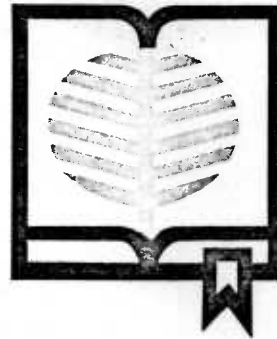


# NEW YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CONTINUING THE BIBLICAL SEMINARY IN NEW YORK  
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Nov-Dec/75

WILLIS E. ELLIOTT, Dean  
Exploratory Programs

Dear Libby,

I've just reread your notes on the communion meditation at our Kirkridge "Theo-therapy" retreat, and your completion of the generic stem "As I leave here today, the most important thing about me is...." I have this on my heart and in my head as I write this response to your request that I critique your "Proposal for a New Institution for the New Town of Columbia, Maryland." Knowing you, I'm sure you approve of my sharing these thoughts with some others of fellow-concern--and thus the thinksheet theme and number at the top of this page.

1. How like you, with all the painful deeper soundings of your spirit, to title it PAVILLION OF LIFE....A JOYOUS JOURNEY TOWARD RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS, with "inscription ...somewhere on the side of the Pavillion: Dedicated to our Creator God and to His Kind of Living, Whole, Adult, Aware Relationships"! And the "inscription over and around the arched door: Can you find your way to where you are going?"
2. Before I go further with my commentary, let me alert you to a scholarly effort [in the current--Sept/75--JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE] to make a fresh association between the city and the messianic biblical theme: "The Servant-City: A New Interpretation of the 'Servant of the Lord' in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah," by Leland Edward Wilshire, who is pastor of United Community Parish, Campbell MN 56522. Of course no identification of "the messiah" will be without remainder: the theme is by nature open, yearning, discerning the liberating-healing action of God in history particular and general, personal and communal. We Christians claim that our Lord Jesus comes closest to the spirit of the Servant Songs, and deserves the title "Messiah" [Greek, "Christ"]; but the Jesus-Event obviously does not exhaust the messianic expectation [and thus patchwork exegesis: "the Second Coming," etc.]. We are, thus, free to use the messianic image more expansively, and this Wilshire has done in suggesting that the primary reference in 2nd Isaiah is to "the cultic-center city of Zion-Jerusalem" (p.367), whose suffering prepares it for its redemptive mission. Diagrammatically that I am, I'd suggest this be drawn as a triangle with "city" at the top, "individual" and "Israel-collective" at the other angles, and "messiah" as an up-arrow bisecting the horizontal line and reaching "city." [By the way, "city" is masculine in the Songs and, elsewhere in Is., feminine: androgyny!] Anyway, bringing "city" and "messiah" together should make some fresh sparks jump across the gap. "New towns" can be more than just new "ways of life." They can be sources of therapeutic vision for old towns, and stimulants to hope for drooping youth. Extremes to avoid: "the sacred city" and [Cox's title] "the secular city."
3. I like your inductiveness and action-orientation. Instead of imposing a dogma, you worked hard, over a long period, with the implicit question *What is loving behavior?* "Live the [ultimate] questions," says Rilke--and what is more ultimate than that question you've lived all these years, and especially since the breaching of the most intimate relationship? [ If anyone should ask whether your question is

an ultimate question, I should ask in reply *Are you for or against humanity?* That question has a Schopenhauer-Nietzsche ring: am I for power or truth or love? As a Christian humanist, I am for the kind of power which appears in our species as willingness to sacrifice for truth and to die for love. Around me I behold multitudes who, instead of dying for love and sacrificing for truth, are drying up for lack of love [active/passive, i.e. loving and being loved] and are sacrificing truth to mere survival. Short of violence, which would be self-canceling, everything possible should be done to impress the truth, and ultimacy, and urgency of your question, which so awes me that I kept putting this letter aside, preferring tasks less onerous with the numinous. Your Antioch thesis was a joy to read, but a burden to critique. For one thing, it stimulated me to Thinksheet #717.] Yes, inductive: "the Basic Tenets emerged as the ideological backdrop of [long studies of] loving behavior, and it was exciting to rediscover Christ's Mindset in this way. It made clear that we were asked by Him to have four loves:...God,...Self..., Others (especially mate),...Brotherhood (the Kingdom of God on earth)." Scholars have been properly, but too, diffident about Jesus' consciousness: a tough balance, as you can see in my #70, which was written in an hour after spending a week in bed a few years ago. A caveat: The girls are apt to see Jesus as love, and the boys as truth. The boys tend to be badnews for relationships by hypo-attention, and the girls by hyper-attention. Love is relationship, truth is adventure: let each attend to what, innately and by cultural overemphasis, is the "property" of the other.

