

WAY #3 [LIVING HARMONIOUSLY THROUGH CONFORMITY TO THE COSMIC LAW]:
Should every community seek to balance yin-nurture / yang-challenge?

This thinksheet serves, in addition to raising this question, as report #18, on the 18th session of the '75-'76 NYTS Doc.Ministry Integration Seminar. So that the sheet may serve a general purpose, the usual practice of identifying contributions by participants' names is foregone.]

1. Several had seen last evening [15 Feb 76] Bill Moyers' interviewing of Mortimer Adler, which was sandwiched between segments of the Winter Olympics. Mort the Lug --as we used to call him at the University of Chicago, for he did not regard the face of mortal man, had no respect for persons [Gk. prosopolepsia, a sin in NT], treated all alike as faceless producers-processors of ideas--noticeably did not treat Moyers with respect, reserving the respect/disrespect responses for Moyers' ideas. NB: He did not treat Moyers with disrespect: he simply did not relate to him personally, in the respect-disrespect dimension. He did not fail to treat him with respect: one cannot fail at what one does not attempt. In short, Adler was what Adler has always been, a 100% Jewish-German-American yanger as teacher and dialectician. [In Pres. Hutchins home when I was there at the Univeristy of Chicago, Gertrude Stein bopped Mort the Lug on the head and said, "You're the kind of man who doesn't lose arguments!" And Gert's constant if not eternal companion, at evening's end, whispered to Mort, "Gertrude has said things this night that it will take her ten years to understand."].In the sphere of the intellect, Mort was and is a gold medalist in a gray clay world, an Olympian of the mind, transcending the boredom and pain of preparation and process and relating only to those who do likewise. As the Winter Olympics required each athlete's to treat him/herself as a "Ziel" [goal] machine, responding utterly to the challenge--the Olympics thus being yang-oriented--so my course work with Hutchins and Adler, who had no respect for each other or anybody else and thus made that institution a community of intellectual excitement-achievement par excellence [including the atomic bomb].

2. But was that Univeristy of Chicago, with its severe elitism of the critical intelligence, a human institution? REPLY: Do all institutions have to be "human" in the comprehensive sense? If not, should each institution have, amid its inhuman activities, a space for the fully human? And what about every degree-program? If the mentor/ee relationship in NYTS's D.Min. program is fully human, can another part of the program be inhuman, i.e. concerned about some dimension [i.e., the intellectual-integrational], instead of the full dimensionality, of the human being and mission? Since American religious institutions tend to ideologize themselves into yin compensations for the hyper-yang American civilization, can a degree program for clergy [or a clergy peer-group of any kind, including a local colleague-group] include a dominantly yang substructure? In my experience, the sad answer is no. Sad, for I see the whole Western spiritual enterprise languishing, paradoxically, from yinism [hyperfeminization] and sexism [hypermasculinization].

3. After the first hour, in which we dealt with Way #3 [yin/yang] from several perspectives vis-a-vis ministry, we spent the second hour (1) seeing a film on Koinonia Foundation [Balt. MD 21208, Box 5744], (2) interfacing that community's yin-orientation with our ministries, and (3) [back alone into our own group] critiquing Koinonia Fd. (a) in itself and (b) vis-a-vis the ways of being religious. It is [1] the opposite extreme from the U. of Chicago--i.e., nurturant instead of challenging--and as such is [2] the soft, warm nest our parishioners, largely unconsciously, press clergy to let them make American churches and synagogues into. "God" takes the shape of the members' wants, i.e. their distortedly perceived needs. "Together" is the holy abstraction, and "community" is the holy concretion, criterion, and eschatology. [Contrast Pendle Hill, which is yin-nurturant / yang-challenging. My friend Dorothea Blum, 100% nurturant, is on both staffs.]

4. So, is Pendle Hill a "human" community, and not Koinonia Foundation? Or only that other Koinonia [in Americus GA], since it does, or at least did, include political action? CONCLUSION: We individually are to be "all things to all men," and not expect our institutions to be so.

THINKSHEETS [some on Way #3] at places before the session: 479A, 482, 540, 656, 752f, 757-9.