

[Study this word in Darton's CONCORDANCE and Richardson's THEOLOGICAL WORD-BOOK, and possibly also in former thinksheets on it.]

On "trust," this thinksheet is limited to exhibiting the force of the word in various common sociocontexts. My motive for writing it is to exhibit a crippling phenomenon, viz. the fact that the warm/person/intimacy end of the spectrum now dominates when the word is used in my circles. I say "crippling," for the word should be free to serve the full range from the mechanical [e.g., "I trust this coupling not to leak."] to the personal [e.g., "I would trust my life to that person."]. Here, I exhibit the full range by the use of the balance analogy. I use a fine balance in winemaking and photography, and must remember to rectify the underbalance before using the scale else the pans will not function honestly: the word "trust" will not function honestly unless its denotation is freed from ideological-connotative captivity, as in the Humanistic Psychology or Behavioral or Human Potential or NTL movements. (The person/task balance derives originally from NTL.)

The question of balance can be stated either way:
How can we get the job done without being too hard on people? [EFFICIENCY as primary target.]
How can we honor people, and further their growth, while getting the job done? [INTIMACY as primary target.]
 The overarching theological question might be stated as
How can we further justice and joy, and thus the glory of God, whose "kingdom" is to be "on earth as in heaven"?

person task
 INTIMACY EFFICIENCY
 MODEL F: The Family



In MODEL F, "trust" means interpersonal vulnerability, such confidence in each other that betrayal is least expected and most easy as well as most painful. One's stance vis-a-vis the other is *passive* in the sense that no energy is invested in self-defense, but *active* in the senses that (1) energy flows between persons (2) in expectation that the payoff in human values will appear "between man and man" [to use the title of Buber's second most famous book]. "Righteousness" is this behavior, and "sin" is any cageful or halfhearted commitment to each other, arising from (1) commitment to other value(s) or (2) suspicion or doubt of the other(s).

In MODEL W, "trust" is *active*. As the "task" of the work-world is "getting the job done," "trust" means relying on someone to shoulder his/her share of the task: it is "trust to...." A person's character is only indirectly in sight, viz. as it bears on responsible behavior vis-a-vis getting the collective job done. "Sin" is incompetence, unreliability, or both; "righteousness" is nothing but getting the job done at an acceptable level of performance. Intimacy is viewed suspiciously, as either irrelevant or dysfunctional: efficiency is the target value.

MODEL W: Workworld



In MODEL C, the values of intimacy (concern for persons) and efficiency (getting the job done) intertwine. I use the term "church" because that is the sphere of my usual commitment to this type of society: the gospel is both community and mission. A church institution that grinds people is hypocritical, but so is a church that bogs down in "human relations" problems at the expense of mission. General comment: the local church tends to the latter.

MODEL C: Church

