

FORGING SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

When we were last in Maliwada we were with Mr. Dethe, who is about 65 years old and a Guardian. He is a very renowned architect in India and had recently retired. He had suffered three heart attacks, and his family and his doctors all convinced him that he ought to sit at home and have a fatal heart attack in ease. However, your colleagues persuaded him to use his expertise and go to Maliwada. He is the man who, with the wisdom of the local people, designed that unbelievable threeroom house. They now have some 20 of them built out of local material rocks that grow like mushrooms: local, of which there is plenty, and a not very satisfactory roof. That is one of the issues of the repository finding the roof for housing around the world. Anyway, he has also done the master plan of Maliwada. He designed the two industrial sheds there that are out of this world. You go into a typical Indian village and there you see before you two rather large concrete industrial buildings. Subsequently he has gone to the other three villages in India and has already started to do the master plans of them. He was the senior architect in the design of the town of Chandigar, which is a fantastic new city built north of Delhi, and he has developed a number of the significant industrial buildings and commercial office buildings in Bombay, plus temples. We were talking one night in his room in the Religious House in Maliwada. We were curious about the fantastic history there, so we asked him, "Now, of all those which one do you wish that history would remember you by?" I frankly was expecting the Chandigar one, but he shocked us. He said, "I hope I am remembered by that," and he pointed to the model house. I do not know why I was shocked. I guess one of the privileges of humanness is that you can be constantly shocked by what you know. Mr. Dethe has never been in finer health. By the way; whenever they have a celebration he dances with all the ladies. He has recruited a number of his colleagues in the architectural profession getting ready to go around to the other villages.

Dethe made the remark that India had been invaded some 32 times in its history. He said that each time there was an invasion, local man gathered and built the great palaces and forts, the Taj Mahal, the great temples, the great mosques that today stand as wonders of the world. Mr. Dethe said that in his experience in the last 6 months he now was persuaded that for the first time local man in India was going to build his own dwellings. As you looked around the things that had stood were the Taj Mahal, the Ellora caves, and the Red Fort, but the dwellings are in shambles. He had talked to his fellow architects about participating as Guardians in the rebuilding of local man's dwellings. There are 700,000 villages at about 100 houses per village. That would be 70 million houses. Can you imagine? And he has committed himself and his colleagues to design those houses as their participation in the replication movement.

This has to do with the fact that 85% of the people live in an entirely different universe from 15% of the people. This is not the simplistic division of the haves and the havenots. It is not the simplistic division which says the West has the money and the East does not. The richest people in the world are in India. That is a fact, and our people have done well in getting money from them. I am talking about the fact that 85% of the people live in an entirely different universe from what you and I do. This is not a statement about hunger. The shocking thing is that to date in history, only 15% of society at most, have gotten their creativity into building society. Just think, if the 85%, or even half or a third of that number found a way through Town Meeting, Social Demonstration, or awakened community renewal to get their creativity into history, we would have the greatest implosion and explosion since the dawn of consciousness itself. Somebody pointed out that the art of tactics to date had been the special privilege of the military tacticians. In this implosion and explosion of the 85% you would have on your hands something that is beyond all of our imaginations. We are participating in something that is far beyond any institute, any set of guardians. It is the most profound trend in history today, the resurgence of local man.

As you know, we have spent our whole life trying to evolve the philosophy of the local approach, and we have come a long way. The social demonstration documents represent the unbelievable creativity of a given community. In the last year or so we have been in close dialogue with the superstructures of the world: the European government agencies, the World Bank, the USAID of this country, and so on. We have started to talk about the local approach. It has been fascinating. Each time we start off and say, "Only in the 20th century has man been able to do the broad and inclusive planning that the World Bank is a symbol of, a broad, macro economic planning. Before then there was only local economics. Now once again the local is coming into being. We underscore it with our lives." We say, "If you think of the broad approach, the figures dominate. The figures say so many people will die, and the figures are right. Even the Club of Rome, the Cassandra outfit that publishes the yearly doomsday report or the latest liberal eschaton forecast is right in that sense. However, if you think locally, village by village, there is no reason for anyone to starve in the world." The funny thing is that when we say that, the men like McNamara understand. When we talk about local economics, local social infrastructure, and local motivation, they understand. When you think from the perspective of a village, they understand that the local economy can generate enough so that people need not starve.

