

Minneapolis Region
First Gathering of Guardians

CW
5/24/74

THE ROLE OF THE GUARDIAN

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When I began wondering about the role of the Guardian, one of the first questions that came to mind was to ask, 'Who in the Sting was the Guardian?'

Johnny Hooker is fairly easy to eliminate. He has the energy, the drive, the exuberance to escape from one situation while rushing headlong into another. But those are qualities that I do not associate especially with Guardians. He also tends to throw money around in a rather unconventional way.

Del Londrigan is a Guardian. You see him in his gambling casino, then on the golf course. Always dressed for the part. He knows who the key contacts are, how to integrate business into life. He has the style, the savoir faire, the confidence. He is never at a loss, knows the appropriate response. That has something to do with being a Guardian.

Henry Gondorf is the master con man. Johnny Hooker, if you remember, always looks like he put on a tuxedo specially for the occasion. Henry Gondorf looks like he has been wearing one since six months of age. He has the style. He is the one who beckons the leadership, who taps the side of his nose and has the professional con artists drop whatever they are doing and join him. It is he who runs the meeting where they decide which con game they will play on Londrigan. 'How about the stock swindle?' No, he knows all about stock. 'What are his weaknesses?' He doesn't drink, smoke, play the ponies, or run around with women. Yet I see Henry Gondorf more in the role of prior. He is the one who announces the consensus when the group decides that they will use the wire. He is the one who tries to anticipate Hooker's needs and assigns the bodyguard who eventually saves his life from Selino.

The best candidate for the role of Guardian may well be Kid Twist. He has style. Dressed in flashy clothing, hat, cane, vest, it is clothing to fit the occasion. He plays the part of the painter entering the Telegraph Office, and looks like a painter. A few seconds,

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The worship and the cabaret, one is the flip side of the other. And perhaps the Guardian is the flip side of the Prior, the Secular-religious compared to the Religious-secular.

The first Guardian meeting back in 1972 had 33 Guardians present. I remember the discussions that went on over who to invite. Those were the days when the Development office was at one end of the hall and the Future Projects office at the other. There was a lot of consultation back and forth, a few grooves worn in the carpet. A lot of the talk centered on the gap between the church and the world of business. We knew the blessing of the business community was essential to the mission of the spirit movement. And we knew that most of us in the movement were churchmen. How to involve those businessmen. The other factor was the new course, now known as LENS. A break through has been made in bridging the gap between business and church with the North Shore Cadre. How to expand that to include men from all over the continent?

Another gap was the one between the establishment and the disestablishment. The disestablishment was very much in evidence around centrum in those days. Lots of students, long hair, blue jeans. College students around the country had taken courses, come in for summers, taken busses to Chicago for an RS-I. In the summer of 1971, the place of the

transestablishment in bridging the gap between establishment and disestablishment became clear. The role was there for the movement of being the creative catalyst between the yes and the no. But to really bring that dynamic off in history, the Yes as well as the No had to be present in force, in person, getting their wisdom into the process. The Guardians have stepped into the role of representing those who have said Yes to civilization, of putting all that accumulative wisdom of a thousand years into tension with the No of the disestablishment to enable the creation of the new.

Guardians have picked up the role of bridging the gap between the comprehensive and the practical. They were among the first to walk through the LENS course and measure its relevance to the day to day issues encountered by the business world. They evaluated its terminology and suggested changes that would make LENS more easily marketable. Their experience as world travellers has made LENS a course with built in comprehensiveness.

The spirit movement has defined what it is about as contextual re-education, spirit re-motivation, community re-formulation and symbol re-creation. The first to be actualized in a significant way was the symbol re-creation that occurred when a cluster of families first began to see themselves as the symbolic order. The move to the West Side of Chicago was symbolic. The rituals, the accountability, the Daily Office, the wedge blade--all these emerged as the outward manifestation of an inward reality.

From this symbolic beginning emerged what we have come to know as the Movemental Order, or just "the Movement." From the beginning, its task was conceived in the wisdom arena, bringing bus loads of students to courses in Chicago, organizing courses in their own cities. Theirs has been the passion of contextual re-education, setting the comprehensive context for a renewed global churchmanship.

