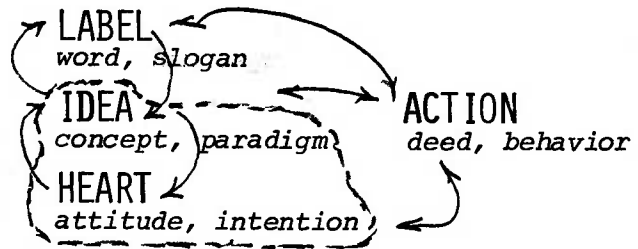


If you throw food (not bread, please: bad for them, + eutrophy for the pond) to the ducks on our pond, they swim to it as fast as iron filings to a magnet. These images fit how I come to decide to do a thinksheet: something is the food, the magnet, (a 3rd image) the catalyst. For this thinksheet, it's a poem of J. Franklin Pineo: *Christ, forgive us!/We paste the label of your name/On deeds and attitudes/Whose like you bitterly condemned,/Paying for your fearlessness/Upon a cross of wood.//Christ, awake us!/Face us with the truth. The outer show/Means nothing in the eyes of God/If we condone the wrong within./God does not read the labels...* Here's a visual matrix for displaying what I want to expound and illustrate:

1. The wisdom of all times and climes warns against buying a pig in a poke (without opening the "poke" (bag, cf. "pocket") to peer in: "Appearances are deceiving." "Things are not always what they seem." "All that glitters is not gold." "It's



not the beard that makes the philosopher." "The cowl does not make the monk." "The face is no index to the heart." In our theistic religion, God models this wisdom--e.g., 1Sam.16.7: "The LORD said, 'Pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is...I do not judge as man judges. Man looks at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart.'" And Jn.7.24: "Stop judging by external standards, and judge by true standards." And 2Cor.5.12: Beware of "those who boast about a man's appearance and not about his character."

2. On the visual, the dotted line is for the innerness of heart and idea. The arrows on the left side indicate (1) the interdependence of heart/idea/label and (2) the flow of influence: one's mindset, orientation, purpose, attitude, intention ("heart," including conscious and unconscious--Hebrew, *lev(b)*) predisposes one to receiving/creating certain sign-sets, sense-making frames, paradigms ("idea" or concept) and rejecting others; one then selects/creates +/- (relative/pejorative) labels/slogans to signal accepted/rejected ideas/actions; then the labels/slogans feed back into, pollute/enrich, the ideas, which in this reconstructed forms affect the "heart." The arrows on the right side indicate the interaction between each and all of the factors on the left: we become inwardly what we do outwardly, just as we are outwardly (behavior, deed) what we are inwardly despite our persona (masking).

3. Why bother to display the dynamics in the visual? Because most of what I hear/read is, in some way, out of reality and into illusion, whether naively (ignorantly), absentmindedly (at-the-moment unawareness of some part of the dynamic), or rhetorically (for purposes, goodwilled or illwilled, of persuasion). God's gift of reason demands that we spot deceptions (especially self-deceptions!), check for anything important we may be leaving out, and inform ourselves toward more intelligent-compassionate decision and deed.

4. While it's a philosophical question whether "rational" thinking (as described above) is possible, the ideal of nonideological thinking is clear--ideology (e.g., Marxian "critical" thinking) being a power-interested shortcut to the arduous effort to think "rationally."

5. So, in light of all the above, what's the "Good News" (evangel-

over

\*The book is famous for exposing/lampooning the nonrational factors in "the conventional wisdom." As such, it's an essay in remedial thinking/knowing.

ism)? Biblically, it's the being/doing/speaking of what intends and effects recentering of persons/societies in YHWH-Jesus, "that the earth be filled with the knowing of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." Fundamentalists of all stripes use biblical phrases as slogans, shorthand, for their understandings of the "good news." Successfully avoiding bad news (e.g., hell, oppression) is itself, and an implicate of, good news; but the biblical phrases, biblical means to overcoming amnesia about YHWH-Jesus, become, as slogans, ends in themselves--the "good news" becomes, perversely, humanity-centered, as deliverance from hell or poverty or....Compassion for humanity as an expression of passion for God becomes the substitute for passion for God (in the individualistic narcissism of Orphic soul-salvation or the socialistic narcissism of "liberation theology").

6. The good news of failure--that our schemes and slogans are working mainly to throw us all into chaos--is good news because it opens up the possibility of a theological renewal as radical as we need. Some lines of this will be: (1) Sophistication about the self-reducing power of shortcuts to thinking, i.e., of slogans; (2) "Radical monotheism" (H.Rich. Niebuhr); (3) Rejection of automatisms (Darwinian, Marxian, Freudian, Durkheimian, et al); (4) Recognition that "ideas" (concepts, paradigms) rule history, all actionisms being dupes of ideas and anti-intellectualism being self-defeating; (5) Metaphysical modesty (listening with intelligence and love to other ultimate paradigms) + metaphysical courage (proclaiming how it is in the universe/world/history/soul according to one's lights); and (6) A clear understanding and praxis on both sides of the firm line dividing the "natural sciences" (Naturwissenschaften), which are nomothetic-positivistic-pragmatic (searching for and based on general "laws") and the "human sciences" (Geisteswissenschaften), which are idiographic-hermeneutic-spiritual (studying individual events, history, human-values-laden ideas)--against the American woeful tendency to try to reduce the latter to the former....*QUALIFICATION ON (4)*: Ideas rule till subverted by underground shifts of events--as Galbraith (26, THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY, Mentor/58/63) qualified Keynes' bon mot: Ideas "yield not to attack of other ideas but to the massive onslaught of circumstance with which they cannot contend." \*

7. Quick notes on a few ILLUSTRATIONS:

(1) ABORTION--The decibel level of screaming on both sides is increasing, and the Supreme Court justice who drafted Wade v. Roe was shot at yesterday (5Mar85). The church should help develop nonideological thinking on this, an even more "insane" debate than that over nukes.

(2) NICARAGUA--Why is Reagan maddeningly, persistently, out of reality in his rhetoric here? He's inferring the worst from the Marxian automatism built into the Sandinistas' founding documents (i.e., "history" calls them to expand their good news beyond their national boundaries). In biblical light, the Nicaraguan government is (1) corrupt at the core and (2), in the meat, the most humane and progressive the world has ever known within the sphere of the Marxian automatism. The USA should get out, giving aid and comfort to neither side.

(3) SOUTH AFRICA--Fresh, nonideological thinking could get past slogans ("apartheid," "one-person-one-vote," et al).

(4) STARRETT HOUSING, BROOKLYN--Should the Dept. of Justice's "equal access" be permitted to destroy (by "white flight") this well-integrated community? I hope not, as does virtually everybody in the project.