

1. Two experiences this morning [20Sept77] are behind this thinksheet: (1) Larry Josephson's WBAI rumination on the "happy days" of the 1960s, when the countercultural wing of his generation were "with it" and "into it"--having a focusing vision-commitment and therefore power and community and joy and hope. (Where do you go when your "era is over"? "I'm looking for some cause to animate my life," but I just can't get into religion. A mix of nostalgia and grief, pensiveness-pathos-depression, yet reaching out beyond the historical disappointment that the hopes of the 1960s have met with the ambiguities, complexities, discouragements, and isolation-loneliness of the 1970s--an historical movement from enspiriting to dispiriting.) (I'm sending him this thinksheet, together with a personal letter.) (2) Another person of his generation, also brilliant, also growing up Jewish in NYC, whose condition of spirit is diametrical: Mel Yosso (TRANSCULTURE, Box 104, NYC 10014), radiant and modestly aggressive with a message of hope and power for peace and for spiritual-human wealth....Two beautiful human beings, one burdened down with only the relief of black humor, the other on top of it with an all-taking and all-giving dedication. Darkness and light.

2. Also this morning, the NYTS Administrative Faculty began this schoolyear's Tue. a.m. AF Bible Studies, first of a series on the Acts of the Apostles. While contextual interpretation is inherently superior to literal-scribal interpretation, one of the conundrums of the former is that it demands speculation about the original audience-readership in cases where the text does not reveal patently the primary group being addressed. In the case of Acts, we're in the tenuous position of having to project a construct of the provenance [origin, including author(s) and audience] and then interpret the document in the light of the hypothetical construct. My conclusion is mediating: "Luke" does not address either a Jewish-Christian or a Gentile-Christian audience, but both--in that he incorporates, through rewriting, a Jewish-Christian "document" [oral or written] into his own work, which is addressed to (a) churches of people most of whom are of nonJewish background and (b) individual nonChristian readers, primarily nonJewish.

3. In the light of the first paragraph of this thinksheet, we might call Luke's Jewish-Christian source "Larry" in its earliest layer [the disciples discouraged over "separation and loss," in grief and confusion both from the disappearance of their Leader and from historical disappointment--viz., the failure of "the Kingdom of God" to "come" according to their vision and expectation], and Luke's own writing we might call "Mel." Analogy from archeology: on a number of occasions, Loree and I have had the privilege of being under present churches while archeology was proceeding on earlier churches which formed the foundation of the later churches (e.g., York Cathedral). From this experience, of a piece with the reality I believe we're dealing with in Acts, I'm calling Luke's Jewish-Christian source *the lower\* church* and the churches of his own address *the upper church*. NB: No disparaging connotation to "lower"! The reference is purely historical! As for me personally, I'm not open to the accusation of preferring, in Christianity, the Gentile to the Jewish strand--rather the opposite! While I love, and have been trained in, the Hellenic-Hellenistic culture, I am a child of Abraham in noticing that God preferred the Hebraic culture for the primary statement as to how we human beings are to see and live in the world: Socrates I continue to learn from, but Jesus I worship and follow.

4. Unlike archeology, the lower church--in Acts and in Christian action today--is alive! It insists on historical engagement in spite of "doubts within and fears without": it does not drift off, with old and new "Greeks," into gnosticism. It continues in faithful dialog with the Jews, on our faith's most perplexing boundary. And it seeks to live "through the Holy Spirit" (Ac.1.2). Yes, sometimes it gets depressed; but, thank God, not repressed! And, within and beyond the Church, it sustains encounter with "the Greeks" and other cultural streams: the council of Jerusalem (Ac.15) continues.

\*The over/under metaphor appears also in the Greek historians' word for the materials they rewrote: *hypomnemata*, under-remembrances.