SOCIAL PROCESS

This is a time of models, from those representing economic processes and management matrices to those representing the physical universe. These models give us an opportunity to clarify components and see relationships which were cloudy; they widen our understanding to include perspectives and aspects we might not otherwise be aware of. Our model of the social process is triangual; it is an attempt to hold in one picture the entire "culture" of a group of people. We use that word "culture" then to refer to one aspect of the entire "social process."

The economic is that collection of activities and patterns which is foundational to the continued existence of the other two, having to do with the raw resources, what we do to them (production), and how they are packaged and distributed.

The cultural is those forces and structures which give meaning and make sense of the rest of the social process—the communication of skills and knowledge and methods for attacking problems, the acceptable styles of behavior for various phases, sexes and groups, and the sense of destiny or purpose which link the society to the past and the future.

The political processes are those which allow for the ordering of social relationships, the ensuring of equitable treatment (justice) and the overall well-being of its citizens. This dynamic in a society has to do with how decisions are made and executed.

Now the important and revealing aspect of this model is not so much its shape but the interrelationships it represents. For instance, the cultural values inform the political decision-making while they illuminate the role of the economic. The political protects the value systems, the knowledge and styles sanctioned in the society and defends the economic processes which in turn support the political functions and sustain the cultural.

In every age and locale the "ideal" of a balanced process is un-realized in slightly different ways. Now we have an impotent or crippled political dynamic, probably in large part because it is not getting the direction from the practically-collapsed cultural. But are under the dominant influence of the economic where most of the power and creativity of our time is to be found. The cultural influence is relatively mild compared to the decisions and the impact of the economic and the political. This is what we mean by an imbalance in the society.

Do you remember a few years ago we spent a good deal of time analyzing some specific activities which we called pressure points in the society? The imbalance comes to a focus and causes problems to be manifest at certain points. Let me give you another example: the rapid growth of the economic has unintentionally caused many many problems to be manifest in our society. This is not an accusation, but it is simply to say it is going on. The economic growth has begun to put a great deal of strain on our distribution system. You might think this would be easily solved but there is a problem relative to not simply the amount of natural resources but their distribution, their utilization, their conservation. This is a pressure point in our society--how we make use of and distribute the resources that we do have. At the same time it is as if you could spend your whole concern and energy dealing with economic issues. But these economic issues, as I said, have unintentionally occasioned other problems.

Down here in the political process there is one called Bureaucratic Systems. That's a big word for Red Tape. We have to have bureaucratic systems. But this economic growth has happened so fast that the bureaucratic processes are not able to deal with it administratively. It's not simply that the computers have all the answers; it's a problem of the use of them and how they are organized. This mainly comes home to rest in the government and we know the problem there with regulations, with red tape.

Another pressure point (and you'll understand why these are in the political) has to do with Executive Authority. If the bureaucratic system is not delivering the goods, no leader, however dynamic or insightful, is going to make any difference. The crisis in leadership ro executive authority is not lack of intelligent people; it's because the system itself is not working. You can put Truman back in the White House, it wouldn't make that much difference because the bureaucracy is grinding to a slow halt. It's an illusion to think that a more intelligent person is going to make a difference in the executive position.

But we discovered that the critical pressure point has to do with involving and using the insights of individual people. We get caught up in the system, you know. We get so busy we forget about the direction and the purpose. This is called Significant Engagement. That's a way to talk about the overall commitment that people have in their jobs. If this is not clear, obviously the system is going to falter. If people are not involved in some sort of committed way, obviously the leadership and the system are going to feel it.

The most pressure points that we discovered were in the cultural process. Pressure points is another word for malfunction. What we discovered were five malfunctioning areas in the cultural dynamic. That would go along with the imbalance theory. What imbalance would look like on a mechanical diagram is, this one is not working, this one is going ninety miles an hour, and this one is going twenty-five miles an hour.

In the cultural, in the Wisdom dynamic, we found two pressure points. One of them, Social Morality, had to do with social world view, with people's perspectives and their view of the world from which they make decisions. And the second one went along with that--Formal Methods. We put those together because even if a person decides to be responsible, even if a person decides to deal with the problems of the world, there is still the issue of how. You can encourage people to be responsible all day long but if they do not have a method to solve the problem, if they do not have a method to cooperate with other people and solve the problem it all ends up in frustration.

