing to try enough. Finally, the optimism often characterizing this World can lead to a discounting of one's shadow side, blind to one's own motivations for advantage even when denying all interest in power.

WORLD FOUR: CONDEMNATION AND FORGIVENESS

Strength: Residents of this World have the courage to look at human duplicity without illusion. They see a powerful case for God in the destructive spectacle of humans playing god in the very act of denying God. Evidence of the Fall is this universal human pretentiousness. What needs to be heard is the good news that God's grace is free and available to those who repent of their arrogance and ask for forgiveness. Whereas conversion can be once and for all, there continues to be a need for ongoing confession and forgiveness, over and over. Christian life is characterized by humility, in knowing that one is sustained by grace. The response called for is one of faithful obedience, rooted in a strong distinction between good and evil and in a committed discipleship of self-denial.

Weakness: There can be a tendency for the individual in this World to be guilt-ridden. Thus one may be tempted also to put guilt trips on others. Either way, incapacitating self-images can result. Stress on sin can be so strong that it blurs whatever motives, capacities, and degrees of goodness may be present, even undercutting morality in society. In portraying the "new birth" in terms of a heavy

contrast between before and after, one's inevitable shortcomings can be driven inward, creating a secret life of deception, sometimes from oneself, but certainly from others. Relatedly, the distinction between believer and nonbeliever can be so graphically drawn that rather than confessing one's shortcomings, one may be tempted to project them onto others, in acts of righteous superiority. This can occur not only in personal living, but in establishing political, economic, and national dualisms which too easily identify one's own position with God's. Such idolatry can encourage use of force to keep the "unrighteous" from prevailing. Emphasis upon response can render justification by faith, ironically, into a new form of works-righteousness, known as the Protestant work ethic, in which one is driven to prove one's worth. There can be a tendency to surround the offer of God's free and unmerited grace with so many conditions that it is no longer free.

WORLD FIVE: SUFFERING AND ENDURANCE

Strength: Residents of this World have a keen discernment of the way things are, and what it means to live as the leftovers of others. This sensitivity can bring a deep empathy for others. There is a tendency to be tenacious, strong, and shrewd, committed to living with a special brand of homey integrity. Deep loyalty and dependability for its own sake can become second nature, with a capacity to outlast with long suffering. These are the ones who remain for the long haul. They are often surprisingly open in sharing what they have, being more concerned for the quality of the little than the quantity of the much.

Weakness: Although these are the salt of the earth, the salt can lose its savor—by becoming strung out, overextended, or burned-out. Thus around the edges can lurk the shadows of depression or immobilization, even a tinge of masochism. For inhabitants of this World, closure and resolution are difficult to achieve. Also apathy toward change can become a defense mechanism. There can be a tendency to squander everything in an irrational moment, either of respite, or of gambling on a miraculous reversal. Because this World rests on life as unchanging, remaining basically what it was, is, and always will be, a resident can be undone if a reversal does occur. In finding oneself in the "up position," one can be tempted to become judgmental, even intolerant, of those with whom one had formerly identified so deeply.