

Every time I've used #621A/B with a group of counselors, the deepest, heartiest response has been when someone says "I'd be there, and tell him [the person about to undergo a possibly fatal operation] so: 'I'll be there when you open your eyes again.'" Once the counselor added "...and if it's not in this world, I'll be there with you wherever you are." Now, I've observed that each time this Dasein, this being present with the wounded one, has been suggested as the primary therapy, the suggester has been a person who knows--or has known and therefore still knows--deep personal suffering. This thinksheet is about, then, the healing of wounds [the counselee's], through wounds [the counselor's]. Those wishing to pursue the thought can't do better than to read slowly Henri Nouwen's THE WOUNDED HEALER: MINISTRY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY [Doubleday/72], and note especially the first of his three Principles of Christian Leadership [p.71]: "personal concern, which asks one man to give his life for his fellow man:...a deep-rooted faith in the value and meaning of life, even when the days look dark;...an outgoing hope which always looks for tomorrow, even beyond the moment of death."

God makes some of us, including me, "naturals" for this Dasein. Our genes are, and therefore our personal histories tend to be, traumatropic as flowers are heliotropic; not necrophilous, but white-corpuscular. Mama used to say that I was never young, and her evidential backup was usually "Even in his early teens he went around visiting the sick and dying." It wasn't a neurotic fixation on hurts, pains, troubles. It was a knowing, through my own supersensitivity and painful shyness, that I could, and therefore should, be good news to the distressed. [Yet, despite a love of chemistry, I never had any inclination toward medicine, nor have I had to "spiritual healing"--neither of which I put down as therapies.] (Mama died young--87--and so got to see only the early stages of my getting younger....but that's another story. Still another story is what this life-orientation has meant devotionally, the fascination-perplexity-love vis-a-vis the Crucified One. And another story,...politically, the raging against active and systemic injustice, with wanderings among the option-responses.)

The rest of this thinksheet connects with something I've not used in the decade since my National Council of Churches debate with Billy Graham, viz. my beginning "irenic context" which of course the press passed over in a hurry in order to get to the fireworks.

"The believers say, 'We have seen the Lord!' The world says, 'Unless I see the wounds, I will not believe.'--Jn.20:24-26. Jesus makes himself one with the world's wounds. These wounds, his and the world's, are the only context for proclaiming and understanding the text of the Word which he is and brings. ...In doctrine I am an orthodox believer; in attitudes, a liberal; in social, economic, and political matters, a radical. My technical self-description is 'orthodox open,' one who prays that our holy hope will in the power of the Spirit make available to us our holy heritage for ministry through the holy here and now. The heart of our holy heritage is a Story...about the Holy Love, source of all life, that became a Jew and we killed him and he didn't stay dead and is with us now and will be at the end of the age....the words of this Story--the gospel Story--and the wounds of the world are meant for each other, and evangelism is the process through which God enables the world, through us who believe this good news, to understand its wounds through Christ's wounds and its opportunities through Christ's resurrection. Because of the inseparability of our Lord's words and wounds, we Christians should judge fraudulent a debate in which ideological hardening occurs through the polarization of wound [the actionists] and word [the verbalists]....It is inauthentic to be a partisan of the Word without wounds or a partisan of wounds without the Word...." ....Counseling is being present to and with the Word.