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# A PRACTICAL VISION



OF

• THE NEW SOCIAL VEHICLE

# **A PRACTICAL VISION OF THE NEW SOCIAL VEHICLE**

written from documents prepared by  
the participants in the

**SUMMER '72 RESEARCH ASSEMBLY**

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A PRACTICAL VISION  
OF  
THE NEW SOCIAL VEHICLE

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*The task before us now,  
if we can shake our  
ancient prejudices,  
is to build the earth.*

--Teilhard de Chardin



## PREFACE

Throughout history there have been times in which cultures have exploded with creativity, in which civilizations have flowered, in which people have invented society anew in a great upsurging of the human spirit. There is a sense of destiny about such ages, of recovery of the past and of responsibility for the future. Such an age led to the invention of the Egyptian pyramids. Such an age sent explorers around the world from Elizabethan England to found an empire. Such an age is our own, pulsing with human potential in the midst of seemingly anarchic collapse. What is demanded to release that potential is a practical vision of how such an age can be made manifest. Such a practical vision was invented by the Research Assembly of Summer '71 and Summer '72.

This practical vision is based upon five fundamental screens, named the Five Pillars of social analysis. The first pillar is that society is, in the first instance, a dynamically interrelated set of processes, and only secondarily the institutions, forms and roles in which these processes find concretion. The second pillar is that of the relative imbalance which always prevails among these processes at a given time in history. The third pillar holds that the emerging social ideology of our day, the consensed rationale for society's very existence, is "All the earth belongs to all the people." The fourth pillar affirms the existence of discernable social contradictions which prevent the structural manifestations of this ideology. The fifth pillar articulates a series of practical proposals, interrelated by virtue of being built on the first four pillars, which will inclusively create the New Social Vehicle. These Five Pillars represent the work of the Summer '71 Research Assembly.

The Summer '72 Research Assembly began its work by drawing together the social proposals which will benefit all different dimensions of the social process in a single whirling set of relationships. The five have been named the Five Nexus. The first nexus calls for a recreation of the mythological basis of society in a way authentic to secular man. The second nexus proposes totally renewed educational structures and forms across the globe. The third nexus demands the reconstruction of primal community in the midst of the fragmentation of urban civilization. The fourth nexus designs authentic participation for every human being in the decisions which affect his life. The fifth nexus insists that the present economy operate self-consciously for the benefit of the whole globe.

This book is the first product of the Summer '72 Research Assembly. It paints a practical vision of the New Social Vehicle by means of an introduction and an essay on each of the five nexus. It articulates the depth longings of men in our day for a way of inventing authentic society anew. It is a call to a new age of creativity, of civilization, of life itself.

# I. INTRODUCTION

1. A stranger walked into the old city. Deliberately, almost reverently, he wandered through the deserted streets until at last he stopped before the remains of a great temple. He looked up at the crumbling masonry and broken pillars. Everywhere his eyes found only ruin of that which once had been the splendid achievement of many dreams.



2. Moving slowly through the collapsed city, he brooded aloud to the rubble, "What were your dreams?" As he searched, he tried to imagine how those now broken but once magnificent columns had looked as they had stood proudly declaring the integrity of a noble civilization. Yet he could not solve the riddle of their fall nor imagine what abrasive power had toppled them at last.

3. Restlessly, he searched for patterns in the landscape of broken stone until finally his mind began to construct a picture of what his fathers had created. With that vision his own dream for the future took on form and substance. From deep within came a ripple of laughter, the beginnings of a song. He rolled up his sleeves and began to work.

4. The reconstruction of a collapsed society cannot be accomplished simply with laughter or a song or rolled-up sleeves. We know that. And, of course, those parts of our world community out of balance are not static piles of debris. They are more like whirling, clanking machines or blinking lights and blaring horns. They are dynamic, inter-mingling complexes of problems which require a sophisticated understanding and make even experts withdraw in confusion.

5. In these pages we mean to describe a universal upwelling of determination that these problems yield. There is a shaking off of the old load of futility, a squaring of shoulders, a reaching out for the means of making things right, of insisting that social processes be responsive to the real needs of man. That time has come across the earth. And this is the laughter, the song, and the rolled-up sleeves.

6. This is a moment of wonder, shimmering with the concentrated awareness of Teilhard de Chardin's words, "Now is the time, if we can shake our ancient prejudices, to rebuild the earth."

7. This is a vortex of history within which either ancient prejudices are shaken loose, the moment seized and the earth rebuilt or the day ends, the light dies and earth decays. It is as if the future of civilization waits in a life boat at sea for a ship, any ship, headed wherever, to lift it on board and so determine its future course.

8. Again, it is as if mankind prepares for a great testing like going through, vicariously, the manhood rites of passage among a tribe of aboriginals in New Guinea. At the time of the rite a sixty-foot tower is erected. Novitiates are taken to the top of this tower and vines are tied to their ankles. Then, in a spectacular drama, they plunge headfirst from the tower toward the ground. Just before their heads smash against the earth, the vines snap taut, stretch, then contract, bouncing them back up, unhurt and transformed. Boys have shown themselves men.



9. Aware persons know that such a moment has come for our planet. We stand on the platform inwardly trembling with dread that comes with knowing that only men, not boys, can do what is necessary. These pages contain a series of essays which describe how creative energies within the global village can be released. Five great brushstrokes, or concentrations of proposals, each identified by the word "nexus," hold these insights.

