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Summer '71 Joseph Wesley Mathews

Research Assembly

Chicago

CONCLUDING PLENARY ADDRESS

I want to read the 77th psalm:

I cried aloud to God,

I cried to God, and he heard me,

In the day of my distress I sought the Lord,

and by night I lifted my outspread hands in prayer.

I lay sweating and nothing would cool me;

I refused all comfort.

When I called God to mind, I groaned;

as I lay thinking, darkness came over my spirit.

My eyelids were tightly closed;

I was dazed and I could not speak.

My thoughts went back to times long past,

I remembered forgotten years;

all night long I was in deep distress,

as I lay thinking, my spirit was sunk in despair.

Will the Lord reject us forevermore

and never again show favour?

Has his unfailing love now failed us utterly,

must his promise time and again be unfulfilled?

Has God forgotten to be gracious,

Has he in anger withheld his mercies?

'Has his right hand,' I said, 'lost its grasp?'

Does it hang powerless, the arm of the Most High?'

But then, O Lord, I call to mind thy deeds;

I recall thy wonderful acts in times gone bad.

I meditate upon thy works

and muse on all that thou hast done.

O God, thy way is holy;

What god is so great as our God?

Thou art the God who workest miracles;

Thou hast shown the nations thy power.

With thy strong arm thou didst redeem thy people,

the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw thee, O God,

they saw thee and writhed in anguish;

the ocean was troubled to its depths.

The clouds poured water, the skies thundered,

thy arrows flashed hither and thither.

2.

The sound of thy thunder was in the whirlwind,

thy lightnings lit up the world,

Earth shook and quaked.

Thy path was through the sea, thy way through mighty waters,

And no man marked thy footsteps.

Thou didst guide thy people like a flock of sheep,

under the hand of Moses and Aaron.

So that's Psalm 77, and now I want to talk a little bit about 77 proposals. All this summer I have been scared to death because I didn't know what was coming next, but I thought surely today, the last day, I could not be scared. Now, I am scared about what we have done and about the fact that I am not quite sure what we have done. I know

we have done a lot of it, whatever it is.

As I have gone over the synopses of all of the 77, some things have occurred to me which I want to share. Take them with a grain of salt, for you have to think them through for yourselves, too, but you can see that we were trying to do both the Platonic approach, from the top down, and the Aristotelian approach from the bottom up, and we wanted the two to meet. This is the meaning of the rightwise and the inverted universes. In looking at what we have done over these weeks, relative to the Platonic approach, I have come up with these seven distillations. These are in awkward, redundant formal language, but I want to keep them that way for now. I will read them to you and then talk about what I think our problems are for the future. As we have attempted to articulate the practical vision, this is what I think 'the New Social Vehicle looks like, from the top down.

"First, in the broadest sense, the practical vision of the New Social Vehicle begins with a radical awakening in the cultural dynamic that issues in an empowerment of the political dynamic, which counteracts the dominance of the economic dynamic, thereby altering the social balance for the sake of the wellbeing of all the suffering people of the world."

"Second, within the economic dynamic, the vision begins with the radical illumination of the common distribution dynamic which issues in a resuscitation of the common resources dynamic which counteracts the dominance of the common production dynamic, thereby altering the social balance for the sake of the wellbeing of all the suffering people of the world." One way to check on whether we are on target is if illustrations of this just rush to your mind. You see, we are not inventing anything; that is never the church's business. The church is the comprehensive guardian in this universe and must draw together in a comprehensive picture that which is already taking place. So the movement in our day is an awakening that empowers distribution, which empowers resources, which cuts over against the tyranny that you have found in production. After 100 or more years of Marx, who hit at the production for the renewal of society, you can understand how, the economic balance is out of kilter in that fashion at our particular moment in history.

"Third, within the political dynamic, vision begins with the radical illumination of the corporate welfare dynamic which issues in the strengthening of the corporate justice dynamic which counteracts the dynamic of corporate order, thereby altering the social balance for the sake of the wellbeing of all the suffering people o' the world." The political moves just the opposite to the economic, so to speak. It moves from welfare to justice over against order. I'm sure illustrations of this come to your mind.

