

As I write this thinksheet [3Dec75], the fifth assembly of the WCC is in session. Of the first, the theme was "Man's Disorder and God's Design": the WWII experience of DISintegration consciousness-raised as to the need/task of integrating, and doing so on "God's design." This intervening 1/4th century has seen further disintegrating, and further attempts at integration: "Jesus Christ Frees and Unites" is the appropriate theme of the current WCC assembly.

1. Note the importance of deprivation and attention thereto. "You don't appreciate your health till you lose it." The present American yearnings for purity, simplicity, private and public integrity are Vietnam-Watergate inspired and illumined. The counterculture strives against the bureaucratized technopsyche of [Marcus Raskin] four false integrations ["colonies of the mind"]: violence (governmental authority), plantation (GNP and the economy), channeling (the educational establishment), and dream (masscom)--to the end [to adapt Eric Berne's "game-free"] we just might, in old age, become colony-free. Theodore Roszak's latest [THE UNFINISHED ANIMAL (Random/75)] decries both the false cosmos of the culture, and the irresponsible acceptance of the below-chaos [the "subconscious"] and the above-chaos [the "supraconscious," i.e. the transcendent in its countercultural ethos that anything goes as long as it's odd].
2. The same dynamic of struggling to breathe order when sinking in chaos and "pluralism" appears in the sense-making strain of post-positivistic philosophy and post-libidinous psychotherapy [supremely, Frankl]. "Nothing makes sense any more" is a wail heard increasingly by priests old and new, sacred and secular. For this complaint, "salvation" = life-sustaining sense-making. "Doing theology" includes critiquing the quality of this sense-making with a view to improving the quality. "The Kingdom of God" as the ultimate sense is also the intimate sanity and, necessarily vague though it is, the political criterion.
3. The psychosocial tension between ORDER as deposit ["sacred"] from former experiences of crust-breaking transcendence ["holy"] and ODDNESS as shocking confrontation with the threat to present order and, potentially, with the promise of re-ordering ["new being"]--this is the heart of my course in "The Holy in the Common" [on which see thinksheets #14, #15, #19, and #239]. If, instead of re-opening to the Holy [as did Moses at the burning bush and Jesus at his baptism] when so confronted, a person, group, or culture digs in against the force of the confrontation, the result is not divine renewal but demonic possession [what I call the "sacrosanct"]. Church and theological energies can be spent in creative cosmizing in the present cultural chaos, or in sanctifying sacrosanct values, processes, and institutions.
4. I believe that the earth's most powerful and crucial current tension is between the freedom struggle of rising expectations ["liberation," decolonialization, etc.] and the meaning struggle [the cumulative efforts to form life, to whatever degree it may be "free," into significance--knowing that much of the past's successes in "freedom" have ironically increased insignificance, meaninglessness, aimlessness]. Psychotherapy in general, and pastoral counseling in particular, is tipping the balance from freedom from to freedom to. "Freedom to" requires form, internal/external Gestalt, faith both in our forming power and in some degree of cosmic cooperation with our cosmizing projects [i.e., a universe that is, to an adequate degree, "friendly"]. In his latest [THE COURAGE TO CREATE (Norton/75)], Rollo May builds his case on a need our culture has long neglected, viz. the need and "passion for form." In theology [BLESSED RAGE FOR ORDER (Seabury/75)], David Tracy has just done the same thing--proclaiming his "revisionism" [of U. of Chicago liberalism, via his own Roman Catholicism] as more adequate than the four other competing analogical models in theology [orthodox, liberal, neo-orthodox, radical].
5. I cosmize by visualizations and thinksheets....and love...and....