We are being forced to articulate our social philosophy. No longer do they ask "Who are you?" They ask, "What do you do?" Really, what they are after is the \$64 question: "How does motivation take place?" I want to talk about that a little. We are finding, as we have done 12 of these social demonstrations, some remarkable constants that occur in each one of these programs. We are not suggesting that now that we have done 12, we would take a set of principles and superimpose them. That has not worked. We are talking about

the constants that would represent a social philosophy, a screen by which you could gauge a community while at the same time dramatically insisting that each community do its own planning.

There are three arenas of this evolving social philosophy, and you would well guess them. One has to do with the economic, one has to do with the social and one has to do with the spirit. We have received very little criticism as we have talked from using such a word as "community spirit." We are after social self-reliance. We are after local self-sustenance, and we are after local self-confidence. There are five categories in each one, and the third one is by far the most important.

The first one we have entitled out of our experience "complete and immediate nutrition." A more rational approach would be to put "nutrition" under "earth", but it is a shocking thing that we find in nutrition, as we go into these villages. A curious story: we believe that when you do a site selection you first look at a village from outside. Only if you think that there is a remote chance that this could be the village do you get out of your car and then you walk and you walk fast, because you are after an art form of that village, not details. You are after the intuitive, impacting your consciousness. Anyway, Mathews is good at this. Here you have a fat 65 year-old man: he gets out of that car and he rolls. Spencer and I are able to keep up because we get down and get on our marks, but the village people in Kelapa Dua had a hard time. This one village guy was always behind and was trying to keep up, and he finally came up to Mathews and said "how old are you?" He thought Joe had premature gray hair. Joe said, "I am 65." He said "I am 50 and I can't keep up with you, but I've been underfed all my life." I should use somebody other than Mathews in that illustration: the fact is that you go into a village like Kelapa Dua and you are impressed with the physical lethargy of the people. I am not talking about a bigoted laziness; their bodies have for centuries been absolutely undernourished. One colleague tells a story about the 30 years his feet hurt, but they had hurt all his life. When they stopped hurting, for the first time he realized that having his feet hurt was not just normal for humans. That is the way it is with this absolute lack of vitality. For all their life they have been feeding two bodies. Therefore we believe nutrition has to be complete and immediate. If it is a long term process you might as well not do it. What we do is start a community kitchen. It took a while to get the community kitchen started in Maliwada, but you go there now and you are absolutely shocked. This is a kitchen where not just the kids, but everybody gets one solid nutritious meal a day, cooked by the community people out of both donated food from the UN organization and locally grown food out of their corporate garden, which ultimately will replace the donated food. And they eat like mad, and the kids drink like mad. If you went around house to house with a home economics course, it would take 20 years and you might as well not try it. This way, with a community kitchen, the vitality that they now have on their faces where this has been done is a shocking thing. We believe that is one of the Achilles' heels of rapid socioeconomic change.

The second has to do with health. Health has to be geared to the preventive. Now one of the things that is absolutely vital around the world is water. In Kawangware, this is because of parasites. Here they are feeding two bodies. They must find deep water bores, they must drill until they get good water which the people can not only drink but wash their clothes in and bathe in. And then they can use the high table water for irrigation only. Where this is not done you might as well not do health. The doctors come in with immediate immunization and preventive health structures. In Kawangware they went down 450 feet to find good water. Ingersoll Rand came in and it was a \$7,000 expense. They just drilled and drilled until they found water (or China). They got it. In Maliwada, 250 feet down they got water. I prophesy they are going to find water even in El Bayad. It is just a matter of going down far enough. It is unbelievable. The health team is right on target in that arena.

