

"No man will ever be a martyr for a conclusion," wrote Wilbert Webster White, founder of what has become New York Theological Seminary. On another occasion, as he thought of the future of this institution, he spoke of "a crusade in teaching method...with the Bible central and illustrative," and the perpetual need to be so responsive to God's times "as to be willing to change" even radically in order to fulfill the mission "of theological education in general and this institution in particular."¹

The exciting tension which this pioneer brought to theological education derived from a double affirmation supervening over a double negative. The ethos of the school was biblical but not scribal (the Book was central without being the Center), scientific without being scientific (open to the spirit of the age, but without concession to its idolatry). This stance constitutes, in my opinion, both our noble tradition as a seminary and the intellectual basis for the present process of reshaping ourselves into a theological-studies center transcending the otiose images of theological education -- the image of the classroom-library trip, excluding the world: the image of the theological student as hung between "school" and "life" (as Church and/or world): and the image of the academic ladder, which dictates the homogeneous classroom, excluding the mixing, with seminarians, of laity and clergy.

I am saying that the present exciting open style of theological education at NYTS is faithful to the heritage of our institution both in spirit and in substance. For the Christian, faithfulness to the Lord supervenes over faithfulness to any institution; but it is an occasion of praise and joy when the two coincide. The current cultural disorders and dislocations of the human spirit, altering the posing of religious issues, do not find our tradition wanting in dedication to the biblical heritage or in the flexibility and openness this new age demands.

"Doing Theology"

Accordingly, NYTS takes very seriously the mood shift in young people from cerebration to action plus reflection. For this shift we use the phrase "doing theology," the verb having the feel of the shift itself as it is used, for example, in Joan Baez's husband David Harris' GOLIATH: "doing" means

"living" and therefore "being." Almost one and one-half centuries ago, Kierkegaard reflected the shift in his wry maxim, "Jesus died on the cross: theologians only talk about it." Theology limited to talk has brought Christianity into disrepute as weak (for grace is love in action) and irrelevant (for only that theology which is continually shaping faith at work has a chance to be relevant). "Theology" itself, when it is itself, is a verb -- something done and the doing of it. Because "Christian" is a verb -- the doing of the faith.

How give theological education this new shape?

In the past school year (1969-70) the students' vision, convictions, and opinions were taken more seriously than I have ever seen done before, or even heard of. In the senate, students had equal power with faculty. Students were free to suggest courses and even teachers, and to judge performance. The seminary property was not sacred: a course in "The Christian in the Changing City" met all over New York, only its first session being at 235 East 49th Street. A course in "The Holy in the Common" gave each student a chance to discern the working of God in his own life somewhere in the world and apply all his religious-theological knowledge, skills, and acumen to illumining that action -- the chief action of the course being the doing of theology in the situation of mission, "on the turf." Courses were available at times strange to traditional theological education: evenings and Saturdays -- as well as weekday mornings and afternoons. Instruction was not limited to the resident faculty: many of the teachers were drawn in from "the outside" because of their particular piece of the action of mission in the world. Toward the end of the year, it was agreed that students should participate in shaping the questions constituting their own examinations -- for education is a process of reshaping one's questions (with or without teacher-helpers) into better questions, answering, and then shaping the answers into still better questions -- an endless process that makes nonsense of the traditional feel of "graduation" as termination. Many students were in core groups that tried to confront the human reality of each member in the light of the centering presence of Jesus Christ as Lord in the Word and the World.

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Whole Communication for the Whole Man

While there are many ways of viewing this oceanic shift, a way we find both illuminating and motivating is from the angle of the human potential for growth and for the service of praising God and enabling the whole creation to rejoice. In this approach, a fundamental question is What are man's energies and how should he use them?

In Christian version, How can man's energies work together toward what our Lord called "the kingdom of God"? In self-examination, How am I using, and how could/should I use, my energies?

Briefly stated, these energies are visible and invisible. We call the visible energies "physical," the powers of our "body" (a concept not as simple as it sounds). The invisible energies produce trust, faith, decision, devotion: such we call, in biblical terminology, "spirit"; dreams, fantasies, poetry, arts: these we call, in the narrow sense, "psyche"; and ratiocination, thinking, cerebration, concatenic reasoning, logic, mathematics: these we call, in the narrow sense, "mind." Products of the "spirit" we gather up under the heading "religion," meaning the whole constellation of decisions that "bind" our life. Diagram A (at end of article) provides a model for meditating on man's energies. Note that all human activities can be put somewhere on the diagram. E.g., pure science would be at the righthand angle, but applied science (technology, engineering, cybernation) combines mental and physical energies and exists therefore on the mind-body axis. It's fun and profit to spell out the rest of human activities, as you can think of them, on this diagram; for a diagram is space in the service of spirit, i.e. of the deciding dimension of human existence.