"Fourth, within the common wisdom dynamic, the vision begins with a radical sensitizing of the final meanings dynamic which issues in enablement of the accumulated knowledge dynamic which counteracts the dominance of the useful skills dynamic. thereby altering the social balance for the sake of the well-being of all the suffering people of the world." The shove is in final meanings. This was your question, "Who am I?" when some of you were young enough to be back in college. That question does something in accumulated knowledge which then pushes in useful skills. You watch in the next twenty years. I suppose some of you in your Walter Mitty fantasies have wanted to be a prophet. There is no magic in being a prophet it is just daring to think a little bit.

"Fifth, within the communal styles dynamic, the vision begins with a radical self-consciousness within the social structures (or primal community) dynamic which issues in a transmutation in the cyclical roles dynamic that counteracts the dominance of the procreative scheme (or family dynamic), thereby altering the social balance for the sake of the wellbeing of all the suffering people in the world." You just think about that a little bit. What's the last great sacred cow that our society has created? And what is done by the transposition of the meaning of what it means to be an unrepeatable individual when you are able to begin to reach out beyond your family and therefore touch the inclusive or the comprehensive?

(Now I go back to the total cultural, and, I think, in this kind of analysis, it is number six.) "Sixth, within the total cultural commonality dynamic, the vision begins with a radical upsurge in the communal symbols dynamic which issues in a resurgence in the communal styles dynamic, which counteracts the dominance of the communal wisdom dynamic, thereby altering the social balance for the sake of the well-being of all the suffering people of the world." You can begin to sense there, that where you are going to run into the next 12 inch guns shooting at you is from the academic realm, both inside and outside the church.

(Lastly, and befittingly so, I want to deal with the top. And I have to say on this one that I am doing rather pure guessing here. Those of you who worked in this area know that we didn't think it through enough. All the other six I think I could back up in terms of the work you have done.) "Seventh, within the communal symbols dynamic the vision begins with a radical awakening in the common religion dynamic which issues in a upheaval in the social art dynamic, which counteracts the dominance of the corporate language dynamic, thereby altering the social balance for the sake of the well-being of all the suffering people in the world." I say, I have a bit of hesitation there. Perhaps you could even see it reversed. I would like to see it reversed, in terms of some rather strong rationality in the balances, but I think maybe it is the way I said it.

Now, if somebody asked me, after fooling around for a month, what did

you come up with? Those statements are the most crucial things I have come up with. They were built out of the sweat that you all went through. You understand I had a rather luxurious position in that, while you were sweating, I was able to be present to the data that only now you are able to be present to as a whole. So I am ahead of you. It is this kind of thinking that you have to do, also.

Now, let's start from the ground up. After going through this maze of processes, finally you came up with your contradiction. I have not get gone through your 77 proposals; I have only gone through the synopses. Because we got behind, you didn't have enough time to put on the proposals, the flip side of the contradictions. You were too rushed. When I tried to read those summary paragraphs which you made I got a little worried. Then I began to expand my reading a little bit. I got worried also at your synopses of your major proposals. They tended to be still dealing with the idea, rather than the stuff of social reality. Then, I looked at your four auxiliary proposals and my heart began to soar like an eagle, for you began to get your teeth into what I mean by social stuff. Then in that last paragraph, when you were pointing to tactics, very frequently you hit the nail on the head of what the proposal was about. Then I flipped back to look at your summaries of the contradictions, and they were good. It seemed to me that you had a little bit more time on those contradictions than you did when you flipped them over to work on the proposals. But I am sure that it is all there within your little five page booklet that you called the proposals, where all of this is held together in more detail than in the synopsis.

What we need to do, and if we had another week we could do it very easily, is do together what I was trying to do from the top down. It would be better as you would be able to back it up more with your own data and so on.