Third, and most important under the social, is "local social framework." What I mean by that really are local social infrastructures. In each developing country you go in, there are unbelievable cities, unbelievable regional infrastructures, unbelievable airports and highways, and they say their best highways are to the airports. What must happen are local infrastructures. In our terminology they are "stakes" in terms of community care, "guilds" in terms of community action, "assemblies in terms of the whole community, or "congress" and "commissions" in terms of the administrative and a Panchayat in terms of the symbolic in India. We would be fools if we went in and did not consider that an absolute priority, because we want to get out of those villages. If you do not build the stake, guild, commission and assembly structures, you are there for 20 years. They are working everywhere. Maliwada, after only 10 weeks, had everything going except stakes. The problem was no one there had ever heard of stakes. (It is often good to send someone in who is innocent enough not to know it is impossible and they do it anyway.) These are absolutely crucial. These are not organizational structures. We insist on saying that we are doing local socioeconomic development. Now we could say "community development," however, we are not doing community development. Community development is bureaucratically superimposed renewal. Stakes and guilds are the extreme opposite of local bureaucratic structures. They are that without which the social cannot be done.

Fourth is "functional education." This has to do with skills relative to total community renewal. It has to do with basic literacy. It has to do with English, and a liberal will tell you that you ought not teach English, but if a person is going to survive he has to have some basic capabilities in English. Then technical skills. They have to have functional education that is relevant to their lives rather than 4 more years of college.

Fifth, and last, under the local social dynamic, is "family development." This is not just family planning, though that is a part of it. I want to insist on this: we have found some unbelievable things in these villages. One, if you think back, nutrition gives you the physical capability to hear a message. If your body is enervated by parasites and therefore lack of vitality, you could care less about a message that has to do with tomorrow. In this family planning issue, only when you have engagement of a community and only

when they have the physical capability to hear, will that message be understood. It is one of the great indirect benefits. In all the projects they are doing an analysis to show two things: one, that when they start the project how many babies were born in a year and more tragically, how many died in a year, and second how that is reduced without a direct family planning program, although that is a part of it.

Then also under domestic sciences is health training in terms of sanitation and children. I want to stress we are talking about family development, not the mindset that says foreigners have too many babies.

Under the economic, the first box is "total employment." That is an audacious statement: not half, but total. What we are really talking about is total engagement. In the mud in Kwwangware, they have 1,972 people, from the kids and the adults, involved in the training. I would like to describe the Maliwada factories a little more. It is shocking. One out of every family in Maliwada is employed in either the two factories or the construction program. That means that you are spreading income. The rest are farmers. They are about at total employment or engagement now after 8 months. These factories are the most incredible things in the world. One is a food processing industry. The shocking thing is that they have 130 people working. They take a soy bean stuff and make a little lunch pack for the school lunch program in Maharashtra. It tastes terrible (they have to improve the taste of it.) but you go there and people are working. They work three shifts, 24 hours a day. I was standing there and all of a sudden a whistle goes off and I said "What's wrong?" They said "That is the next factory." Can you imagine a little village having a whistle that blows and out goes one shift? The ladies are there on the floor crushing this stuff and singing songs. Three shifts of these ladies sitting there doing that, singing that crazy Maliwada song. Next to it is another shed where they are creating boxes. They are going to do more industries, but it is total employment that we are after. The vital thing is that they have stressed the landless be employed there. You are getting a tremendous distribution of income within the village.

Secondly, "local commercial structures" are to be built. This is the direct input of the principles of local economics where with an injection of outside funds you re-circulate a dollar within the village. You consider the village an economic unit in and of itself, as if it were a nation. You talk about imports and exports and so on. You get a dollar or a rupee or lots of rupees into a village and then you re-circulate the money as many times as possible before you let it seep out into the larger economy. What do you build? You build structures that have to do with corporate buying of goods, corporate retailing, and inner circulation of the funds. It is phenomenal what such a structure can do.