10. In centuries past, social change has come through powerful individuals such as Lao Tze, Luther, Simon Bolivar and Attaturk. Now, such change seeks a people through which to work its way. Once, a single man made the headfirst plunge. Today, it is a people who poise, ten thousand at once, for the leap. Out of such terrible purposefulness emerge the practical tools contained in these proposals.

11. Dreams take shape even out of rubble as men trust their deep response to a vision's demand. Out of that trust surges a kind of adventuring which is the beginning of a long journey to make the entire social process responsive to the real needs of the human family. These essays are the invitation to that journey.

*The first proposal nexus calls for a new mode of humanness articulated through a secular mythology which re-interprets individual and social significance in a post-modern context.*

## II. SECULARIZED MYTHOLOGIES

12. Man makes sense out of the daily happenings which are his life by telling himself stories about who he is, where he has come from, whence he is bound and what it is he is here for. These stories carry mores from the past, values of the present and offer a sense of sureness as he moves into the terrors of an uncertain future.



13. Even one-line explanations tied to one's introduction are clues to a person's story of his significance or lack of it. "I'm with IBM," is a light year distant from "I'm just a housewife," in the self-worth conveyed, yet both point to the context that that person has set for himself.

14. Rollo May, a psychoanalyst, has described two kinds of language. One is horizontal, an everyday tool with which we talk about facts and details. Like mathematics, it is a precision instrument. The other language is reserved for poetry. It allows us to reach deep down into that region of human experience which ordinary words cannot touch. May calls this "myth." Our usual definition of myth as "untruth" comes from a bias that says truth is limited to what can be weighed, sliced, measured, boiled, smelled, or in some way analyzed. If it can't be, then it isn't true. This attitude ignores an immense dimension of human experience.

15. May points out that myths are the primary carriers of a culture's values. He suggests that whenever a people no longer live out of the values carried by their myths, their stories then become ridiculous to them and their society either creates new stories or crumbles. The Horatio Alger myth that a young man will prosper if he is honest, works hard, and saves his money, has faded into an interesting relic from another age, because it just isn't true and every young man knows it.

16. In recent times we've discovered ourselves sitting like surprised children among the broken, scattered pieces of our toy balloons. Accelerated change, shifting values and new data about the world all have joined to shatter the old myths which gave us our understanding of what it means to be human. With their collapse, reasons for daily work have lost weight, and standards of conduct no longer appear binding. The old stories out of which we have lived now seem like the fragile ashes of burnt charcoal waiting only to be scattered by the faintest breeze.

17. A necessary response is that we create a new way of talking about what it means to be human which can be poured into a secularly meaningful system with supporting symbols, ceremonies, rituals and myths which hold values as powerful for us as those once held for our grandfathers by the old myths. We need a story! We need a lot of stories that fit our situation. We need ways to talk about the next 1,000 years that will give perspective for the long journey before us. That's what secularized mythologies is all about.

18. That razor-edged need slashed at the vital structures of our society. "Blue Collar Trap" was the ominous title for a TV documentary describing the work situation of men who labor on an assembly line. It was about men whose stomachs turned sick with loathing of their job as they walked up to the plant gates each morning; who took 60-70 days of the year "off"; who used alcohol and drugs to dull their frustration while



on the job; and who deliberately damaged the products they produced as a way of venting their anger. Watching, one identified with their frustration at stories which all along promise the "good life" if you buy this or the "real thing" if you acquire that. Their homes were full of those things, yet their lives were empty of deep purpose.

19. Within the diagnosis lies the cure. For a resurgence of the human spirit, a new language for manipulating cultural differences and social imbalances is an absolute necessity. Myth is the mode of those stories which give sense, style, significance, and the power that captures imagination and finally breaks through all limits into the brilliance of ordered meaning.

20. A one-line self-story that illustrates one new style is, "I'm black and I'm proud." Another, which shifts concern from self to a larger context, is John F. Kennedy's appeal, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask, rather, what you can do for your country."

21. The problem is that both of these stories are reduced. They do not reflect the global condition in which humans must live for the next 1,000 years. After the first moon walk, one writer observed that what we learned was not that we are now set free to explore the universe. What we discovered was that there's no other place for man to go. This planet earth, this tiny, jewel planet set in hostile, space blackness, is where the struggle must come. Not that we should stop the space explorations, he wrote, but that we must not dally with the illusion that technology will get us out of this world, with all of its agonies and frustrations, to a better home somewhere out there.

22. Our situation is that earth is our nest, and the stories we tell must develop a universal awareness of that reality. The cultural pool of meaning-systems from around the planet will become a major source for creating contemporary, secular myths, stories, rites and rituals.

23. Mystery still is the one certainty in brooding about what secularized mythologies finally look like. We do know they will give a name and a story to that fresh upwelling which is the search for what it means to be human. In imagination, it will throw men out 1,000 years into the future. The grand, over-arching story will be global. "Earthman" or some cultural designation will allow nationalistic identities to fade and gifts which contribute to the well-being of all to assume highest importance.

24. Since the complexities of our age cannot be dealt with by a "do your own thing" approach, stories and symbols which illuminate and help recover covenant as a decisional stance which relates uniqueness to all that is "other" will be created. Within the structures of covenant, each individual will develop his potential while assuming responsibility for the world.