In 1969, the style pole came to the fore with the sending out of the religious houses and the creation of the Local Church Experiment. We know that style is the gift of the Religious House to its region. A group of people live a day by day experiment in being those for whom spirit re-motivation is a way of life. Our children will probably look back with wiser eyes than our own and recognize that style was what the Local Church Project was all about. There are visions, contradictions, resolves and tactics, and all are necessary. But when it comes to the final question, is this or that congregation being renewed, we look not for statistics, not for activities, but for people who are living the style of being the church.

In dealing with the tyranny of the economic and the collapse of the cultural, the first stages have been to build up the cultural, starting

with the symbolic, then the wisdom, then the style pole. Each move has been a process of embodying the creative insights of the spirit movement within a sociological form: the Symbolic Order, the Movemental Order, and finally the Religious House and Local Church Project.

Calling together a group of colleagues to embody the Guardian dynamic has been a head on move on the economic arena. Its strategy has been to heighten the visibility of people whose success in the economic world is apparent, yet who have decided to embody in themselves a balance of the political and economic processes.

SOCIAL PROCESS	SOCIOLOGICAL FORM	RENEWAL ACTIVITY
Symbol Collapse	The Symbolic Order	Symbol Re-creation
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There is one clear implication of this analysis for the future. The Guardians are those who have decided to use the strength of the economic community to rebalance the whole social process. This creates a clear role for the Guild as those who have decided to use their influence within the political structures of society to rebalance the whole social process. There have been a few professionally political people attend Guardians gatherings in the past. As the Guild gathers momentum and takes on sociological form its function and growth may parallel that of the Guardians. Each arena of the social process--symbol, wisdom, style, economic, political--would then be represented within the spirit movement by a particular body who saw its task as using the strengths of that arena to rebalance the whole social process. The clarity this gives to the role of Guardian and Guildster may be helpful.

In looking back over all the ways in which Guardians have served the spirit movement, it is hard to see what all these activities have in common. The legal commission. Teaching LENS around the globe. Development coordination in the regions. Guardians have given continued financial support to the global movement. They have moved into houses and made it possible to have many more people involved full time in the direct mission.

The first Guardian meeting was called in a time when the spirit movement had caught a glimpse of the importance of relating to the business world. Key figures like George Sisler had given the movement vital aid at crucial moments in its history. The North Shore Cadre had created a new support dynamic that promised to bring much needed authorization. But how to bring this all together, to deal with the financial needs of an expanding movement and create the climate of authorization on a global basis which this authorization would require, at the same time as the mission to society was never diminished.

The Guardian has moved to balance the Social Process, by embodying in himself the Cultural and Political. It is crucial to see the signal man. The financial support for research developing the cultural and political models of the future has also been crucial.

We have had a crisis in our day, an identity crisis for the Established Adult. What does it mean to be between 40 and 60 years old. What are the roles, the models, the prototypes. We live in an era where the public models presented deal mainly with people in their younger years. What does it mean to be a human being who stands over against the explorations of youth, the creativity of the rising adult, the serene wisdom of the elder. The Guardian has stepped into this arena of collapse where executives are fired and loose the meaning of their existence.

There has been a collapse of the male role in our time. Self sufficiency was the criterion of the pioneer, but no man is self sufficient in an interdependent interlocked economy. Physical strength, bravery in war, technical expertise--all have been male criteria at one time or another. None have remained inviolate arenas of male prerogative. The Guardian has moved into this arena, pushing the male ontology sections of the LENS course. There has been a continual effort among Guardians to be sensitive to the role of the man and the woman, and to experiment with these on behalf of the future.

This is the era of the vocational collapse. Executives are dismissed and have great difficulty becoming engaged again. What does it mean to be the vocated one in our day? Guardians, maintaining very consciously their vocational engagement at a level of deep commitment, ask what this means for the one who sees himself as the religious in history, catalyzing the new consciousness, creating the new civilization, inventing the new structures of humanness.

Each arena where the movement has found itself in difficulty, in crisis, Guardians have been called to step in and have stepped in. Where there has been financial crisis, Guardians have dealt with the situation, not only with their personal resources, but also with models and concrete action that have released funds far beyond the capabilities of any one person. Where there has been a crisis in the ability of the movement to handle data, it is the Guardian who has stepped in with a knowledge of computer capabilities and steered the course towards a system

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Clair Woodbury

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