What does all this have to do with theological education? Look at it from the standpoint of Christian stewardship: will not a better understanding of one's own energies, through a better understanding of human energy in general, make our decisions on the use of our energies more intelligent?

Will it not also make us more compassionate in our action, by giving us a keener appreciation of how unintelligently so much of our own energy and of the energy of mankind is used, in the light of the Christian Gospel and of the common need to sustain

human existence? Or look at it from the angle of communication, for those who study in a theological seminary are concerned to become better communicators of the human in general and of the Christian gospel in particular.

Diagram B displays both the traditional bind in theological education and the opportunity for radical reform thereof in the light of what we have come to know, largely since World War II, about the learning-teaching process. Box A is just that, a box; Boxes B, C, and D can be boxes, too; i.e., they can box you in to a dogma or a fed or a polemic, as indeed they tend to in some phases of the so-called human-potential or human-development of the human-growth movement. Box A, however is the old sinner in our Western educational system. It's no accident that our education through public school, college or university, and seminary has been under the domination of the verbal (as against the actional) and the rational (as against all that escapes logical analysis and measurement): the Greek word Logos means both "word" and "reason" (Had the Hebraic rather than the Hellenic strain in our cultural genes dominated, the feel of our educational theory and praxis would have been different. Daver, in addition to being the main Hebrew term for a "word," means also "action," "deed," "thing.") Box A is the professor's (and pastor's) book-covered study. (You can actually see the books in Box A.) Indeed, the prophetic tradition in Scripture and therefore in our spiritual heritage and history is highly suspicious of the Box-A mentality, which it calls "of the scribes," "scribal." Instead of setting the authoritative literature on one hand and the world on the other so the each illumines the other through the internal witness of the Spirit (testimonium Sancti Spiritus internum), one's own spirit deciding how one shall use one's energies in the light of this interillumination, the scribe interposes his holy books between himself and the world: he sees the world, if he sees it at all, through the holy books whose perceptual models he uses moralistically and legalistically for judging the world and shaping it, cookie-cutter fashion, according to his own reading (hermeneutic). Because of its ethos and vision as described above, the Biblical Seminary of New York, now called New York Theological Seminary, has not fallen into this "scribal" or "fundamentalist" blindness and narrowness.

World-End First?

According to the scribal dogma, God gives us, ahead of time, the answers, which then we use to respond to, and even to shape, the world's questions. One need then hardly be surprised that the dogmatist is a bad listener, a selective listener, listening only until he hears a question that fits one of his answers--like an electronic finger on an IBM sorting machine. In the prophetic books of the Old Testament, the analogies most used to reveal the spiritual effects of this aggressive insensitivity are blindness and deafness.

The reverse dogma, of course, parades ignorance: "I don't have answers, just questions"... "It's not God-church-world, but God-world-church."... "Let's begin with the world, human need, the world's agenda..." If we describe the former stance as "scribal" we may describe this one as "priestly," the priest in this case using "the world" as cookie-cutter on tradition and community, absolutizing the world's demands and relativizing the gospel. Scribe and priest have their proper functions, the first to preserve and interpret the tradition and the second to stabilize and enrich communal life in a particular time and place. It is the hybridic forms of these to which we must object: against the scribe when he tries to imprison the present in the past, and against the priest wherever he attempts to imprison the Holy in the present, in "the world's agenda," in the name of "relevance" and under the criterion of "intelligibility." I am saying that in biblical stance, priority cannot be given to the past-and-church or to present-and-world, for "the Kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who takes new and old things out of his storage room" (Matt. 13.52 TEV). The prophetic-dominical posture is dialectical, a perpetual tension between what is and what in biblical perspective should be, between Word and world, between message and method, between messenger and listener, between affirmer and critic, between the language of Zion and street language--yes, and between theological school and the churches, between theological school and the culture (especially other institutions of higher learning), between the theologian with his tradition and perceptions and the student with his perceptions and questions--yes, and within the theologian, between the believer and the doubter, the man that was and the man that is, the man that is and the man he wants to become, between the learner and the teacher.

A Christian way to state and claim freedom confrontation with self and neighbor and

from the tyranny of the past (scribalism), of the present (sacerdotalism), and of the future (messianism, prophetism, futurism in the bad sense) is "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13.8). Since it is this Jesus Christ we are involved with, who was and is and will be involved with the world God made and loves, Christian obedience is the paradoxical freedom of a gracious transcendence over over-involvement in any particular there-and-then or here-and-now or not-yet-but-soon. We Christians are not to be archaizers, romantics, or futurists, though at varying times our obedience may make us for the moment partisans of future, present, or past; grace does not grant us a cool objectivity, a philosophical distance from the hard decisions of everyday and long-time involvement. As all other men, we act on the world's stage in, for, and unfortunately also against our humanity. On the suprahistorical stage (in trans-historical dimension) we act, however, according to our commitment, both under and inside the Christ event, both with and unfortunately against Jesus the Christ, the New Being.