And then you wouldn't be surprised to know that Community Groupings was a pressure point. Our neighborhoods are not what they used to be. It's not just the inner city that has begun to deteriorate--it's almost any neighborhood, high-rise, low-rise, rural or suburban. And even beyond that, the pressure point also has to do with the developed and the underdeveloped. The gap is widening. The community that we call the global village is disintegrating. It's not because we can't communicate, it's because there is a gulf. And the gulf is between the 15% and the 85% of the people of the world. That's a global pressure point as you know. There simply is a chasm between the developed and the underdeveloped countries.

Now there's an unusual one up here, it's called Social Art. This has to do with the future of a society and how it represents that future pictorially. This can be done with paintings, sculpture, and art of many kinds--the point is that the future of a society is important but it has to be represented. It has to be graphically protrayed or it does not become the vision of a society. It becomes instead the work of an individual genius. That's why the emphasis is on social art.

And then this top pressure point has to do with Secular Mythology--a story that in some way unites the people of the globe, gives meaning and relates an individual to the possibility of every culture, not just Hindu, not just Buddhist, not just Christian, not just Muslim, but a secular mythology that would allow some kind of cooperation.

Last night we talked a great deal about guardian involvement. This is not a surprise. If our pressure point is Significant Engagement, of course the expansion of a guardian network would be a vision of ours. It's a way to allow individual women and men to take their gifts, their potential, and use them not only for their own family, or neighborhood, but for the needs of the whole planet. That's Significant Engagement.

We talked last night about community development. Do you remember the cards that had to do with local community leadership and local community development and getting ourselves ready to do that? Well, that shouldn't surprise us. This community disintegration is a major pressure point in the cultural area. Of course the guardians would have a vision in this area.

And then you remember our discussion about the style of the guardian. This is a very difficult area to talk about. It's in this whole cultural arena and it has to do with the community called Those Who Care. And the formation of Those Who Care or the Guardians is precisely the point of the weekend.

We talked about the delivery system, which has to do with a cultural malfunction. Just prior to his death, Dr. Schumacher, author of Small is Beautiful, was going to spend some time with us. He thought that the ICA and Appropriate Technology International, his organization, could work together because we had the possibility of a delivery system. He had the vision, he had the library, he had the tools and yet he was not satisfied with his delivery system. The key to the delivery system is our perspective. It's our perspective that every community is worth dealing with. It's our perspective that every culture is worth honoring and in that light, that social world view, you can deliver something. If you are delivering selectively, you are never going to have an effective delivery. You will get some things there, but you will not have an effective delivery system. Without the methods you will have appropriate technology but it will not be appropriated. Do you understand what I'm saying? You can give all the gadgets and widgets big or small but they have to be received, and that is a matter of appropriating methods as well as the appropriate technology. That's this pressure point of

For the guardians to deal with the vision that you articulated last night is to deal with the major contradiction in society. That is really all I want to point out. You are right on target. To deal with your delivery system, to deal with the engaging of other people, to deal with community development, is to deal with the major contradictions in society.

Now, simultaneously or alongside of that are what we call Global Priorities, which are an attempt to succinctly state our objectives for the year. There are fourteen of them. We don't have time to go over all of them, but let me illustrate that both the vision you articulated and the vision of the priorities are focused in these pressure point.s

We have a priority called Two Million Village Awakenment, and No. 4 is called U.S.A. Mass Awakenment. These are based on the insight that to significantly engage individuals they have to be awakened. This does not mean limiting engagement by say that there are some that are enlightened and some that are not enlightened. It has to do with getting people's attention. Everybody is already busy. Everybody is already involved. But in order to get them to look and significant and global engagement you have to get their attention first. And impact and awakenment has to do with different instruments for getting their attention long enough so that they can decide about involvement beyond their family, beyond their community, or beyond their country.

Priority No. 3: 2500 Villages, is the India replication effort that is going on right now in which some two hundred and fifty villages are actively engaged. Some of you have been involved in this and know a great deal about it. My point is that this is the most massive assault on the contradiction of Community Groupings that the world has ever seen. Can you imagine dealing with the Community Groupings in twenty-five hundred Indian villages? Now that's Community Groupings! It is the pressure point of how communities are to relate to each other and how individual communities sustain themselves, and therefore our work in India is directly related to the pressure points of the malfunctions of society. India is meant to be an example for other developing countries, but also for the developed countries.