4. The fact that you come to your task of a therapeutic heart, which means also a humanist educational heart, for the new city, Columbia, Md.--the fact, I say, that you come to this task out of, and from within, the center of a flame of recent pain, viz. the rupture of the most intimate relationship and only total one--that fact is vital, and to be kept ever in mind, in considering your vision and effort. Our Lord's Prayer asks for all that community needs: centering ["May your name be sacred"], vision ["May your rule come"], sustenance [...bread"], and restoration of relationship ["...forgive..."]. AMEN! The biblical way of seeing, and living in, the world is not in love-dependency, making everything "hang" [etym. of "depend"] on love, but rather in God-dependency, making everything "hang" [Mt.22.40] on God-devotion, God-honoring, God-love, God-obedience [in the phrase Jesus uses, the phrase denoting the central Jewish sanction, "the sanctification of the Name"]. Two ways to err on this are [1] to reduce the God-experience to mere mystery [the Eastern-hemisphere temptation] and [2] to reduce the God-experience to mere morality/ethics [the Western-hemisphere temptation, therefore yours]. Against Victorian romantics, who reduced everything to "love," GBS reduced everything to truth--so that "Vivian" [etym. "life"] in "Mrs. Warren's Profession" will have nothing to do with love but is a paragon of [yes, the boys' virtue!] truth. I'm saying that while you do not reduce the mystery out of God, I worry that you are romantic-leaning about "love." Liberation theology tends to be like Vivian, but some little more of that in your vision would make it both more true to the gospel and more attractive to the boys. CONCLUSION: The Pavilion must have androgenous reality as well as androgenous image. That would be a breakthrough, and a reconciliation--a defeat of the mutual alienation of the sexes.

5. And that other description I gave of your project in paragraph 3: inductive and action-oriented. Bravo, for there is so much fantasy toward the better city and society, and so little courage toward it! [Tonight, Christmas Sunday '75, I'm leading a group on the second phrase in Niebuhr's prayer: "the courage to change what can [and should be] changed."]

6. I wholeheartedly applaud your desire to evolve an education/therapy beyond the current fragmentary-in-base ones: "a reliable, dependable framework for counseling, one which would not be partial, but whole," and am with you in believing that the biblical is both the richest and the most comprehensive base. A severe difficulty here is that all the secular therapeutic traditions except logotherapy are antagonistic to the biblical base [Jung, by gnosticizing it away from its essential rootedness in history and concreteness].

7. Since we can't avoid public self-descriptions, phrases which tend to become slogans that seduce and capture us in the process of our using them to release our message, extreme care has to be used in crafting the phrases. So some comments on the Pavillion description as the "new counseling process for personal wholeness and brotherhood behavior, or 'Christo-therapy'":

a. "Brotherhood" sets ill with many women, and feminist men, today, though it was a great word on the lips of your patron Harry Emerson Fosdick [whom, as I told you, I admired both as an honored schoolmate of my father and as one I heard preach in Riverside Church and elsewhere, and for years on the radio]. But "brotherhood" is assonant with "behavior"--and what synonym would be better? Yet so many women now knee-jerk reject anything associated with "sexist language" that I fear you cannot use "brotherhood." Tough luck. What to do?

b. "Behavior" now, for many sophisticates, signals "behaviorist," and so is as much a red flag as "brotherhood." Just a few weeks ago, a woman in my office turned me off when I used the word "behavior," and refused to listen further when I substituted "action"! CONCLUSION: Change "brotherhood behavior" to "humane action." [Yes, "action" for some rightists connotes "actionistic," i.e. "radical"--but....!]

c. "New" has both an arrogant and a Mad Avenue connotation. Why not say simply "a counseling process..."? CONCLUSION: "Christo-therapy, a counseling process for personal wholeness and humane action."