25. Secularized mythology will become a tool that helps the family recover its purpose. "What must be done so that the mission can be completed?" is a question which will clarify the role of male and female. Male and female responsibilities will be established by the task, so that energy can be focused where commitment is made.

26. Life phases will fill with new meaning as the dominant story pushes men beyond their own small concerns and into the larger arena of care for the whole earth for a millennium to come. Youth will assume their adventurous, risking role. Established adults will become the calm decision makers and elders will become honored wise men who offer the distillation of their life experience for the rest.

27. Without purpose that focuses his imagination beyond his own small universe of needs, a man becomes a shallow, petty creature not worthy of the name human. When the context for his life is a story that calls him beyond his neighborhood into the future and on behalf of a grand design, the demands upon his imagination pull out of him an undreamed of richness and he experiences himself as one, whom called, is one, "a little lower than the angels."

28. The secularized mythologies which now must be created are cosmic in proportion, awesome in their design and even now are beginning to appear.



*The second proposal nexus calls for a global complex of educational structures for all ages with a particular emphasis on comprehensive curriculum, methodological development, and vocational training.*

## III. HUMANIZED EDUCATIONS

29. The development of technology and the rapid influx of data in the twentieth century has resulted in a dramatic effect on society. Local man knows that he is better technically equipped than ever before, and yet, he senses that the depth meaning of his life eludes him. He is surrounded by data, but is bereft of wisdom. Wisdom, unlike data, is not transmitted. It is built as surely as the Empire State Building or the Parthenon. It is built out of the ultimate significance, the final human, meaning, on which a society lives.



30. The area of human meaning is on the whole more elusive than the practical skills a society constructs. They each have the elements of the unknown in them, but the results of dealing with human significance seem very nebulous when compared to counting the number of trained typists in a city. Yet the malaise of our society would seem to indicate that a skilled laborer with a story no more profound than that his human value is equal to his ability to produce cars, is as paralyzed as a jammed assembly line. If he sees no further than his job, he could as well be a machine. A man is endowed with self-consciousness, a reflective capacity about the depths of his own life. He is impelled to bring his occupation into a meaningful perspective. And when he cannot, something of the human goes out of him.

31. The collapse of the economic myth in relation to work is clear as many college graduates turn aside from the high paying jobs their fathers took. The explosion of the Peace Corps and Vista Volunteers are signs of a trend toward participating in building something new. People of all ages sacrifice money, health, and familiar surroundings to give themselves to something that consumes their talents and pushes their creativity beyond its limits.

32. In our own time we have seen the rapid development of practical skills take a major role in our job market and education structures. A young artist applies for a position with a commercial agency in New York. "What do you do?" they ask. "Hands, eyes, or purses?" "I can do any kind of work," he replies. "Sorry, we are looking for someone who can do eyes," the interview ends. Narrow specialization dominates our understanding of what it means to be skilled.

33. Economically struggling nations find themselves in the technological race with wealthy nations. Funds sorely needed for basic literacy for whole populations are diverted for use in specialized training. While world-wide corporation expansion of Mitsubishi and IBM bring nations into the 20th century economic family, literacy training for whole segments of nations goes untended. Many men are therefore cut off from the basic equipping required to live as an urban man. Entire villages in South America wait in hope that one of the men they sent to the city will return to bring them the simple tools that will unlock their participation in society.

34. The struggle within the education community seems somehow wider than this. Our data overflow is directly linked to the expansion of our technical know-how. In our times there are no overarching designs for forcing the data to yield its creative and demonic trends. It is here that the wisdom of a culture informs its posture. Its wisdom is the treasury of its intellectual patterns; it defines its common sense. The educational institutions struggle to empower their studies with the rich human meaning that makes disciplines live in the being of men. Yet, at the same time, they hold the conviction that meaning is personal, private, a matter of opinion. The academic community of our time is cut off from the



profound human truth that moved the universities of the Renaissance or informed the Greek academies. Interdisciplinary studies that recount the debates of great men but fail to articulate the life and death difference for their students are, at best, journeys into abstract never-never lands where men slay paper tigers with cardboard swords. Every student, every teacher, every administrator experiences the absence of this heritage.

35. How many times have we heard, "Why do I have to learn this?" The sense of disrelated data, of being lost in endless directionless curriculum with no master design to say where we have been or where we are going is virtually universal. And it points to the problem behind the cries of irrelevancy. Our present curriculum designs come out of a classical age, but changing times have required additions and subtractions and rearrangements that have resulted in a crazy quilt of patterns. Oceanography, sex education and driver's training added to language, history, science and math with no single curriculum focus and no tight rationality proclaim the lack of prioritizing criteria in our age. The creation of inclusive designs which hold the wisdom of the entire race of man is an overwhelming prospect, but within the reality of our global village seems indicative of the direction we are being irresistibly pulled. It is the despair over the vastness of the task of shaking off familiar modes to create the new that paralyzes us. The trend within the present education structures toward recreating interdisciplinary studies seems to mark the first efforts in this new direction.

36. Jerome Bruner's concept of spiral education, and Marshall McLuhan's picture of education as womb-to-tomb begin to break through ideas of education being limited to a short period during youth. On a recent evening television newsbroadcast there was report of a gathering of senior citizens. The camera disclosed a small group of people arranged around a sign reading "Elder Power." The spokesman told the interviewer, "We'll not be resigned to an early death." That served as a shocking reminder that the aged within our society are re-emerging to claim their role as elder. Serious efforts at prenatal education and swimming lessons for babies proclaim a new resolve to deal with education as a dynamic for the very young.