Thirdly, we build the local economy. We are interested in sizable income upgrading. I have a quarrel with cottage industries. If you just do cottage industries you are creating structural underemployment. We are after people having a dramatic increase in income. Our goal is within two years to triple the income of that village. When we saw McNamara at the World Bank he said their goal was to double income in 5 years by using the regional approach of impact through projects like their command area irrigation and so on. That is not a bad goal through that approach, but we are out to triple the income in two years. We are absolutely persuaded that it is possible. Again to illustrate from Maliwada, in 8 months they have gone from \$100,000 gross village income to \$280,000 gross village income. In 8 months they have almost tripled it. The actual net cash input was \$25,000 over 6 months. They got a lot from the government but that money was sitting there anyway. They got a lot of loans but that is locally assumed. It is a shocking thing when you see how they have spread their income. There are similar figures on Kawangware and other projects.

Fourthly, we are concerned with "local agriculture productivity." That has to do both with expanding the agricultural effort and intensifying it. That has to do with not only more corporate farming, but also intensifying the yield from the small landholding plots that you find in many countries. What they have done in Kawangware in farming is just shocking. They raise green beans which they export to London, and they are able to make a fantastic income off a corporate demonstration farm. Also on the demonstration farm, they are trying every, crazy crop they can think of that would grow there. If it does not work they do not do it again. They are just putting everything in the world that could work on the small landholding plots. The farmers are using hybrid seeds to intensify the yield of their small plots. Irrigation is another factor. You go to Maliwada where the great fort sits. It is very easy to visualize how it was once a garden of Eden, green, lush, beyond all imagination. There is a big hole miles long that was a fantastic reservoir built 700 years ago. You can see the tracings of small irrigation lines. Maliwada is in what the World Bank calls the drought prone area. What happened? Did God have his way? No, they just stopped irrigation. They once did irrigation and now they don't. Now they are doing it again. It is getting green again there. Barring natural catastrophe the irrigation locally is easy to do.

Fifthly under the economic is "intensified profitable light industry". I described those industries that they have in Maliwada. First is a cottage industry. I am not against them as long as they are not the only thing. I do not mean handicraft per se, but things that people can do in their houses, like rope making. Second is a processing industry. That is where you take a crop that is locally grown and you push it one more step down the production line. You take the guava that is grown and make it into guava jam. In other words you cut out one step before you export it. Third we are calling ancillary industry, which is trying to point to the factor of a guaranteed market. Any minority or entrepreneurial business that has failed has failed with the market issue. We have had unbelievable luck around the world in approaching the national and international corporations in the nearest city, and we say to them that we are after employment. If they have a product that is relatively low capital expenditure and relatively low skill or easily learned skill, we would create this product. You have to mention that you would even be willing to have competition, but you would rather be the only one. We will produce a product and in the first 2 years or first year of production we will base estimates only after meeting their guaranteed market.

They get started off with a guaranteed market and they are relatively easy to find. You think of many villages in replication and how the economy of the state of Maharashtra is going to create an internal market which is unbelievable, producing products that go to a larger business outside the country of the local village. That is what they have done, and why they do extremely in those two industries in Maliwada.

Third, and this would be in the middle column, "local community spirit." We believe this to be the white hot heat of motivation itself. Under spirit, first is a "meaningful context." This is a crucial one. You know, in our first projects we picked some villages where the story of the village was relatively easy to discern. You just think a village sitting at the foot of the Dualatabad Fort, carved out of sheer rock. It is easy to see once upon a time they had a fantastic story about their village: their ancestors built one of the great wonders of the world. What we are finding is every village has an unbelievable story about its past. The story that the village at Kendore has tells of a sacred well, and that is just a regular old dirt bag Indian village. Every village around the world has in the deep recesses of its past an unbelievable story and all you have to do is ask enough questions and it comes out. The look on the villagers' face when they see that story and then you help them mold it! Once they remember their past they have a chance to see that there is more of their future beyond tomorrow. They can start to envision a future. Secondly under a meaningful context, you are charged with discerning the fundamental human issue that is there. This is not easy. It was hardest perhaps in Kelapa Dua where you had to discern what the deep underlying human issue was. They had at the same time an unbelievable physical lethargy and a fanatical motivational spirit. We had a hard time stating that one, but in each project if you do not discern what their fundamental human issue is, then you cannot help them in creating their story.