Where Begin?

If, then, we do not begin with the past or future, or "the Church's agenda" or "the world's agenda", where do we begin? Each one of us, with the here-and-now dialectic in his own heart as that dialectic is informed and strengthened through dialog with other human beings. If the business at hand is theological education, I bring my Word/world dialectic into interaction with others so engaged, both peers and superiors.

What shape and structures should this dialogic process have? Many are aware that the old shapes of theological education are now inappropriate, but does anybody yet know how best to program for present and future? At NYTS we are exploring in many directions--the core group of committed Christians aiming at professional ministry, courses mixing clergy and laity with seminarians, several different programs in continuing education, lay theological evenings and weekends in our building as well as many courses elsewhere in Metropolitan New York, educational liaisons with other institutions, (including clusters of congregations). Our teaching methods range from traditional courses, which we deemphasize, to intensive experiences of

world and God.

To illustrate how the spirit of "doing theology" dominates the NYTS approach, let me sketch the course project for the "The Holy in the Common," which aims at experiencing the presence and working of God at some point of focus in the common life, a focus of the particular student's concern. The student's theological skill is sharpened in many ways, here by learning to be a better questioner. He learns that a situation-focus can be viewed from many perspectives (Diagram C): the life-styles present (e.g., middle-class "forgotten," Birchite, black militant, New Left, Young Lords, ethnocentric, hippie, secular liberal, Protestant fundamentalist), particular issues (e.g., drugs, pollution, planning, violence, powerlessness, the military draft, war control, conception control, community organization, community control, gaps (generation, etc.), church/state relations, the biofuture (genetic revolution, etc.), the technofuture, the new leisure, the esofuture (man's future inner life), sexual equality), values (life, the salable, the sacred, the antisacred, action, the right, the good, pleasure, the beautiful, the personal, the true--all of which, as idols sucking the Holy into themselves, are isms), and feelings (awe, order, love, oddness, rage, pain, joy--all deeply numinous, pointing to the daimonic depths and high potential of human life vis-a-vis its Source).

The student selects a turf, a life-situation somewhere in his present experience, where he has continuing relations and obligation. This he heats up from these four perspectival quadrants as he involves himself, and cools off as he reflects on his participation--the double activity so prominent in the life of the core groups. The guidelines for the project in "The Holy in the Common" further illustrate the process: "Select preferably one perspective from each quadrant. Your exploration may be deductive (working with the four perspectives that most interest you) or inductive (starting with a life-situation that is currently grabbing you). Shape your own questions as you proceed, but here are some guideline questions: (1) In this person-group-situation, where do you find the fourfold convergence of your chosen perspectives? (2) There, how is the Holy expressed nonverbally? verbally? (3) How does Scripture illumine the situation (with what images, categories, processes)? (4) In not more than 100 words, state what you see God as trying to do in the situation. (5) Does religion, if present in

the situation, help or hinder in this working of God? (6) Can the religion present be reshaped so as to be better the servant of God and man in the situation? ~~USE~~ MAXIMUM SOURCES: (1) your past experience (memory-reflection), (2) action-research (involvement incident to your project: field trips, conversations, etc.), (3) conversations with classmembers whose projects are other than yours, (4) reading (newspapers, magazines, books: bibliography should include pages read in each book), (5) art (films, theater, museums, etc.)."

Why, and Why Not?

The four questions introducing the four diagrams (below) are all existential, aimed at deciding-and-acting in mission i.e. as "sent," as assigned by God in Christ to the action of truth, the work of love, the struggle for justice and peace, the active "waiting" for "the Kingdom of God." The traditional name for the concern Diagram A expresses is "stewardship," and the analysis should include one's collectivities (church, state, etc.). Diagram B used to be gathered under the seminary discipline "Homiletics" or "Preaching," but it is now startlingly extended through impact of the behavioral sciences in general and the human potential movement in particular. Diagram C suggests that theological education should use the knowledge and skills of social psychology with its expanded awareness of what is in play in a decisional situation: eagerness to discern and point to the working of God in a situation is the religious dimension of this expanded awareness. If one's spirit is set longingly on this discerning and witnessing-serving, i.e. on faithful response to the More Than Everything in the situation, one cannot settle for less than everything one's mind can compass in the situation. (Note that the diagram adds the motives-functions axis and the attitudes-behavior axis to the explanation above.)

