EARLY CHRISTIAN PREACHING, & OURS ---------- ELLIOTT #2161

These are some notes from my 10May87 presentation to clergy gathered at Cape Cod Hospital, looking toward the 10June87 followup when, using my #233 (A Self-Examination for Pastors: My Sanctional Range and Richness), individuals are to share their self-discoveries via-a-vis the whys of the whys, the incentives underneath the motivations: what moves me & why, & what I (un/consciously) use to move others & why.

1. What did I know, when did I know it, & what did I do about it (to use a current Washington-famous line of questioning)? In my middle teens, I came to know that God loves me-personally-as-well-as-along-with-the-rest-of-creation (not a transcendentalized narcissism but a shishkebab, axis-of-the-world-passing-through-me experience). It was that double sunrise of otherness we call puberty--the dawning of awareness of yearning with my whole being for the other that is human &, beyond that other & myself, the Other that is more than human, the Other who alone can explain me & my yearnings. What did I do about it? I witnessed to it; indeed, before the end of my highschool days, witnessing to it became the central passionate action of my life; & I sought & studied ways to move others toward centering in the Center I had been given as the gate of new life & the path of childhood into manhood toward sainthood, not without occasional twinges of messianism....In that brief account of my spiritual pilgrimage, notice the phrase "I sought & studied ways to move others toward centering" where I had been moved to center. Etymologically, a "<u>motive</u>" is something that "moves" me; & a "<u>sanction</u>" is something I use in hope of moving others. I seek & study ways to move the broken toward wholeness, the sick toward health, the sinner toward repentance, the confused toward some life-centering clarity, the aimless toward some reachable goal that can resurrect the sense of self-worth face to face with God, in whose presence our worthiness is impossible as task (Aufgabe) & granted as gift (Gabe).

2. Everybody has motives (motivations, un/conscious), & leaders use sanctions. Christians' motives are sublimely stated in the Lord's Prayer: We who seek to center in God through Jesus Christ all things within our control pray that so it will be with the whole world; for this, we ask for what we need, viz, what supports our life ("bread") as persons & as persons-in-relation ("forgive us"). Notice that our Lord gave this prayer outline to his disciple-apostles, ie, to Christian leaders, for whom--as the LP displays--it is impossible to disengage motives from sanctions; but in the historical context, Jesus taught <u>all</u> his followers, not just the Twelve, to pray that prayer--so it is, in this perspective, impossible to separate leaders from their followers, clergy from laity--though in institutional perspective, it is equally necessary to do so.

3. We Christians in general & we Christian leaders in particular are the living tradition of a way of believing & living that answers to the question WHAT do we think & do: that is the CONTENT of our faith & life. The equally important but less often addressed question is WHY? Why do we think & do as we think & do? Why do we believe & live as we believe & live? This is the <u>INTENT</u> behind and within the <u>CONTENT</u>. Decisions lie behind our beliefs & actions; motives lie behind those decisions; and sanctions lie behind those motives. If we are unaware of this sequence & process, we are to that extent unprepared to minister. But we need not be unprepared. Our Bible, esp. our NT, is prepared to prepare us--even without the help of modern psychology & sociology, even moreso with. #233 displays, by sanctional analysis, how the NT goes about this as itself the literature of the earliest Christian leaders as they sought to preach the Good News & live with the consequences, positive & negative, of their preaching & living. We shall look at the type, range, depth, & pattern of their <u>sanctions</u> (incentives, incitements, inducements, appeals, persuasives-&-dissuasives)--instead of looking at what is more often looked at, viz, their <u>differentia</u> (directions, commands, prohibitions). Ie, we shall look not at WHAT they said to believe & do, but at their WHY to the questions "Why should I/we believe & do what you are telling us to (ie, why be pious & good)"?