8. In Chap. IV, "partaker" has an ecclesial-eucharistic ring. How about the common secular term "participant"? But for other reasons you may be willing to pay the church-smell cost of "partaker." After all, anybody who gets past "Christo-therapy" would be stopped by "partaker"!

9. "Note to Reading" begins with an asterisk without footnote.

10. Thanks, in the same note, for crediting me with "theotherapy." I've just reviewed Roszak's seventh book, UNFINISHED ANIMAL, in which the phrase-of-vantage is "visionary humanism"--a global gnosticism for education and therapy, sanctioning the biblical ethic [sadly, for the biblical ethic is better supported by the biblical sanction, "Creator/creation-creature"], as a stage beyond "secular humanism." "Christian [or biblical] humanism" is an old, just honored, and still live phrase; in fact, it can now have more life than ever before, what with advances in psychology and sociology.

11. Your first chapter aims at a "delivery system" for human-relations training and retraining on a Christian base, and liberation ["a way out of the misery of broken relationships" (p.1)]. On p.6 you say the breakup of your own primary relationship was "unnecessary," and from conversation with you I know what weight you intend the word to bear. But I wonder.... Who knows what's "necessary" to our maturing? And whether being handier at preventing ruptures would further or impede maturing? "Faith" relates to truth as "belief" [masculine, as in Allport's definition, last chap. of THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS RELIGION] and to love as "trust" [feminine, as in Oates' definition, last chap. of PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION: individual aspect, community impossible without trustworthy, reliable persons; collective aspect, sustaining trust impossible without a community of trust--cp. Pastor Niemoeller's not "How can I be saved?" but, now, "How can I find a neighbor I can trust?"].

12. The philosophy of an enterprise is self-screening: you tend to get the folks of whom what you proclaim as truth is true, and the others tend to be invisible to you. Counseling tends to get folks whose EROS is stronger than their THANATOS, and the courts tend to get the reverse folks. This selectivity principle tends to warp philosophy into overemphasis, and this is what I see in your p.1 statement that "Inhumanity stems largely from ignorance, innocence or naivete. People don't want to hurt each other. They don't want divorce, crime, wars. But, human beings can't

seem to get on top of their human relationships and know how to deal with them." Yet on the very next p. you beautifully spell out what's needed, viz. "a model of what works and the steps it takes to get there....a high relational capacity."

13. P.3: "We go from feelings or ideas, to attitudes, to behavior." As you know from my diamond diagram, I see "image"-feelings and "ideas" in dialectical relationship, and therefore don't like your "or." I'd prefer "and," or, even better, "to." As for "ideology" in the same paragraph, it's politically a no-no term, so you'd do better to use worldview [Germanism from Weltanschauung] or, better, worldpicture [Germanism from Weltbild]: a way of seeing the world can indeed be sick or wholesome, but an ideology-which is a worldview developed with a view to coercing others to conformity with it--cannot be healthy for anybody.

14. P.4: Pavillion to mix "serious" and "delights." Yes! But because the culture sees these as enemies, it'll take extra effort to evidence that play and depth are partners in wholeness.

15. Same p.: "open not only to the local community..., but to transients." As a Community Center with Information Booth? Do Betty and Bret figure in this with their bookstore? [As I mentioned, they're alumni of my MidCareer Exploration, and fairly close....he and I lunch together sometimes....they sent their daughter's antiwar book recently.]

16. P.9: "Personal growth alone....is downright dangerous." Yes! So many rich and near-rich are now self-mesmerized into narcissistic, hyochondriacal zombies! "Personal growth alone" is a "growth" in the pathological sense, i.e. a tumor or cancer. In a few days we're having in our home Mrs. Willian Sloane Coffin and two others to consider her vision of how, in weekend and week intensives, to help these victims turn their "liberation" outward toward social needs, political action, urban reconstruction--in short, caring, including lay counseling. She's a person you should keep in mind for what you're doing...and there are so many other names, and references....but I'll not burden you further till you're farther along on the project.