Diagram D is strategic: given my energies, my communication knowledge and skills, my power to penetrate and use dynamics of a situation how shall I discover the use the best symbol(s) in particular situation--"best" meaning most appropriate to my human and Christian functioning in the situation? Ever present in my mind should be the question Why is this person or group behaving thus, and why not some other way (especially, why not a way or ways I consider more human, more Christian)?

Let's look at the situation symbolics chart, then use it on a case.

Only the second and fourth columns need subdividing on the schema. The second column asks eight questions, from What is the person/group's dominant feeling in the situation? to What use is the person/group making of statistics? Column four assesses, in descending scale, the depth of commitment in each participant--commitment to whatever gods/values he sees as in play in the situation. Now to illustrate:

Case Method

Call this CASE #27; CLASS: generation gap. The situation (upper of first column) is that you find yourself in the gap between a father--a vice-president of one of America's largest corporations--and his New Left son, a university student. The father's dominant self-image: "successful" and "respected" member of the economic establishment and an "influence" in local and state politics. How does the son see himself? As a friendly alien--friendly, for he doesn't want to surrender entirely the prospect of making it like Dad; alien because he considers some of Dad's values phony, and Dad a phony for not living up to certain values father and son have in common. And hating himself for his ambivalence, and for the ambiguity of his situation in life.

The issue (lower of first column) is Cambodia, May 1970. Father and son have had a long, hot fight over President Nixon's moving a military mass into yet another Indochinese territory. You weren't present, but immediately after the son slammed the door and started his car to head back to the university, the father in deep distress phoned you and between anger and tears said he feels his son is now almost a complete stranger to him.

Note that the father emphasizes how he feels: "dominant feeling" is rightly first in the list of psychosocial categories (column two). The father is anxious about his relationship with his son, but (it ensues) also anxious about President Nixon's move--yet determined that "we must push on and finish the job" militarily and diplomatically. Let's call his mood "anxious determination," and write it as item 1 on the upper half of a sheet reproducing the schema of Diagram D--the lower half being for his son, where write "raging alienation" as item 1. Now staying with column two:

2. The father's image-model of our military presence in Southeast Asia--his dominant collective picture in the head--is the same as President Nixon's: a sports model, the winning team. He was proud when his President said we haven't lost a war (read "game") in 190 years and he'll not be the first President to lose one. But his son was enraged with so eristic and impoverished an image of community, exacerbated (he thought) by the advocacy system of jurisprudence, the President's profession. If the son must use it, he will see the U.S.A. as a losing team in the Southeast Asia game. If you were to ask him the dominant picture in his head vis-a-vis America just now (and that might be a productive question), he might say the lost society or sunken Atlantis. (He might also use the biblical imagery if he's not too deracinated from his spiritual heritage; but we'll save that till column three.) Here the fantasy future may serve the father-son dialog: what projections, scenarios, alternative futures with canonic variations and catastrophic/beatific expectations can they draw and compare? (But we leave this for item 5.)

3. In the relation between 2 and 3 we confront devilish opportunities for misunderstanding. In our permissive culture, one who feels may say "I think...."--and then resent that the other responds not to the personal feeling but to an impersonal idea; and the reverse is true: one who says "I feel...." when he means "I think...." may resent his remark being taken as personal when he was trying to be cool and objective. On Diagram A, "I think" is on the right angle ("mind"), and "I feel" is on the left angle ("psyche"). So Diagram D's item 2 ("image-model") ties in with item 1 ("dominant feeling"); and almost as tightly item 3 ("idea") ties in with item 4 ("ideal," as "idea" as abstract moves out in one direction to the moral abstract, i.e. "the ideal"). The dialectic between the fantasy life and cerebration--the horizontal axis of Diagram A--is taken up in the spirit-as-decider, then drives down into action through the body--the vertical axis of Diagram A....The father thinks (i.e., has "the idea") that we'll force the non-Saigonese Vietnamese to negotiate soon, then we'll pull our military out of Southeast Asia; sometimes the idea weakens into a hope, and the hope stretches out into a prayer. But the son has the idea

that we have already lost and the so-called enemy is just waiting for us to discover it and leave; "winning," if such a word is any longer accurate in warfare, would cost so much in so many directions that Washington cannot seriously consider it.

4. What then is "the ideal" outcome of the affair Cambodia? As father sees it, it's peace through negotiation NOW, in the context of an emergent global affluent society. The son is also for NOW, but reads "Yankee, come home NOW." And he likes the anti-American poster in Saigon, "Vietnam: Love It and Leave It!" Well, is there a biblical NOW that can unite these dissonant NOWs? And/or a secular NOW? Should the clashing ideals of father and son be reconciled now, right now? or is there a greater work to be done through their continued clashing? would reconciliation, at this level, be premature? have they yet fought enough over the difference between their ideal projections on this matter of U.S. foreign policy?

