

V. The Capacity to Orient & Adjust

On several occasions in past studies, I have quoted to you one of my favorite observations by:

Kirk, Russell. *The Roots of American Order*. La Salle: Open Court, 1974, p. 6:

If our souls are disordered, we fall into abnormality, unable to control our impulses. If our commonwealth is disordered, we fall into anarchy, every man's hand against every other man's.

Order is the first need of the soul. It is not possible to love what one ought to love, unless we recognize some principles of order by which to govern ourselves.

Order is the first need of the commonwealth. It is not possible for us to live in peace with one another, unless we recognize some principle of order by which to do justice.

Dr. Kirk understands the battle between the conscience and the sinful nature, order in the soul being the former, inability to control the body's impulses being the latter. But the norms and standards and scale of values that are developed in the conscience and which serve to bring order to the soul do not exist at the moment of a person's physical birth.

Acquisition of these principles occurs gradually and with the acceptance of each one, the order of the soul is positively altered to that degree. The reason none of us is perfect—except from the obvious presence of the sinful nature—is that in a single lifetime we are incapable of assimilating all the principles of righteous conduct.

So, our entire life is a series of alterations in our inventory of norms and standards. As we become aware of a principle of truth, and are volitionally willing to alter our view and change our mind, then the brain must have the capacity to make the adjustment.

But change to be meaningful must be ordered. Accepting a new standard which contradicts another well-established one results in a change that leads to confusion and disorder.

Dillow, Joseph C. *The Reign of the Servant Kings*. 2d ed. Hayesville, NC: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1993, pp. 8- 10.

Dr. Kirk makes the point for establishment truth:

Kirk, Russell. *The Roots of American Order*. La Salle: Open Court, 1974, p. 10:

We must have permanence in some things if change is to be improvement. Americans generally retain a respect for their old moral habits and their old political forms, because those habits and forms express their understanding of order.

Permanence and progress are not enemies, for there can be no improvement except upon a sound foundation, and that foundation cannot endure unless it is progressively renewed. What Patrick Henry called "the lamp of experience" is our hope of order refreshed.

What Kirk calls permanence and progress, we call inflexibility and flexibility. The permanent things are the absolute principles of God's Word and to those we are to remain loyally inflexible. In other areas we are instructed to be flexible. The establishment of these two categories in the brain is described by neurologists as "specificity" and "plasticity."

In order to function effectively, the human mind must possess two contradictory properties:

1. Stability in order to resist the pressures of daily exigencies which continue over a lifetime.
2. The ability to adapt and modify one's beliefs in the face of repeated experience.

This stability is called “specificity.” We always go with what we know and tend to reject the unknown, the new, or the different.

But life is a series of experiences each of which brings new challenges to our established belief system. Whenever we orient to this new information and adjust accordingly, we have become plastic—and a change occurs in our brain’s chemical makeup.

Those things which are stable or “specific” are established wheel-tracks. The laying of new wheel-tracks indicates the capability of the brain to make adjustments and indicates that it has capacity for change. Order in the soul results whenever the individual identifies what Dr. Kirk calls the “permanent things.”

Plasticity allows for spiritual growth—the ability to take in new information, the capacity to establish new wheel-tracks, and the flexibility to adjust to new circumstances.

Life demands the capacity to orient and adjust and the brain therefore must be equipped with the capability to make those adjustments. Order comes from all of this because volition is able to only choose from an inventory of what it knows and what it knows it considers absolutes.

If change is to occur, the established principle must be conceived of as flawed. The new idea must become a wheel-track offering opposition to the old idea whenever future decision-making circumstances occur.

Once again it is demonstrated that personal volition is the governor of the soul and that the individual must be held responsible for his own life. Thus, specificity is the brain’s capacity to catalogue absolute truth as a foundation for soul order.

Plasticity is the brain’s capacity to alter one’s belief system whenever a wicked wheel-track is uncovered. Whenever a wheel-track is laid, its availability for recall under pressure is contingent upon the brain’s capacity to remember.