

MANIFEST (CARGO LIST) OF THE ANNUAL BATES COLLEGE RELIGION LECTURE for 1972
THE UNCONFINABLE AS THREAT AND PROMISE.....Willis F. Elliott

As the one hour given and taken for the lecture included less than half the lecture (attached), and as the style of the lecture itself is impressionistic, this manifest is a rational, lineal display of the argument.

1. In certain life-experiences, human beings have BVRs (basic visceral responses) they generally, in all cultures, interpret as confrontations with boundaries that confine them but not forces on the other side of those boundaries. In these experiences, Something/Someone gets through to us from "the Beyond," Something/Someone "More" than we are and "Other" than we are--traditionally called the supernatural, the divine/demonic, gods, God. Whether, in a particular instance, I feel this invasion as threat or promise, the emotion it produces is awe,

2. Which is one of a number of indicators of the presence/power of "the Holy"--the others being order, love, oddsness, rage, pain, and joy.

3. In church this morning (16Jan 72) a highschooler said to me "I've never had an experience of God, and am therefore an atheist." The statement--in all its honesty, ignorance, and urgency--needs gentle and firm responding and guidance, including (a) TRUE, you have not "experienced" "God," and (b) NO, you have had, and are having, many unconscious and therefore unfully realized experiences of God. The lecture has to do with (b) as propaedeutic to (a) and is therefore evangelistic. Let those beware who wish to continue to resist the biblical God!

4. To advance from REFLECTION to ACTION, refer to the following revised chart (the letters not corresponding exactly to those on the manuscript chart):

What are we to DO? Face reality, and in community-meditation-prayer test reality, vis-a-vis the threat and promise of what we experience as unconfinable by us--and not (pathologically) fight against the obtrusive-intrusive reality of "God" (hyper-, as hubris; hypo-, as apathy). ... "B" takes care of itself, but "A" takes virtues (discipline, patience, etc.) and skills.... If I go the way of hypertrophy ("overdoing it"), I specialize in one of the indicators (#2, above); e.g. love (which is the idol of the mystical-communal lifestyle in the counterculture) or rage (the idol of the militants). What, here, is "health" and "sanity" and "the will of God"?.... By what criteria (values) do we determine all the questions arising from our chart--such as what to confine my/my neighbor's energies to, and how to confine man's use of exhaustible earth-resources and man's polluting of the earth by humans-and-"good"'s production, and how achieve optimal interior disciplines in homeostatis with external controls (about which I was talking today to a member of Nixon's Pay Board--who had a column in Thursday's NYT OpEd page)?

			want to	don't w.to
can	do	can't confine/limit...	A	B
		shouldn't	C	D
	don't	should	E	F
		shouldn't	G	H
		should	I	J

5. Self-examination toward attitudinal and behavioral change should proceed on "C," "D," "I," and "J," toward the biblical goal of the praise of God in the joy of the whole creation.