5. The father's expectations are confused, but he thinks we've got it in us to muddle through in British style (yes, he's an Anglophile) if not triumph in good old American style (lots of communal imagery here!). Cool it, he says to his son, and we'll make it through (an Enlightenment expectation); God has never let us down yet (+ Deuteronomism). But the son is all gloom and doom: the country is collapsing, maybe has already collapsed but we haven't noticed yet. Our neurotic war abroad is sucking the resources we need to cure our psychotic society at home (he's read R.D. Laing on Anglo-American sociopathy). Father need not worry that the son is paranoid, for son's reaction is rage, not fear; nor schizoid, for the son, though alienated, cares, cares deeply, and is trying to relate effectively to the nation's malaise. Father's expectation is cautiously optimistic but nervous; son's is catastrophic --but is it a sick expectation, or accurately prognostic? What components of "expectation" are in their dialog at this level, and what does the Christian hope have to say to them severally and together here? In other words, how do you "do theology" with them in relation to what they think is going to happen in Southeast Asia?

6. "Motives" are what move me inwardly, autonomously/theonomously: "sanctions" are external, heteronomous pressures others push me with, whether those "others" be God, life, society, groups, and/or individuals. That's too simple, for most motives are internalized sanctions

and most sanctions root deeply in group values and mores, i.e. constitute corporate motives. But the distinction is functional for our purpose: 6 and 7 should be treated separately Father is moved, in his opinion about

"Cambodia," by his conviction that the American Way of Life is the best in the world and needs stabilizing and extending so that non-Americans can come to share its blessings; also, he's enjoying his own comfortable slice of it. But son, here, is a futurist: he's moved by the conviction that America could, soon, be a far juster society than it is, and that the main thing standing in the way of that blessed event is characters like his father, who identify productivity as good (even though its pollution threatens human existence) and even almost as the good, at least that's how good their piece of the affluence seems to feel to them. If we ask what self-images father and son have at this level, father might be "hero" and son "divine child" and "victim." If we ask what

virtues, father might be masculine and son feminine. If we ask each to state his image of the other on this matter, father might say the son is a "fool or worse," and son might say the father is a "traitor and oppressor." Even if they would not use such words, the role-images may be powerfully at work; and counseling-witnessing-serving might help through enabling the surfacing of these role-images. Too, motivation research at a simple level might help: given twenty cards, each with a value on it ("money," "love," "fame," etc.), how would father arrange them? how son? and what sort of conversation might they have over the two sequences?

7. As for sanctions, Dad's are largely social, and he's willing to admit it. In fact, he's proud of his "responsible" living, responsive to the American values and the honest, upright opinions of his near neighbors (i.e., of "people like us," "our kind of people," "the better class of people"). Son couldn't care less about what the neighbors think, at least that's what he says. His sanctions are ultimate, like "the way things really are" and "where it's really at" and "what it's all about" and "authentic living" and "emotional honesty" and "honest relating" and "really caring about the other person," without calculating the consequences to oneself. He sees his father as a calculator, as a self-striver, as a capitalistic egotist-- though he's a rather gentle soul, and doesn't use personal nouns against his father. Son has enough religious sophistication to call his

father's excessive attachment to "America" idolatry, and attributes Dad's agreement with current U.S. foreign policy as an anxious effort to prevent the death of the nation-god; whereas Son claims to feel about governments, even nations, the way Don Juan feels about women: "they come and go." This clash over the taproot of the civil religion is extremely serious, and the Christian as theologian should have the knowledge and skill to enable father and son to face its depth.

8. Finally, father and son will make opposite use of statistics, each to ram home his own arguments. Father can prove, by body count and other data, that we are "winning" and the Cambodia thrust has paid off: son can use statistics to prove stalemate or worse. Both may agree that never before in American history have so many been so deceived by son much flying data: grim laughter about statistics seems more appropriate to the reality than the grim, combative use thereof.

What's the best use of the Bible as resource in this case? The third column should be filled with suggestive symbols/images from Scripture for each of the eight items in column two for both father and son. Here I only begin this process so essential to "doing theology," and I mention only a few biblical references.