17. [Libby, it was at this point that I got sick for eight days, and have just managed to catch up. Sorry for the delay!] The closest thing we've had, since early Christian times, to a pan-Christian statement of faith is the Catholic-Protestant THE COMMON CATECHISM [Seabury/75], on which currently I'm teaching a course. P.183: "Either we make Jesus a teacher of purely human wisdom or in acknowledging the raising of Jesus from the dead we believe in the "God of the living" whose representative he claimed to be. If the resurrection of Jesus is too much to believe, so also is the whole idea of faith in the living God." Cast in a European rather than an American or Asian or African mold, this solid stuff ought to be in the dialogic process of your center, which you want to be [1] undogmatic but [2] openly, joyfully Christian.

18. That CHRISTOTHERAPY: HEALING THROUGH ENLIGHTENMENT, is a 1975 Seabury book, by Bernard J. Tyrrell. BUDDHATHERAPY is a better term for "enlightenment" healing, for "Buddha" in Sanskrit means "an enlightened one"! I still prefer THEOTHERAPY, for theocentric efforts at delivering life from false centers, benighted or enlightened!

19. I like the idea of a Pavillion film, first. I suggest a 28" CBS/TV program, and so have sent a xerox of this letter to David Pomeroy of NCC. [C. herewith.]

20. "Therapy" is a down word anyway the public looks at it. It automatically defines "health" as a temporary conditions between diseases, finally a failed effort.

Furthermore, its both presumptive and inflammatory [of "the health professionals"]. "Education" ain't much better: folks won't stand still while you educate 'em. "Growth" is even worse! "Pavillon of Life," is great, for "pavillion" has joyful, playful connotations, and "life" can't be a down word! "Right relationships" is fair, though the phrase is Buddhist and may mislead on that count; also, "right" has dogmatic connotations--but all the synonyms I can think of are worse! We, too, enjoyed Expo '67; and your story of it deserves to be in your introduction rather than on p.39.

21. I'm disturbed by the shape you give your presenting, formative question (also on p.39): "How can we help the people of Columbia to find meaning in life, to learn how to love and relate?" I'd be happier without the two qualifiers, so that the primary question addressed would be "How can we help people find meaning?" [Maybe I'm influenced by a present project of mine, viz. writing a book on "Sense-Making."] Try thinksheet #755 [enclosed] for biblical rootage, rather than in "love," in truth-trust. I know you care about the needy world, and in focusing on Columbia are not copping out on the rest of struggling, suffering humanity; but I fear the self-project with which many would come to the Pavillion under this presenting question. I see "self-fulfilment" [or "-realization" or "-actualization"] as inherently a sinful, sick project: sinful, as incurved on and around the ego-self [Luther's "incurvatus"]; sick, as inescapably narcissistic and escapist. I know I know I know....! But my worry here is based not on biblical dogmatism [theocentricity] but on participant observation of the human potential movement from its earliest days. American mid/upper-class self-indulgence. There are ways to outwit this Tendenz...but perhaps more of this later.

22. Here and there you say "Christotherapy" is "new." A quarter century ago I studied with Fritz Kunkel, and his approach--as in his CREATION CONTINUES, an exposition of the Gospel of Matthew--was precisely that....But of course there are always precedents. You are relatively correct.

23. In your document, the closest thing I find to an intention-formula is on p.20: "Brotherhood Behavior counseling and training, which is Christo-therapy plus behavior<sup>1</sup> modification." Folks, even sophisticated folks, go bananas when you say "behavioral modification" or even "behavioral" or even "behavior," so much is this language presently owned by B.F. Skinner. But what else have we? "Change." "Growth." "Maturity." "Development." "Fulfilment." "Sainthood." "Humanization." "True humanity." "Mellowing." "Life-flowering." "Adulthood." "The ripening of life."

24. On 13, 24, 40, 45-47 you mention frighteningly expensive hardware. I'm glad you've converted to beginning with a film!