37. Perhaps no area of education has been as thoroughly researched in our day as the effective means of education. While the intellectual and social methods of educating are important, the greatest concern seems to be about motivational methods. Intellectual methods in our time are primarily research-oriented. In facing a new age with a new task, new ways of examining all available data are necessary. Methods that objectify one's own bias are critical if comprehensive new curricula are to be constructed. Social methods are needed that allow an uncharted future to be created through construction of temporal models. The Doxiades Institute systematically designs models that deal with major blocks in the lives of our cities. These methods are simple and can be developed so that a factory foreman can deal with a problem within his shop without calling on the outside authority of the personnel manager. Motivational methods,



more than any other means of training, are centered around a society's essential values regarding the struggle to be human. Here its ultimate concern is expressed in its patterns of social morality and individual integrity. The emergence of women's liberation, the youth revolution, the experiments with marriage contracts and the explosion of the occult all point to the profound struggle of our culture to develop a common mind on its basic understanding of maleness, femaleness, community, the ages within the life span of man and his transcendent relation to his life.

38. Our uncertainty about the meaning of humanness, our unwillingness to self-consciously imbue all education with value has vast social repercussions. Technical training which provides competence without an understanding of meaningful vocation frustrates the passionate investment of a man's skills in work that goes beyond merely making a living. Man operates out of a context in which his job is equated with the significance of his life; he sees his meaning in what he accomplishes in his job. He continues to operate out of this understanding even when his occupation does not finally fulfill the gnawing hunger that nags him. As a result, more and more stories circulate about executives who leave their desks and never return to work, about factory workers in Japan who release their frustrations in management-provided "aggression rooms."

39. We are still reeling from the shock waves of the industrial revolution which transformed us from isolated farmers to urban specialists overnight. Our rhythms and roots wrenched from us, we raced to keep our human values in step with our technical know-how. But our values seem to take on the character of the industrial age even yet. They are rooted in economic images. The necessary dynamic interrelatedness of jobs has been lost, and we have succumbed to a scale of status occupations. A one-day garbage strike, or a mail strike, or a blackout in New York serves notice on the cruciality of all labor within the framework of the urban setting. And yet we train ourselves without impressing this fundamental interrelatedness of urban life deeply into our lives. The caste system in India originated as a way of holding in being every station in life and accounting for its vital relation to the whole society. The same is true of the craftsmen's guilds of the Middle Ages. Today's labor unions function as the arbitrating force of justice for economic benefits, yet the idea of vocation has yet to be recaptured in powerful stories that stir men to see the destinal significance of their lives. A man's energies and imagination far exceed the requirements of his job. Within the ranks of the teamster unions, there are now being included training courses in human relations. As the labor unions are opened to broader participation by all races of men, horizons of responsibility open that were never available before. Without an authentic vocational understanding no man can be adequately educated to live responsibly in today's society. To discover the needs within our world is to stumble onto the fact that no one of us is equal to the task. Yet, at the same time, each of us stands before the task in unequalled adequacy. The sentimental refrain of each one doing his own part hardly fits the complexity of our new age. The intersection of the entire social process is too complex to revert to narrow



compartmentalization. Neither is unity in harmony part of this strategic picture. Somehow it is the single task that holds incredible diversity of interrelations together. Somehow the practical mode of standing before the dynamic complexity is the major task of education in our day.

40. This proposal nexus, therefore, calls for a global complex of educational structures for all ages with particular emphasis on comprehensive curriculum, methodological development, and vocational training.

41. This global complex is in no sense a superstructure with a world head-master. Rather it is a network of locally autonomous units oriented to re-weaving the basic meaning of human existence into the educational life of our planet that no man die without having lived. Without such a radical reorientation of our understanding and our structures of education, wisdom will go out of the world and a new and more frightful Dark Ages descend on the face of the globe.

*The third proposal nexus calls for structuring human engagement through forming primal communities characterized by re-empowered local structures and re-created families covenanted to care for global community.*

## IV. PRIMALIZED COMMUNITIES

42. A small town on the Mississippi River was suddenly threatened with ruin when the water rose to its greatest height in many decades. Not having taken the flood danger seriously, the town's officials were unprepared for the rapid rise of the river. Just before the water reached the business district, men began sandbagging operations. The whole town joined the struggle and stayed with it all night and into the next day when the river finally crested.



43. Talking about the victory afterward, people kept recalling that beneath the frenzy of their labor to save the town swelled a grand exhilaration that seemed to weld them into a single, powerful body, wrestling with and overcoming the common enemy. Long after the town had returned to its normal rhythm, the memory of their shared triumph remained as an event which stood as a sign of what they could do together. "The Flood," with all their stories about it, became a way to talk about life together in community.

44. Unfortunately, such experiences are rare indeed in our urban milieu. The sense of "belonging" to geography, the sense of place, out of which such experiences well up, has been lost in the mobility and impersonality of twentieth century forms of settlement.