1. Can the Exodus illumine the father's anxious determination? And both the Exodus and the Exile the son's raging alienation? And can the Exodus serve as a dialogic image for the biblical-theological encounter of father and son? A biblical symbol/myth/image does more, for those of Western spiritual background, than delimit the play, define the game-board. It also opens up spiritual and psycho (i.e., imaginal) depths and stimulates the mind to new action; and in heating up fresh territory, it tends to damp fires on old grounds and thus let something new grow there. Besides, it's fun to play around with stories and pictures! And the fun itself serves as a coolant, in an overheated and underilluminated argument. Remind yourself that in item one or column two we are dealing with "dominant feelings," and that almost all humanly significant conversations, whether amicable or bitter, occur in the feeling world, and that Esalen and "Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice" and the two "I Am Curious" and just about all significant works of art in any medium are about this feeling world, now made all the more precious as it stands over against the extrapolation "mind" (in the narrow sense of cerebration) as cyternation. Our society has suppressed feeling in the interest of efficiency, and now

feeling is raging and rampaging in our midst. I define discipline as the systematic violation of feeling in the interest of a higher order; then I am severely critical of whatever claims to be "higher"--for I prefer riches to order, and chaos to tyranny. Yet I observe that the anarchy of the feeling-obsessed person or culture soon turns to tyranny, as surely as tyranny soon fragments into anarchy. How delicate the balance, the precarious balance of order and freedom! And how essential in the religion of the Word and in the civilization of dialog! Father and son should respect each other's right to a dominant feeling, and in so far as possible respect that dominant feeling so as to encounter each other both through and beyond the feeling world.

2. Father and son have wildly variant image-models of America today. Can the Bible's picture of the Church as the victorious Fellowship in Faith (Jn. 17. 14-26) illumine the Nixon collective image of the winning sports team, and if so, in more than one direction? What might the son discover if he were to put the lost Eden (Paradise Lost) alongside his picture of America as a lost, defeated, and hopeless society? Would he read and discuss Genesis 3 with you for this purpose? Does he know how mighty, in the development of his country's self-image and his father's psyche, are the biblical symbols of the Promised Land, the People of God (1P.2.9f), and the Righteous Nation?

3. Many images in the prophets, e.g. in Jeremiah, speak to the political idea of winning/losing contests with the neighbors. Israel's ancient international relations can throw light on more than modern Israel's present snarled relations with her neighbors: what would happen if father and son were to read and discuss Amos together? How shall we adjudicate the demands of God, mankind, immediate neighbor, and tribe/nation? What is "responsible political action," to use or bypass "the (accepted) political process"? What is the function, and what if any are the limits, of dissent? How much of the son's dissent is left over from the father's failure to dissent? How much of the son's dissent is in violation of values father and son hold in common? Since item 3 is "ideas," i.e. rational constructions, how can father and son come to the skill of rational conversation about "Cambodia" (and all other significant issues in the life of person, family, church, nation, world)?

4. The biblical ideal of human community, as e.g. in both Isaiahs and in the Sermon on the Mount, is pertinent both to the father's hopes for peace and prosperity (shalom) and to the son's insistence that all the communities involved--Southeast Asian, American, and human--would be better served by our military withdrawal from Indochina. No nation in history has been more buffeted by its neighbors than the little people living on the eastern littoral of the Mediterranean in the middle between the fertile crescent and the fertile valley, who wrote the Bible. Out of repeated international agony they achieved a high level of sophistication about the doings and comings of armies, and one element of that sophistication is a spiritual transcendence (not a mystical copout): God is in the turmoil of peoples, and his Kingdom comes both persuasively (the First Advent) and violently (the Second Advent). The very complexity and depth of the Bible's commentation on the military factor in human history can provide cool light for any discussion looking toward the ideal, i.e. the best conceivable, outcome of a "Cambodia."

5. The father's confused expectations remind us of the repeated clashes in the Bible between false and true prophets and priests, and the son's dire expectation of national collapse puts us in mind of Armageddon and of Jeremiah in the well for having the same premonition.

6. In Jewish phrase, the supreme human motivation should be "the hallowing (sanctification) of the Name." We might say, in the sweep of the whole Bible, the praise of God and the promotion of joy in the whole creation. In this light, how do the motives of father and son look? The father's desire for law and order, for communal stabilization both national and international, is like the "Peace" act in the Body of Christ (1Cor.10.14-31, 12.7-17); but his overconcern for his slice reminds us of abuses in the Body (11.14-22). The son's longing for a juster society signals in us the Kingdom of God (Mark 1.14f and passim through the Gospels) and the New Creation (2Cor.5.17-20); but where is Crucifixion/Resurrection?(An everpresent question in Dr. White's inductive method of Bible study is the wider-context question: What has been omitted here, and why? It applies with equal force to one's inductive "reading" of a situation in the world--a point of conjunction between the seminary's founding intent and its present style.)

7. The son has trouble seeing any ultimate sanction beyond himself, "listening to my body," "doing my thing," But he does remember hearing in church "We must serve God rather than man," and he understands the feeling of the early Christians vis-a-vis unfriendly government (read "Establishment" or "System"). For these early Christians, the Holy Spirit internalized the sanctions of God's nature and will, Scripture, and tradition; with a little help, the son can read and translate great passages that speak to his condition--and perhaps learn even to appropriate some of the terms, thus overcoming to that extent his spiritual deracination. He will need no help in grabbing the reflexive sanction in the Bible: he knows, and not just from his Greeky Western education, that we are our own worst enemies, and sometimes even enemies of life itself (and therefore of God, though that leap this particular young man cannot at present manage)....And what of the father's sanctions? He'll find some comfort in the wisdom literature, especially Proverbs; but the Bible in general is less friendly to those who calculate consequences (i.e., use sapiential and social sanctions) than to those who fling themselves passionately and trustingly toward God: "Fear not, little children, God wants to give you the kingdom!"