25. Don't be too modest, though of course it's better to have others presenting you as Columbia's founder. I like this on p.40: "I was given the gift to be able to generate the concepts of Columbia....this Pavillion idea completes my hopes that maybe we can help the family successfully and joyfully relate, and evoke each one's unique gifts...." QUESTION: If you want this sharp a family-orientation, perhaps "family" should be in the title: "Pavillion of Life: A Joyous Journey for the Family" [the last word inclusive of, but open beyond, the biofamily].

26. The project's nub is the "four loves, or stages of relational maturity" [p. 36]. Another time, I'd like to help sharpen them up.

27. Of our two sets of Founding Parents--the biblical in New England, and the Enlightenment in Philadelphia--you lean toward the latter in your view of human nature. On p.37 you assume that nonrepentance is from "unaware[ness] of..."

inner workings." So much truth in this insight-therapy tradition, Freudian and Buddhist; so much other, and now more neglected truth, in "sin" [WHATEVER BECAME OF SIN?--I'm sure you've read Menninger's book]. "Judging" [= "condemning"] is the danger of the latter; gnostic imperialism, the danger of the former, along with sentimentality and humanistic species self-congratulation.

28. A theological comment on your LOVE-orientation (current pop word, "relational theology"): The Gospel of John, the "love" gospel, along with the John letters, is in danger of limiting "love" to "the Brotherhood"--exactly as in your sequence [p.37]: "We must love at all four points, love of God, self, other, and the Brotherhood." + the unlovable world! I know you believe this addition, but it's significant--is it not?--that you don't list it.

29. I speak of the humanistic appreciation-disciplines ["the arts"] and the humanistic understanding-disciplines [theology, sociology, psychology]. Should the Pavillion be topheavy with the third of these latter three? I'm reminded of something James Leuba says in his A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF RELIGION [Mac/12] and GOD OR MAN [Kegan Paul/34]: On the spectrum of disciplines [astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology--a sequence ascendant toward man], the closer we get to man the greater the skepticism. In the series, psychology is faith's greatest enemy, and your project includes converting it into a friend. OK, but....

30. I like Bettelheim's "total milieu therapy model" except for "therapy." How about just "total milieu model"?

31. P.54 has the tough-minded, experience-shaped quality I should hope the whole project would have. For "hurting," I'd prefer "hurting and harming." [Ditto, 1st line on p.64.]

32. Good ol' American "how to" [p.64] is the cure for "wars or blind spots or divorces"? The skills gap is huge, yes, but....the ambivalences of the human heart and the ambiguities of human history. But presenting material on the Pavillion has a right to skills-claiming as a way out [lit., "exodus"] of many difficulties, especially for those who would use the Pavillion facilities.

33. Your setting [p.42] reminds me of E.F. Schumacher's great SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL. Good to have, in cp. with rest of Columbia, "contrast in warmth, scale and texture." Alternatives to "ancient [Near] Eastern"? Contemporary, without unwanted over/under-tones?

34. Your "The Nature of This Project" is more value-specific and theological than the document itself: good. "Man cannot possibly know what is intended for him behaviorally out of empirical data alone" [p.ii], though of course it's Maslow's project to prove this false by bio-grounding an adequate ethic, what in philosophy is called "a naturalistic ethic." I agree with you, not Maslow --though with Maslow we can go farther toward a public ethic than with any other psychologist with the possible exception of Frankl. I've many notes on this paper, as well as on the document, notes uncommented on....but the main things I wanted to say I've gotten said.

35. The wider context is social change, which comes about "normally" through the combining of external pressures and "vision," with its internal pressures. You're great on the latter; more needs to be said on the former....Why not quit with a quote from your #1 guru, Fosdick [A FAITH FOR TOUGH TIMES (Harper/52), pp.77f]: "Despite our deficiencies, still in our churches at their best, lives are transformed, character is built, courage is renewed, faith is strengthened, ideals...are kept alive, public -spirited devotion is engendered, and God's kingdom of righteousness on earth is made a living hope."

*James & Pamela  
Kallis*