45. With the gift of freedom to choose his intimates, and to participate in the fulness of his and other cultures, the city dweller lost his direct relationship of his geographical context. The metropolis is too large, too complex, too diverse, to feel the direct impact of his decision-making or his style. As a result, the urbanite describes himself as "anonymous" or even "alienated." Big government, sprawling business conglomerates, mass education—all have brought about the same response. The only unit left for which to stand finally accountable is now the family. But the family can bear no such burden. It is increasingly obvious that one spouse and any number of children are simply incapable of holding the unrepeatable burst of creativity in a human being. They are as temporal as oneself. Only a social body, a geographically-related covenant, can demand the hard fidelity which is the bedrock of primal community. Only such a covenant finally relates one to the globe, to engagement that is significant beyond one's own lifetime.

46. The struggle for our day is to build concrete structures of care which allow people to understand themselves as corporately responsible for the area in which they live. Suburban neighborhoods, hippie communes, and condominium and apartment complexes are all directed at structuring urban life to recapture the camaraderie which was inherent in small-scale communities of the past. The shallow relationships within these groupings testify to the fact that mere spatial or emotional ties do not comprise authentic human community. Sharing the same swimming pool, children's play lot, or even kitchen does not in itself recapture the covenant among residents of a place by which hard demands for care can be placed and answered. What would it take to rebuild, in our time, the context in which responsibility for the welfare of one's neighbors comes as an expectation, as a matter of course, rather than a favor?

47. Our era must forge out clusters of people bound to one another by a covenant to reshape the missional framework of their communities. The challenge is to develop pockets of neighbors who understand themselves to be destinally related to the future of their community, who are objectively assigned by each other to care for the needs of the entire



group. Such bodies are the backbone of a recreated framework of responsible engagement. Such a body insists upon feeling the impact of a participant's decisions and his style. The basic community groupings, neighborhoods, or primal communities, provide the context in which the family might also rediscover its identity.

48. Nation-states which have exploded into history since the end of World War II are vivid testimonies to the power of such a community. Then, nation-building was the paramount concern and the citizen merged his individual destiny with his state through symbol and act. Each person understood that he had a place in the grand design and a job to do on which the whole plan depended.

49. Man's loss of a sense of vocation, as demonstrated by final meaning being equated with economic success, points to a major imbalance within our society today. When vocational decisions are made on the basis of economic considerations, and adults see their lives as meaningful only through economic success and social distinction, this one aspect of life begins to preoccupy men to the detriment of the other aspects of society. With the breakdown of the corporate welfare dynamic, the social process also suffers imbalance. Society is sick when too much concern for economic security threatens man's liberties and renders political freedom powerless, and significant engagement in public decision-making collapses. This is seen when the local community relies on political *experts* to solve their problems and when voting is unrelated to corporate decision-making, or when a man's worth is marked solely by his possessions and the dollar values outweigh human values. The social process again suffers from an imbalance when its only symbols of significance are economic and technological symbols imposed upon man rather than created by him.

50. The primal community structure would offer the individual a way to embed his vitality into the life of the world by giving him a unit small enough to directly feel his impact, and connecting that unit with a network of similar communities across the city, the region, and the globe. Every man yearns for the opportunity to shape the decisions which affect his life. The structuring of primal community would necessarily demand an individual to participate in deciding matters of local concern, such as housing needs, school policies, and local politics. At the same time, such a community, acting in concert with other communities, would formulate policy for areas beyond the community—the city, the area, and so forth. Key to community decision-making is finally the community covenant. None of the decisions spoken of make sense unless they bear the weight of one's destiny, unless they are seen as critical to a citizen's life. Thus, neighborhood participation would require that each one in the community pledge himself to stand finally accountable for the future of that neighborhood and its residents. Out of such a stance, a citizen understands that, even if he is the last one remaining faithful, the community depends upon him for survival. This is literally true.



51. In this framework, the significance of vocation is also restored. One form of the primal community might be a vocational guild network, by which workers in similar fields gather to think through the future of that vocation. In relation to the family, the tendency is to be concerned about one's job only insofar as raises and bonuses are concerned. Its future is measured in economic terms. From the perspective of the community, the vocational guilds are freed to raise the question of what such a vocation as theirs might need to become to assure that life in the future is improved. Such a role is being played by New York garbage men when they chant, "We are not garbage, even if we do work with it." Such a group restores vital significance to one's work, by grounding it in a sense of the demands of the whole globe in the future.

52. Only with the re-empowering of primal community throughout the world, only with the recovery for every man of genuine common engagement in life, is it possible to envision an authentic future for global civilization. Upon the fate of its foundational communities rests the fate of civilization itself.

*The fourth proposal nexus calls for a global-local polity network which is based on consensus procedures and is activated by a centralized control, itself accountable to local man.*

## V. LOCALIZED POLITIES

53. A picture is taken of earth from the dark side of the moon. For the first time in all of history, men see their common environment from afar—a cloudy sphere floating in blackness. Quite suddenly every man is conscious that he is only one man in only one community in only one nation on a planet that sustains three and a half billion other people. Civilization has entered the post-modern age of global awareness. There is only one world.



54. The news reveals daily the seemingly insoluble conflicts which mark our time: Protestants and Catholics in Belfast, North and South forces in Vietnam, students and the police in Mexico, Japan, and the U.S. Every day it becomes more obvious that political forms, even at their most responsible, are seriously unable to come to terms with the massive scope of global decisions or with the wide divergence of opinion which they represent. It is no wonder that men everywhere are calling for more effective political structures to allow every man in every culture to participate in shaping the future destiny of their Earth.

