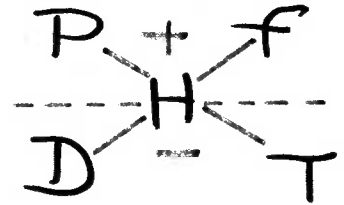


they are the official guardians of the dysfunctional-antihuman tabus.....What's "an acceptable level" of soil depletion, pollution, death, birth, responsibility for life-death-biosphere-inorganic/fossil resources, medical care [which has cancerously outrun population-control], waste, "mental health," poverty, violence, mendacity, corruption,.....?

Over the globe and through the millenia, the "natural" religious leader is a person community-recognized as having had "supernatural" experience and thus to be in touch with the "super"vening, the transcendent realm perceived as decisively over, and at least operationally discontinuous from, this natural world of dailiness, profaneness, secularity. Indeed, "religion" is personal-communal experience and practice of the transcendent, which the shaman-leader has experienced only more intensely and practices ritually only more extensively. Religion is the experience and practice of the transcendent as ultimate [and therefore unavoidable demand with threat and promise] and sacred [and therefore both dangerous and fascinating]; and "Holy" is the name of the One, the Transcendent, so encountered and besought and celebrated. Here is a working model, a chiastic for counseling as well as self-examination, teaching, and preaching. The letters represent the words whose first letters are underlined [above]. The P-T axis is ultimate-interpersonal, and the F-D axis is sacred-intrapersonal. Accordingly, the first axis is dualistic, more than "at least operationally discontinuous," and includes biblical religion; the second axis is monistic, the discontinuity only a seeming, a maya. +/- refer to the so-called positive/negative feelings, in ministry continuing to be addressed with Ralph Sockman's clever phrases: those in P-F we should afflict, and comfort those in D-T.



1. The religious leader need not have ecstatic-transcendent experience [such as Ac. 9,22,26], but it helps (a) destabilize-disengage him/her from "the world" and (b) credential her/him in the community's eyes as one able to reveal the secrets of "that [primordial-sacred] time" [illud tempus] and therefore to guide the community and its individuals, protecting against demonic disintegration from the destabilizing forces of internal dissension and of invasive alien modes of sacral existence. A leader without direct transcendent "personal experience of the Holy" [Streng, Way #1] lives either by tele-transcendent [second-hand story-telling of when the sky hung low] or by pseudo-transcendent authority. In either case, religion in her/his hands tends to lose its spiritual/ethical tension and degenerate either into feeling-tripping [of high or low culture] or into either petty-private moralism or grand-public, "social-action" ethics. Either way, the people are underled in handling their public-private P-T/F-D experiences, feelings, images, ideas toward more human life.

2. In Kulturkampf or future-shock, personal-communal internal stresses become so urgent that little energy gets used externally: "maintenance" as self-protection and institutional survival gets most of the attention, with little to spill over into "mission." But is surviving without mission really surviving? Certainly not as a "missionary structure"--but then as a what? a zombie? a fetus? a "growth" (tumor)?The rest of this thinksheet is a discursus on the public phrase "acceptable level" --especially as applied to the religious leader's response to the population bomb.

3. Today (6 Jan 76) a WallStreeter talks of an "acceptable level" of risk, then tells me of his walking down the aisle with his first-to-marry daughter last Sunday: feeling oceanic, but "great" because "100% focused, insulated from the myriad of intrusions." He was surprised, and delighted, when I helped him see the religious implications of such an experience for the way he spends his life and his money....Four days earlier, p.2 of NYT had two population-bomb articles. One is dismal: Bangladesh, whose unemployment is almost 70%, will double population before fin de siecle. The other article is hopeful: Punjab is for "compulsory sterilization," something I've prayed and worked for [including with the Government of India] for more than a decade. Is smallpox vaccination, which India has, an acceptable level of coercion--and child-bearing, not? If not, what different tabus in action? And, to honor those tabus, is two million in 1976 an acceptable level of starvation-death, and ten million in 1980 [since even if we then had the food, we'd not have the delivery system]? My distress: Religious leaders appear worse than useless in facing this problem, since