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LOVE is optional and total, says Jesus.....Elliott #1317

LUKE

In "John" (i.e., the Gospel and the Letters), love is lyric, a SONG. In Jesus (i.e., chiefly the Synoptics) it's SAYING and STORY. This thinksheet grew out of a Bible study led 27Mar79 by Dean Bob Washington for the NYTS Administrative Faculty on L.10.25-37; the three passive questions are his, and I've added both the three active questions and the interface of the STORY text with this SAYING text in the same Gospel: "Love your enemies" (6.27,35).

1. The Good Samaritan story is often moralized thus: Be kind to everybody, putting their needs above your own. As you wouldn't let Sabbath regulations divert you from caring for the critical needs of humans and dumb animals, so you shouldn't let considerations of ritual purity interfere with facing and acting compassionately toward human beings *in extremis*. But if our Lord's parable were thus pointing to works of charity toward fellow-creatures, on the model of God's sun and rain on just and unjust, the good guy would be a layman over against the two bad-guy clergy....So, notice that the good guy is not a layman (i.e., a Jew not in professional religious leadership) but an enemy! By ministering to the half-dead Jew [Jew, implied in the story], the Samaritan is modeling enemy-love, i.e. love for enemies! The *a fortiori* force of the parable is this: If "they" our enemies love "us" their enemies, should not "we" their enemies love "them" our enemies?

2. So Jesus makes an endrun around the "neighbor" question in order to undermine his people's nationalistic exclusivism and thus all anti-human provincialisms, including the "-isms" (racism, sexism, agism, religionism, classism, etc.). This universal spirit leads straight to Gal.3.26-28. As in the SAYING, so in this STORY Jesus is "blowing" the daily expectations, the home-street-shop-synagogue conventions --speaking not as a wise man (who would, as do some interpreters of the parable, ask us to consider the merits of deciding one way or the other, weighing conflicting obligations) but as a prophet in the tradition of Isaiah's "light to the nations," which requires a deepening and widening of the traditional definition of the neighbor.

GROUP PROCESS: After exegesis of the passage in plenum, subgroup into dyads to process the following questions, with report-back to plenum (1) after each box, (2) after each bank [active/passive], or (2) after all. Note that the three questions, in two banks, represent the three actions in the story.

WHEN DID I/WE	WHEN WAS I [WERE WE]
beat up?	beaten up?
pass up?	passed up?
pick up?	picked up?