55. A deep-seated mistrust of these inadequate political structures has fostered in men everywhere an attitude of apathy and cynicism toward social decision-making. People tell themselves that their opinions don't count and rationalize non-participation with a "Let the others take care of themselves" attitude. Structures for linking local and regional political units in a global decision-making network are either non-existent or too fragmented to be effective. Few local communities command the tools and methodologies for researching world issues, planning future actions, or forming consensus, and subsequently resign themselves to deal only with immediate needs on the local level.

56. At the same time, increasing numbers of people are becoming aware of the crises caused by non-participation in politics at the local level. The Jewish minority in Russia, the Blacks in South Africa, and student groups around the world are shouting out the message that to be alive and vital requires participation in the planning of one's destiny.

57. The systems of government across the world no longer seem able to handle the diversity and complexity of issues without alienating major segments of the population. As a matter of fact, they prepare for such disruptions. The City of Miami, Florida, spent better than six months preparing its law enforcement services to deal with violence expected at the recent Democratic convention. The assassination attempt on George Wallace was described by some reporters as simply the price of the decision to run as a candidate who takes a strong position. Everyone knows as well of the lengthy delays in the decision-making process. Laws are long outdated by the time they pass Congress or Parliament. To compensate for this collapse, executive powers have taken over much decision-making power on urgent issues, divorcing these decisions from local participants. Kakuei Tanaka, the newly-elected Prime Minister of Japan, for instance, assured his election by promising cabinet seats to three potential contenders for the office within his Social Democratic Party, thus presupposing the incredible freedom of his office. The remarkable power of massively-organized, grassroots decision-making in rapidly forming the decisions of the recent Democratic Convention; in closing the Universities of Tokyo, Mexico City, and Caracas; in marshalling global opinion against segregated schooling in the United States—has pointed to the power of well-organized local groupings to cut across incredible controversy and complexity in the political arena.



58. Rapid social and technological change have created a great awareness of the injustice and inequalities taking place across the world. People in barrios of Rio de Janeiro can see a Sears catalogue, and understand their distance from the good things of life which many regard as necessities. People in New York see television coverage of children wounded by American bombers. Dispossessed peoples at home and abroad respond to their situation with protest and often with violence. The established societies tend to react with a myopic interest in law and order for their own sake. On both sides of issues, shallow slogans and parochial causes block any vision of a common ground which might allow groups to transcend immediate self-interest for the interest of the whole society.

59. And yet, the emergence of many vital grassroots organizations in our time has produced a demand for the tools and methodologies required for researching, planning and decision-making among groups with divergent viewpoints. Voter registration organizations, tribal and neighborhood councils, and special interest groups have discovered that using methods that honor the wisdom of every individual and group in the community enriches the solution to problems and expedites the implementation of new programs.

60. The propensity of local organizations, such as Operation Breadbasket in Chicago, to take stands on national and world issues points to a new era of engagement by locally-grounded groups in world decision-making. It is through focus on issues beyond their own community that local groups transcend internal strife, and focus it upon world needs.

61. Columbia depends so exclusively upon its coffee industry that there are sections of the population for whom a few cents difference in the world price of coffee is the difference between starvation and survival. This incredible situation, seemingly unheard-of in our age of economic prosperity, points to the most tragic manifestation of the malfunctioning political process. This is the disproportionately high level of influence allotted to powerfully organized interest groups and large property owners in the absence of powerful political structures. In Columbia, coffee interests have long dominated the political picture. Their economic might allowed the freedom to move rapidly where political forms were hopelessly trapped in their own machinery. When the coffee market shifts there is no alternative industry available for people to work at because others have been blocked from the area.

62. On a global scale, large industries hold remarkable sway in such arenas as foreign policy and pollution legislation, leaving the private citizen impotent to make his decisions felt. Recent times have shown, however, that the power of mass political organization can contend with even great economic forces. Proctor and Gamble soaps have been completely outlawed in the Chicago area due to the citizen outcry over the pollution of the Great Lakes. The global consensus as to the role of Western nations in Southeast Asia has been totally altered, in the face of



mighty business interests, by the work of countless local groups across the world for many years.

63. The move to hold higher powers accountable can be seen also in the consumerism of Nader's Raiders and the rotating assignment structure of some Japanese corporations. These experiments in the power of grassroots corporateness have begun to map out structures to hold public officials before their covenant to represent the needs of all of their constituents. It is increasingly clear that grassroots consensus-building can free paralyzed political forms to move, as readily as can large single interests.

64. A radical change is emerging in the world's decision-making structures. The outcry of local man to participate, to be effectively heard, and to wield his power in global decision-making requires a system of decision-making which connects global issues with local wisdom, which permits consensus to honor minority voices, and which affords centralized accountability among all participants.

65. In his participation, regional research and planning structures might allow local man to feed his wisdom into a regional data-gathering system, which would in turn draw together the consensus in relation to local, continental, and global priorities. The average citizen might work directly with a regional structure for data-gathering and consensus. The key to grassroots decision-making would be an effective data-gathering system. Such a system would necessarily include computer data storage banks and local problem-solving forums, but it would also serve to remind the public of the needs and wisdom of their global neighbors.