But life is the way life is not the way you want it to be. We are through for today. I think that probably those proposals have got to be rewritten, rethought through, one by one by one. If you participated in this month, you don't need any more data (you could use more, but you don't need any more). It is almost a matter of rearranging the data and getting a little more clear on what a person might mean when he uses that technical term "proposal" for altering social stuff, not for rearranging ideas about society. That can be done in a series of weekend PSU's in which, one by one by one, we take those and reorganize them. I think this could be set up on a movement-wide basis, where once a quarter JOU could get together (no, it would have to be more often than that). I will come back to that. What I am trying to say is you are the only people who can do this. Even though we haven't found out how to use it most effectively, I was encouraged about your corporate reading in which you built that portfolio, even though that is full of inadequacies, we have forged out a way for one person to screen a book on behalf of many other people who are engaged in a particular common mission. I believe the movement is capable of

continuing such research. There isn't one of us in this room who is going to read a book in the same way we read it before. You are going to have about 46 billion issues screaming in your mind for which you are looking for some kind of enlightenment, or some kind of insight. Maybe we could design something like this research on a movement-wide basis.

This continued work has to be done more quickly than I had thought. Things are moving at such a pace that this next year we have to build the tactical model for implementing this. And I am even wondering if maybe a group or several groups are going to have to meet together, maybe a week at Christmas or a week at Easter, and begin to just work hard.

This is one of the reasons why I am glad you gave that nine thousand dollars. I don't think Cramer made enough of the point that last year you paid \$10.00 before you could pick up that junk you wrote. This year we aren't going to ask you to do that. We went to Rockefeller to try to fund this research. I had hoped to ask if there were two or three of you who could volunteer at a minimum salary paid by Rockefeller for a year to work on this research. Rockefeller got interested in it and called Ford Foundation and got Ford interested in it. Then they got a little scared and instead of giving us \$190,000 to carry this on, they gave us together around \$50,000, saying that if they looked into this they must might go on with it. They also suggested that we ought to go to someone like Clement Stone to ask him for help on this. We asked him for \$49,000 and he came up with this \$20,000/\$29,000 arrangement. It is going to take work and some money to push this through and to build a kind of tactical model that has to be built. And it has to be soon, you cannot wait till next summer. I will say why in a moment.

You also have to realize that you are a long way down on the tactics, in a certain sense. First of all, you are an organized movement. You are far more disciplined than even you know. I was shocked this summer. Last summer, we spent time teaching people what corporate discipline was. This summer, we didn't pay any attention to it, except the discipline that any group of people have to have, if they are going to move corporately. You are a disciplined body of people, far more than you know. You couldn't buy what you have, tactic-wise, relative to whatever the Church ought to be doing in the light of a practical vision of the New Social Vehicle. You've got it. Also, with the local congregation experiment, that is on a rationally distributed scheme, you have the external framework, launching pad from which you can move in principle into every city, village, and farm area of this continent.

Some of you have been interested in what we call permeation permeating the established structures of the church and of civil society. Wouldn't it be interesting if you had a guild construct to work in each area, along the lines of the seven statements that I was reading. You

know far more about how these kinds of guilds (or cadres, if you like) operate than you dream. Suppose these guilds are on a local level. Then from time to time, these local people gather together to program themselves relative to a common thrust at the edge of the finger tips of your organization construct. Can you begin to grasp what kind of force you might then possess relative to doing something that would bend history, rather than just sitting around dreaming about bending history?

One of the best documents that you have is what the Presidium produced in this week of the Council. The thing that excites me about it (and I never saw this until this morning), is that a body of the movement-at-large carved out the basic operating vision for this next year. You have a pattern that you ought to hang onto through the years. At least once a year you come together and take what a research assembly has done on behalf of the total movement and then, at your Council, forge out the broad operating image that keeps you common and corporate throughout the continent and throughout the globe.

This point is made throughout your work. You have two things held together at once in a glorious fashion, global man and local man and you are looking at one of them who is both. That is what man has to be a radically local man and a radically global man. You ask how local man is able to participate in programming the computer that is going to run his life for the rest of his days and the only way you can have a sense of integrity is to participate in the programming. One man, one vote, is as passé as some of the things we have been talking about. The man who cares about his authenticity and his creativity wants a way to get that into the programming system. Well, we have discovered a way here, I suspect. This is what maybe can keep you radically corporate in terms of both the external mission and the internal blue. But, if you discover that it is this kind of freedom in which you are interested, in which your creativity really gets into the process, then you have to really sweat.