8. Finally, what shall we say about the use of statistics, by our father and son and by Scripture? Except in a few triumphalist war passages, the Bible is distrustful of numbers, for human counting stands punily over against the incommensurable power of God. Besides the prospect of Pyrrhic victories, we face the ambiguity of our successes and even a strange cancelling, reversing force that turns won honey to gall. Too, the natural desire to "make it," to win, easily turns to hybris, becomes the win/lose psychosis. God releases dark powers against Odysseus, Prometheus, Icarus, Faust, Manifest Destiny, and the Seventh Five-Year Plan. History is about something more important than statistics and winning. It is about Something Somebody is trying to give us, Somebody who never takes anything away without wanting to give us something better. History deals in power, but it is about grace: can you enable father and son to see, and feel, this?

The final column should be divided into as many subcolumns as needed to represent the

areas of commitment in a situation, from the absolute tribal commitment of those who have little or no consciousness of challenge to their commitment because they have had little or no experience of Kulturkampf, the clash against a foreign culture (the "dogma" of tribal man), through absolute commitment to a total way of life against other ways of life (the "ideology" of neotribal man), through belief in "doctrine" (religious and/or the principles and rules of ethics) without social enforcement, through "clue" (giving high valence to certain images and ideas because for you they lead, now and again, to productive insights), through "hint" (some real appreciation for traditional images and ideas because, though rarely and usually only tangentially, they stimulate psyche and/or mind), to "zero" (no commitment at all, and no hope of profit).

Here, accordingly, is how father and son look from the commitment angle:
FATHER: Christ 3, church 3, America 1, business 2, family 2.

SON: Christ 2 & 4, church 6, America 5, Marcuse 2, Zen 4.

Expansion:

For the father, the American way of life ("America"), by which he means his life-style and advantages near the top of the culture's pyramid of power and prestige, and which has at its heart what Robert Bellah has taught us to call "the civil religion," gets the number one spot on his commitment scale--or at least so he says when pressed in political discussion. If that has the force of "dogma" for him, then we may say that family has the force of "ideology" (which is what 2 means on the scale): he sees himself as totally dedicated to the health, prosperity, and happiness of his family, and this makes his son's deviation feel like ingratitude and even betrayal. Mother isn't all that sure of Dad's family dedication, for she sees him as equally if not more involved in his business, which gets most of his time. She knows that what gets your time or attention gets the other (time or attention) and you, and she thinks Dad is more and more "got" by the office, and less and less by the family. But she hasn't really thought much about sorting out these dedications, any more than Dad has, but she worries a lot about it. Son is positive that the office is Dad's religion and that his claims about America and family are self-deceptions: everything else in Dad's life only serves the business god--including Christianity (Christ and church serving as confirmative doctrines for Dad's corporate life-style). /"Christ" on the scale means Jesus, the Christ-event, the biblical vision, any serious effort to discover

and do the will of God through the Christian faith; and "church" means congregational participation as a minimum of ecclesial involvement./

For the son, the picture is markedly different. He's cool: no "dogma" (dedication-level 1). Jesus and Marcuse seem to mix well in spot 2, with Jesus as the substance and Marcuse as the form--which means Jesus as a counter-cultural and revolutionary figure. Note that Christ means to the son both more (2) and less (4) than Christ does to the father (3): in the son's psyche, Jesus is more active than he is in the father's psyche; but for the son, Christ ("the whole Christian thing," he calls it) is less authoritative, serving more as clue (level 4) than as doctrine. The father focuses on "what's right with America," as he likes to term it; but the son looks at what he thinks should be and, in GBS's maxim, asks "Why not?" Jesus + Marcuse = at least a proto-ideology (the father would say a pseudo-ideology), pointing both to the son's degree of alienation from the paternal culture and life-style and to the possibility of and potential for radical change toward a juster society. Dad is tribal (level 1), and son is neotribal (level 2, including "Woodstock"). Church? To the son it looks like a betrayal of Jesus and a fraudulent sanction for Dad's mindless dogma and life-style; he will have nothing to do with it (level 6), prefers "authentic" relationships, is thinking of joining a commune to get away from his family's "hypocrisies," thinks the commune might serve as a church to him, is disappointed that the Ecumen-type weekends don't seem to yet should, loves his girl but knows that can't be all the "relating" he needs, is trying Zen and getting something out of his daily meditation (level 4, some clues as to what life's about--but no more clues than he gets from his Christian background /also level 4/). In his experience, "America" is only a hint (level 5) of what it should be, what human life should be, how society should shape itself.