66. Relative to the effectiveness of local man's decision-making, extreme divergence of opinion and its resultant alienation of participants in the political process is the key. But that masses of divergent opinion can be melded into a single stance, there is no hope for the man on the street to participate on a par with the solid front of a corporate enterprise. What is needed is a mode of decision-making in which the vital question is not what an individual or group wants, but what would be the most helpful option for the future of the entire group. The emphasis here would be upon holding every opinion as part of a final corporately-created decision, which may well not be synonymous with the proposals of any of the participants at the beginning of the meeting. This sort of give-and-take is obviously the only course for us in the future, and it may well be decision-making bodies which are first entrusted with the task of pioneering such a new style on behalf of all of the world.

67. Should such a method of decision-making be used, it would be possible to hold the wisdom of dissenting minorities in a serious fashion, while allowing them neither to rule nor to be lost in a dominant majority. This stance would demand an intensification of our growing propensity to speak politically out of corporate problems rather than private interests.

68. Finally, local man in his need for power may participate in a global network of checks to assure the effectiveness of political representatives. These would take the form of citizen briefings of representatives, as Police Superintendent Conlisk in Chicago has held for information on the police behavior in the city. On the regional level, one characteristic could be a series of quarterly planning sessions open to the public at which, using well-disciplined workshop techniques, plans for the future and specific crisis issues were worked through to facilitate the research job of legislative bodies. On a global level, this accountability may well take place through the United Nations, taking the form of annually-presented "State of the World" reports, similar to those given within nations. Following such reports, committees similar to census-takers would solicit response from the citizenry of the world as to the advisability of present policy and the future directions needed. Obviously, technological tools such as telephone and telegraph hookups, television and radio, and computer systems could be used to facilitate these channels.

69. The inclusive task in the political arena in our time is to restore to local man the power to participate effectively in his destiny which size and complexity of the world have gradually eroded. It is as if local man will return from political exile to reclaim his historical commission: to decide the destiny of mankind in the commonness of every day's most mundane choice.



*The fifth proposal nexus calls for the imposition of inclusive controls on the economic dynamic of society through political regulation, data dissemination, and coordinated inclusive planning relative to global needs.*

## VI. GLOBALIZED ECONOMICS

70. Walk into the business district of any major city in the world, from Hong Kong to New York to Cairo, at about 8:00 am on a weekday morning, and you will see an amazingly similar scene. Great office buildings stand as stark and gleaming pillars, about which the rest of the city huddles, seemingly for support. Hundreds, thousands of businessmen in their dark suits, carrying briefcases, hustle past, secretaries rush by. All are heading for the diversity of business offices in the center city. Once inside any office, you will find recognizably similar metal or wooden furniture, office machines and accoutrements, lifestyle and roles. The world over, technology as it developed in the Western Hemisphere has

"won" in every nation that it has touched. It has recreated every people which it has touched after its own image. There is no question but that we have a "globalized economics." Globality has in fact taken place through economic developments. The issue which this essay raises is, how might we appropriate and use that fact, rather than allowing it to master us by its sheer strength and power?

71. The most incredible breakthrough of the past 500 years in human history has been that survival is no longer man's first task. For the first time in human history, only one-third of the world goes to bed hungry. The other two-thirds of the world exist in an economic framework above the subsistence level. Man never knew such abundance before the modern period. He is freed for the first time to pursue other interests. This is the wonder and glory of our day.

72. The price of this achievement has been over 100 years of focus upon the economic dynamics of civilization. The magnificent human creation of the present structures of global industry and commerce has taken an incredible toll of our lives during this process. Even as we bask in the possibilities of feeding the world, of guaranteeing an adequate income for all, of ever-increasing the prosperity of man, we see that we have allowed this mighty servant to become our master. The creature rules the creators.

73. The forms of distribution of the world's wealth across the globe demonstrate our subjugation to our own economic advances. We invented our economy to conquer scarcity, which necessarily meant that we emphasized production and productivity. When there is not enough to go around, it is reasonable to try to produce enough so that a few more can share in the goods. We have succeeded at the production beyond our dreams. From crop failures and hand-made tools we have moved to grain harvests so abundant that the United States can feed itself, export wheat abroad, and still have massive surpluses left over which are cheapest to burn. The USSR leapt from medieval agriculture to post-modern technology in a mere fifty years. And yet, in the midst of this extravaganza of wealth, we are suddenly confronted with a qualitatively new issue—why not just go ahead and take care of everyone's needs?

74. At first thought, this question seems absurd. People have starved to death somewhere around the globe since history began. In our time, such human catastrophes simply do not need to happen. Tons of grain could be eaten rather than burned. But here is the difficulty: in our age-old mentality of scarcity, we have never created the systems to distribute the fundamental necessities of life to the globe. Radios and Coca-cola are found in even the most remote village, but elementary relief for Indian flood victims can scarcely survive the bureaucratic ineffectiveness of national and international care agencies. Secondly, our very images of life are tyrannized by a production mentality. The "Protestant work ethic," which links productive labor to responsibility for society, has served Western nations well during the Industrial Revolution,



but it has endured far beyond its relevance. If everyone today worked the twelve hours a day that were required a century ago for survival, we would be glutted with just too many goods to handle. And yet we still tell ourselves that the more fully one is able to participate in the production of his society's goods, the more fully human he is. As a result, those who from necessity or choice, are not economically productive are seen as social burdens. Those, on the other hand, who have chosen a productive job look to it for a significance which it no longer has a way of giving, and live cynical, unfulfilled lives behind a punchpress or a desk. Also as a result of our imagery, we are paralyzed to explore the possibilities of new employment in social renewal, in social art, in the creation of the mythology and symbols for which all of us thirst, to hold our contemporary experience.