You may have some stupid one come by who wants "freedom." Well, I want to bear witness to you to be a free man is an extremely burdensome task. If you have discovered nothing else in the last month I would judge that you have discovered that. I get a little upset at some of my colleagues. Maybe their fannies aren't as big as mine, but if you can't sit around the table hour after hour after hour far beyond your exhaustion trigger you still don't know what it means to be a free man. There is a price to pay in creating freedom. Another way of saying it is: the men of the spirit run this world. I don't mean some narrow provincial religious conception of the spirit. I mean the men of the spirit, the free men, run the world. The movement has to cherish this and nurture one another that we might have the strength and the power to be these free men.

Now let me say a word about the documents and then about the future. Just think of what you did. First are your triangles, the most

important thing we did. In these are finally your social dynamics. I have to confess to you that I think this whole analysis held up much better than I anticipated it would this summer. Any semi-bright person could nitpick it, but as a whole it held up well. I do not think that I have been able to get to anywhere near the bottom of what you finally worked out on these dynamics. It is a fantastic job. My guess is that when the intellectual draws his gun, he is going to draw it here. But that is the most dangerous place for him to draw it. He is going to make a mistake, I think.

Now there is your Document A on the dynamics. That is in pretty good shape. The groups among you that edited that did a pretty good job. Once again, not that you can't find fault in it, but I mean it is there and it is fairly well cleaned up. It is the kind of thing that a person, if they wanted to write a book, could use to get a full book out. Maybe the time has come when the movement is going to have to move to that kind of thing. I have never been in any hurry.

The second one is your Document B on contradictions. A group labored hours to get that cleaned up, because some of us misfired. They did good work but sometimes they struck only on rational poles when they should have been striking at the whole. A group worked hard to clean this up but finally did not have time to get that redone. Anyway you have the first copy and we will get that out as soon as we can.

Now there is Document C. This is the one that was on the ideology, "All the Earth Belongs to All the People." I would judge that you are going to use this again and again and again. I can hardly believe the gift that has been here. Every person in this room, I suppose there are 800 here this morning, had that many people working for you all month long. And they didn't charge you a thing! What was theirs was yours. All of the human gifts belong to all the people. If you had been jealous of your Ph.D., you would have wanted to get a copyright on your thinking and get it on the market. But you gave freely and you received freely. Somebody thought it through for you way down here in economics while you were busy up here somewhere in the cultural. That astounds me. Maybe there is a little boy nature in me yet, but that chocks me. "All the earth ..."

Now here is your Document E on the Proposals, "Toward the Practical Vision of a New Social Vehicle." I have talked about that and as a whole I am very, very pleased. But you have it. I am going to be excited about working more on that myself in the months ahead.

Then of course you have the Proposal Synopses. I think it was worth your while to do this. I just wish we would have had more time. This forced you within your limited amount of time to get it said. My brother Jim Mathews had a great deal of fun up in Room E trying to reduce every one of your proposals to a 25 word cablegram. I wish I had one to read it for you. I was interested in his sweating there to get on top of it enough to condense it.

There was a group of people that worked through as far as they could on a Compendium of the Philosophical Presuppositions and the Methodological Techniques that were used this summer. They did it almost chronologically through the month and pulled it all together. It was the total assembly's work on the glossary that they used as a thing to get them started. I am not sure how finished this is but I think it will hold it for you, and perhaps you can work to refine it.

Then there are three other documents. You know that we were going to do the manifesto, but when we got behind we couldn't do it. You can't manifesto much until you have something to manifesto about. And you only had something to begin to manifesto about last night at 5:00 and some of you didn't get your work in until long after five. So what we did was to take two or three different approaches and just to get data out of the broad scope of the minds here. One of them is called the Missional Imperatives of the Spirit Movement, seed work for a manifesto that you might put out in the future. If you got enough work done between now and Christmas, you might begin to think about writing that at the December Praesidium, or at the March Presidium. At any rate, I think you will find this work very helpful. We would like to say who worked on these things but it was colleges.

