

"LOSTNESS" AND "SAVEDNESS" - presented by Willis E. Elliott, 11 June 69, to the committee of the NCC Faith and Order Colloquium, prepared during a meeting for public worship at the meeting's end

The doctrine of salvation is a double reflex - a continuous reflecting on the continuous saving action of God in Jesus Christ in church and world, and a continuous responding to particular shapes of lostness and savedness in our civilization, its cultures (life-styles and pluralistic communities). The first aims at understanding the mighty creative-redemptive acts of God yesterday and today; the second arises from and aims to inform and guide the evangelism-and-mission action of Christians and churches.

Both perspectives can be illumined by use of the first strophe of Is 61 (vv. 1-4) - taken up as the text in our Lord's only recorded sermon (Luke 4: 16-30), which uses images to describe both particular lostness and savedness.

## THE GOSPEL IS:

### 1. GOOD NEWS TO

What shape must the Good News take- what would appear as good news - to each of these poor?

### THE AFFLICTED POOR

What today, in America, are the shapes of afflicted poverty?

- the submarginal (economically) poor
- the older urban single women
- the Negro (as skin-discriminated)
- the black (as another culture)
- the black militant (as a rising rival power)
- the New Left
- pro-radical student
- the hippie
- the young conformist
- the pro-violent revolutionary
- the disillusioned non-violent actionist
- the ex-clergyman
- the rejected reconciler (eg. black or white integrationist excluded by the new separatism)
- the dislocated
- the out-of-action (sick, crippled, etc.)
- the hungry (Biafra, U.S., etc.)

### 2. BINDING UP

-Christ's presence in deteriorating communities

- rural
- hippie
- old-age dumping-grounds
- Indian American reservations
- ghettoes (urban)
- AA and similar support-communities
- reconciling dyads and groups
- the healing, joyful community

### THE BROKEN-HEARTED

What healings, from what diseases, are people now hoping for?

- new cities
- new friends
- urban redevelopment as a human process
- failures in the success society
- failures in altruistic action (civil rights, movements against white and black racism, etc)
- mental "illness"

### 3. LIBERATING (OPENING PRISONS OF)

- fellowship ministries
- revolution (nonviolent and violent)

### CAPTIVES (THE BOUND)

What are the prisons where men cry for deliverance?

- the social routine as reinforced by masscom
- overpopulation
- loneliness - lostness in mass society
- new and old tribalisms and provincialisms (ideologies, nationalisms.)

OVER

#### 4. OPENING THE EYES OF

#### THE BLIND

##### -education

- at all levels
- community and church
- universal continuing education
- first Amendment freedom and action:
  - local dialog on sensitive public issues
  - opening the mass media to the full range of positions on public issues and life-styles
- the church's witness against the world
- demonstrations
  - within the law
  - against particular laws

- the ignorant (as uneducated)
- the brainwashed (masscom)
  - political propaganda
  - economic propaganda (advertising)
- terrified
- the esthetically insensitive

#### 5. PROCLAIMING

#### REQUITAL (JUDGMENT - GRACE)

How "proclaim"?

- 
- 
- 
- para-professional services

- guilt, sick and healthy
- institutionalism (organization man, etc.)
- conservation (ecology)
- crime (social deterioration, divorce, etc.)

#### 6. COMFORTING

#### MOURNERS

Where is the New Eden?

- the alienated (death to one's past world - involving grief)
- fear of death
- fallenness (loss of "Eden")

#### 7. OCCASIONING

#### JOY, PRAISE, AND STRENGTH (THUS GLORIFYING GOD)

Peace with justice  
 Peaceful equivalents for war  
 -creative conflict  
 Liturgy

- anxiety
- uptight joylessness
- nervous, frenetic involvement in
  - commercialized entertainment
  - exhausting "leisure"
- the war-torn
- worship

#### 8. RECOVERING

#### A USABLE PAST

"....in remembrance of Me"  
 recovering from archaism (a past that uses, enslaves, us)  
 recovering from
 

- the tyranny of the present (TV psyche, etc)
- the tyranny of scientism (technological obsession)

- the amnesiac-
  - individual
  - group (church, etc.)

OVER