75. Thirdly, our images of planning in the economic realm are reduced to the short-term and the local. In nations where economic planning is a self-conscious governmental function, five-year plans differ radically in direction from one another as regimes shift. In every country, schools are overcrowded by the time they are funded and built. It is not that we are unable to plan, however. In California, sewage treatment plant engineers have charts for the amount of sewage that will need to be handled in the state in 2040. Quick-service hamburger chains know how many catsup packets are needed in a single drive-in in any particular month according to the volume of customers and weather conditions prevailing in the area. We have incredibly comprehensive and precise plans for specific business tasks, but collapse where human care is concerned. This short-term, immediate planning for society is not wickedness, but a failure of the imagination to consider that the complexity of the plant's needs could be organized using the same analytic and predictive tools presently used for sewage flows and catsup packets.

76. In the comic strip "Lil' Abner," the industrialist, General Bull Moose, has as his slogan "What's good for General Bull Moose is good for the USA." Such a context is laughable in today's world, and yet we find ourselves operating as if it were our credo. Because of its business-related administration, United States foreign aid to underdeveloped nations since World War II has returned a higher gross income than it has cost. Meanwhile, those who receive aid, far from developing economic independence, rely more and more upon American industry and developmental funds for their sustenance. The move by nations such as Egypt and Chile to expel foreign investment long enough to develop an independent bargaining stance is a sign of what it might mean to assume responsibility for global distribution. In Japan, which has for a long while taken a mild version of that stance, new forms of distribution which are comprehensive and reliable now exist through national industrial channels, giving every Japanese access to the goods of the world. Even in nations like India such a network could be constructed without waiting for industry to develop.



77. Our economic images come to us most directly in the form of advertising. All of us, even against our will, long to be the one with the real thing, who no longer worries about his hygiene, or his public image, who is revered by all for his car and stereo and his cigarettes. With the radical vision of human authenticity which has broken loose in our day, we laugh at ourselves at the same time, but we are not unbound. We know the absurdity, yet we continue it. Radical consumer controls over business are perhaps the only direction by which to initially break ourselves loose to see what a production that serves the real needs of society might look like. Truth in lending and base price information laws are a firm step in this direction. Even the antics of Nader's Raiders offer us fruitful clarity as to the forms of accountability which are required.

78. Planning for the future needs of the globe in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is an overwhelmingly complex task. It is obvious that unless we plan to deal with population expansion, urban explosion, and even natural catastrophes such as major earthquakes, the future can only be terrifyingly chaotic. Everywhere we look, prophets of doom predict atomic warfare, massive earthquakes, pollution catastrophes, and so on. This sort of surrender begs the basic question: we are simply in the midst of a shift from an economy which meets needs *after* they arise, to one which must predict demands *before* they arise in order to meet them. Perhaps the most difficult part of this job is the fact that local citizens must participate, to develop the kinds of creative models that local man can live with. No computerized magical solution will work here. Prototype models have been established in the health planning agencies of some nations to provide the link between providers and consumers of health services of all kinds. They link consumers with regional, local, and national structures, and provide priorities for the use of health resources. On a global scale, airlines are an illustration of an industry which is run under explicit United Nations supervision. Similar models of industrial control and grassroots participation are evidenced by Japanese management experiments in which planners, engineers, assembly-line workers and executives are assigned to meet together to corporately think through such questions as the future demands upon the corporation.

79. Emerging proposals to correct the inadequate economic structures for our global society center about a worldwide economic control system consisting of planning, regulation, and interchange. The major focus of these proposals is the equitable distribution of societies' surpluses to various prioritized world needs.

80. The United Nations is emerging as a global planning organization. Within this complex there is a system of technology, an interrelated research network, and a prioritizing system which takes local needs and requests and looks at them from the perspective of the whole world. The organization then decides which areas to move on immediately and which will need more long-range planning. This type of representative research and model-building network will allow the systems to be created whereby every man can participate in economic decision-making and its



rewards. This participation is the key to restoring significance in one's occupation. In the opportunity to decide where his work goes lies the worker's chance to relate his punchpress or his desk to the needs of all man. No longer is he there out of stoic duty, but as one whose production and consumption are related to the decisions he has made about the direction of the future.

81. An example of an inclusive global regulation system is the world currency system. We would propose a network of research and training for consumers by which they could see the ramifications of their decisions, and a regulation of industry in order to direct production to higher priorities when overproduction is threatening. Out of commonly-agreed priorities across the world, industry would be given incentives to produce according to the needs of the world.

82. In the arena of data exchange, a global data and research exchange center is proposed, to provide information enabling decisions about the economic future of any area or region in the world. The task here would be to collect, project, and store data on the needs and resources of all communities in the globe. Such an exchange system would provide information and would make decisions directing the use and distribution of global resources based on the needs of local and global groups. This system would be administered by a globally representative organization answerable to every local community.

83. We have already built a new world in the economic dimension of life. We have created a mighty servant. The task in our time is to tame this servant, that he will do our bidding to the fullest possible extent for the sake of the entire globe.