Then, here is the top flight job that the Praesidium wrote. In many ways, it has to do with the whole manifesto idea, or where we move from here. Then some people tried to do the Aristotelian approach in a huge hurry. In a matter of just hours in which they tried to take the whole 77 Proposals and boil them down to one key proposal in each of four areas and then see how they organized themselves. This is a three page statement called "Toward a Practical Vision of the New Social Vehicle." Then we were going to try to match them to where you came down from up above to see what would happen. They didn't get too far because of time but you have to do that. As far as they got they put in this three page paper, one section on the cultural, one on the economic, one on the political, and one on the communal wisdom, and one on the communal styles. I think you will find that helpful again, in pushing into the future.

Now, one final word. I wanted to talk at length about what I thought as ahead for the movement. I won't. But I will call your attention to the fact that in any social vehicle, you not only have the renewal of the civil dimension of the social process but obviously you have to have at the same time a renewal of the ecclesiastical; that is, a renewal of society and the renewal of the Church are inseparable. You renew one without the other and you do not have that one renewed. This summer, because of the huge task, just to work in one of those areas, we isolated the Church out and centered on the civil dimensions of society. Now we have to begin to focus on the sociological aspects of the renewal of the Church in a new way. But we are a million miles down the road on this. I feel like I know a great deal relative to the ecclesiastical dimension of existence. I mean I have plenty to learn, but what I am trying to say is that in this ecclesiastical, you and I

are way down the road. Your Local Church Experiment is in this area. And if I had to put down the most exciting thing about the form of this research assembly, I would say that you have given me a brand new feel of what a local congregation or synagogue could look like when it was busy being what it is. As a part of that, I have been overwhelmed with the potential power of a group of spiritual people who have become disciplined and had learned to care, not about themselves, but about humanity.

But then there is one thing else you have to bear in mind. The revolution not only is comprised of the civil and the ecclesiastical reformulation. In between the two is always a movement. And if the ecclesiastical, to use categories we are familiar with, represents the knowing pole, and the civil represents the doing pole, then the movement whatever its form or shape represents the being pole. What I am trying to say is that a revolution trades on its presence. Not upon its guns, not upon its knowing, not upon its doing, but finally upon its being. Any civil establishment doesn't have a chance of remaining the same if there is a movement that be's in its midst. Any ecclesiastical establishment must change if it has in its midst a movement that spiritually be's.

The social process work this summer dealt with the civil dimension. Now I think the hour has come when you must say that next summer you have to work on what it means to be a self-conscious movement utterly within the structures of the historical Church. For the realization of this summer's work and the realization of what is held in the Local Church Experiment rests upon the shoulders of an historical movement within the establishment and upon the depth spirituality of that movement.

If I should die tomorrow, the one word I would want you to remember about your future is that next summer you need to face head on becoming a self-conscious historical movement within the established church and to discover what that means. What it means to have somebody over in Hong Kong who is disciplinedly working as your colleague, or what it means to have somebody in Paducah working as your colleague in the sense of a common mission that hasn't the slightest thing to do with you but with your cause on behalf of all mankind. Remember there has got to be many forms of this. It will have many faces. Anyone who thinks he knows what those forms and faces are is naive, or self-deceived.

I said at the close of last summer that you and I this year were going to have to walk in spiritual deeps that we didn't know even existed. I think you did it during the year. I will testify to you that I was forced to. And a funny thing has come over me now. I tell you I know things about being at the center of it all that last year I never dreamed I would know. The burden of the local church that was placed on us last year forced us into new depths of spirituality. But I have an intuition that this will not be comparable to the burden placed on

us this summer. You were nailing your own coffin this month. You were digging your own grave. This burden is going to drive us into far greater deeps of the spirit.

You take those Psalms with you. I don't know the future of those hour offices, but you take them with you. And don't you leave Luke back here. You may need him, ere the sun goes round.

Or is it the other way around?

by JWM