Now if you make a bar graph (with these as vertical columns: Christ, church, America, business, family, Marcuse, Zen), you'll discover that "Christ" is the subject of the highest potential encounter between father and son: the son's concerns with "Christ" are at levels 2 and 4, the father's concern is at level 3. In all the other columns, Dad and Son are strangers, sometimes even enemies.

What might happen between and in them if, under some auspices or on their own, they were to make a serious effort to confront Jesus and each other in regular Gospel-reading together? Our Lord's deeds and words could, Rorschach-like, reveal common ground as well as differences, and their joint effort to interpret the text would give the Spirit a chance to interpret them, each to himself and to the other. But why bother? To close the generation gap: isn't that the "class" of "case" we're dealing with? Yes, it's the way we started talking about this case, since it's the way we became aware of it: the father's agonized confusion occasioned his phoning me for help. But how you state a question or problem or need shapes what you do about it, and neither that son nor I would give the situation the statement/shape the father has. My premises are (1) that God, the biblical God, made and loves them both and (2) is struggling to continue and fulfil his creation in their relationship, (3) both where they agree and in the gaps, (4) which can be illumined by the biblical gaps (God/world, innocence/sin, isness/oughtness, Christ/churches, America/Kingdom of God, tribal/global man). "Doing theology" is using one's Christian intentionality (one's joyous longing for the Kingdom of God) for semantic seeing, i.e. for discerning meaning in a situation. What the situation "means" is never entirely available to a human being--both because of limitations in his receptors (his body, spirit, psyche, and mind) by nature, finitude, and sin, and because of his inability to transcend the situation: he is himself part of the situation's meaning, and he brings his meanings (including his theological knowledge and skills) into the situation, never being able to sort out completely the meanings he receives from the situation and the meanings he contributes to the situation, yet trusting the Maximizer of Meaning.

To review what we are about in Diagram D ("situation symbolics"), think first of father and then of son by using this question: In this case, what symbols are pulling (as motives) and pushing (as sanctions) the participants to feel/be insensitive, trust/distrust, believe/doubt, think/evade thinking, engage/withdraw? and what is the most appropriate (creative, productive) way for me to enter the eidomacy, the symbolic struggle (i.e., to "do theology" with father and son)?

"Theology" at present is a precarious enterprise, and "theological education" a dark continent just opening for a new day. At NYTS we have been doing some painful exploring

in the darkness, and we believe we are ready to make a modest advance. Wilbert Webster White delighted to quote what David Livingstone said as he came out of Africa with a challenge on his lips: "The end of the exploration is the beginning of the enterpraise."⁸

Willis E. Elliott
Dean, Lay Theological Education
New York Theological Seminary
235 East 49th Street
New York, New York 10017

NOTES

- 1 P. 244 of Chas. R. Eberhardt's THE BIBLE IN THE MAKING OF MINISTERS: THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: THE LIFEWORKE OF WILBERT WEBSTER WHITE (Association, 1949).
- 2 Richard Baron, 1970. Harris speaks, e.g., of "doing America."
- 3 The Greeks bemuse us with their word-play: theopoiesis is bad, "making gods"; but theologopoiesis is good, "doing or making" theology." A wag speaks also of theography as "mapping, i.e. locating, where God is doing what he is doing."
- 4 The shift of emphasis, due to advances in learning theory, is well signaled in the subtitle of Caleb Gattegno's WHAT WE OWE OUR CHILDREN (Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1970): THE SUBORDINATION OF TEACHING TO LEARNING.
- 5 See my "The Use of the Bible in the New Age," "Beyond the Old and the New Evangelism."
- 6 This sensibility can be expressed in many languages. Rollo May's LOVE AND WILL (Norton, 1969), e.g., speaks of intentionality as "the structure which gives meaning to experience" ((223): our act itself contains a commitment that brings meaning to a situation, for "every meaning has within it a commitment" (230), and we become creative as our vitality struggles with the forms within us and in the situation. Again, "self and world are correlates" (152), and "in every act of love and will and in the long run they are present in each genuine act, we mold ourselves and our world simultaneously. This is what it means to embrace the future" (325).

⁷ Much of the influence of Harvey Cox is due to his intuitive playfulness with Scripture, his epexegetic use of the Bible in such books as ~~THE~~ SECULAR CITY and ON LEAVING IT TO THE SNAKE and FEAST OF FOOLS. Imago vis: there's power, persuasive power, in images. There are also traps, but that's another story.

⁸ Eberhardt, p. 244.