Second, under the local community spirit is "revitalized symbols." These are not symbols that you import, they are their symbols. Every Indian village used to have festivals, more festivals than you could imagine, but they stopped. You encourage them once again to use their symbolic life and their stories and songs. When they started the preschool in Maliwada we went over to the Haridjan community, the outcast community. When we first went in there they hid in their mud huts. When we went there again they came out and brought their kids. The lowest of the low brought their kids out. They had their kids sing songs in Hindi to us and then songs in English. Not just the kids were vital and alive, but you should have seen their parents. They were proud of their kids for the first time. Anyway, the symbols have to be songs, rites and festivals. Without that you do not have a local community spirit.

Thirdly and most importantly, under local community spirit we are calling a "new living environment." This is best illustrated by the housing. Everywhere around the world housing can be built out of local material and local labor. In Kawangware they have their drain ditches. You can imagine it is a lot easier now to walk down the street where you do not need hip boots. It is fantastic the way those kids get out and dig those ditches. They get full again and they get out and dig them again. Now the city council has come in and they have laid half of it with stone, which is a fine example of working with the city structures. In addition to housing there is the community itself. They have cobblestoned their street in Maliwada. Can you imagine? They have set little white rocks around the road. They have named them "Mahatma Gandhi Avenue", "Jawaharal Nehru Avenue." I tell you it is fantastic and the greatest thing is the pride they have where they can walk down that cobblestone street and not be enveloped in dust.

Fourth, "corporate effort". We believe that such renewal of a community is absolutely impossible without intensive corporate efforts. As you would well guess, we first go out there and we are a sign of corporateness itself. People can laugh at our blue and we do not much care. Besides there are so many blue suits in the world they are getting cheaper. We go out there in our blue and we roll up our sleeves and we start the first work day. Then the next thing you know there are the people. The funny thing is, age-old taboos disappear overnight. It used to be in these places the insanity that water could not pass over one man's land to go to another. That is not an issue in Maliwada or Kawangware, it is not an issue now. Age-old taboos disappear with the corporate effort. It used to be that you had the outcasts out here, and overnight you have all classes working together with significant engagement, and corporateness. That does not mean that they like each other any more than anyone of us likes each other. They sense with the engagement and the first demonstration of the blue going out there that they can work together and get their community renewed. It is fantastic to see.

Then last, as you would well guess, we are after individual creativity coming out. It is the flip side of corporateness. With corporateness you get some of the most individualistic responses in the world, where creativity bubbles out of their skin. We have seen it not only here in our Order, but we have seen it with those villagers. You and I could not do what we were doing if Kang was not in Korea, Parekh in India, Fishel in Majuro, Campbell and Kamene in Kawangware. The individual creativity comes out after that.

We are going to keep working on articulating our philosophy. This is not something that we are going to superimpose on a village. At the height of replication the first four villages are going to do a Consult like this. Then when we do the 25 all the work will be done. They are going to go in and instead of having a Consult, what they probably will do is have a Town Meeting, and that will be all they need. Then they can take the experience of their fellows. With the 250 villages, they go to the training school and then they have a Town Meeting. What I am trying to say is that the Town Meeting is by far the most important thing.

I would like to charge you with just two things. One, your colleagues around the world are impressed with what has been done with Town Meeting. Moreover, they are depending on it because they know that what local man did in North America will make it a lot easier for them.

Why would this work? There are two things I believe. One has to do with the local people themselves. Any of you that have gone to a Consult know this. Integrity bleeds out of those people. After one day in the Consult they are standing up straighter. They are not encumbered with education. They are willing to move. They are not after some dole because they know that depreciates their own selfhood. Some of the finest associations that we have made the last few years have been with local man himself. I believe it will work because of that. The second reason I believe is because we are finding an unbelievable pool of people, around the world where volunteerism is not a dead issue. They happen to care. There are local people who care and people in the 15% who care. Though I am sure a funding agency would not believe that rationale, that is why I am convinced it will work.