You see there Priority No. 6: The Transparent 24. That has to do with the original twenty-four social demonstrations. And No. 10: Servant Force Formation. For me those go together. Simply to awaken people is not enough. When they raise the question of "how can I be responsible, how can I take action against the problems?" there has to be a methodology. Not some kind of rigid procedure but a method for solving problems. You don't solve problems with good intentions. You don't solve problems with good ideas, you solve problems with methodologies.

We have some methodologies and we will always be working to have others, but to solve problems you've got to work together. That goes without saying, but we are not suggesting more meetings or more committees, we are talking about team work. The contradictions are so big and so complex it is impossible to solve them individually. There has to be a team approach to it.

You see some other Priorities there, like No. 7: Mapping the Way, and No. 8: the Global Research Roundtable. Both of these are dealing with the issue of Secular Mythology. Active research is going on right now at this location and other ICA locations regarding the expressions and the poetry that convey profound humanness across cultural lines, trans-culturally. It must be a priority of ours to deal with the Secular Mythology, to state and communicate it so that any person can grasp the meaning and the profundity of humanness in our time.

Maybe just one more, No. 13: Pilot Urban Probes. This is our intention to deal with the urban. You know most of our effort has been in the rural, and it may very will be decided that we continue to emphasize the rural, for many reasons. One reason is that the development of this country is going to take place both in the urban and the rural. The cities can't grow mucy bigger, we have got to come to terms with that soon. What I am suggesting is that in the future, investment is going to be in the rural. Economic development may make a priority in agri-business. Certainly natural resources are going to become more precious.

That you are going to see more development in the rural does not take away from the need to deal with the urban. And I think the pressure point this points to is Bureaucratic Systems. No place else do you find red tape thicker than in the urban situation. It we attempt to address the city we've got to deal with the bureaucracy,.and the decision making which is strangled at this point.

All of this is to say that whatever we do as Those Who Care has to deal with the basic malfunctions that the society at large is facing. To the degree that we focus on the contradictions in society, our programs, our mission, our organization will be on target. We hold ourselves accountable for this. Not for how many people come to the metting, or how many Town Meetings we held. We hold ourselves accountable for addressing the major blocks, the major road blocks in society. We identify these and them we build programs to deal with the malfunctioning.

Once other model we use in LENS is called a Corporate Process model. It is our attempt to transpose the social process and make it relevant for a corporate group liek this. When we teach LENS we expose and emphasize this perspective on society. But when people are involved in a particular organization at a particular place the question is "how do I in my organization and my work deal with society?" The model suggests that any corporate body has the basic function of a service to society, such as producing a product. That is enterprise, and that is an innovative process. And secondly, there is an organizational principle, some kinds of principles of operation.

And then Those Who Care (which I put in the middle) are concerned about their working environment. Now we as Those Who Care can have no lesser responsibility than to look at our basic enterprise or mission, to look again at the minimal amount of organization that we can get by with, but most importantly at the working environment in which the guardians carry out their task. This is what will sustain us, this is what will give us direction. Working environment, in this model, has to do with the utilization of the wisdom that you have. How you go about using the wisdom, the creativity that you have is what we mean by working environment. The style that this is is carried out by the individual, in the family, and with the teams of guardians.

Third, the story about the guardians. What is the story about who we are and what we do, whether or not that is ever written in public? What is our understanding? What is our revolutionary philosophy for the Global Guardians? You say "Revolutionary philosophy? I didn't know we were supposed to have one of those." Oh yes. We need to very carefully state exactly what we mean by the mission of the guardians, the revolutionary principles on which it is based, the global story which is behind that and the methodology that is going to be used. I think we would require this of any other organization with which we deal intentionally. Surely we require it of ourselves, because in dealing with the working environment, it is cumbersome to talk about a loosely organized group like Those Who Care. The working environment is at the same level in the Corporate Process as the cultural dynamic is in the Social Process. To deal with the contradictions facing guardians is to deal with the contradictions in society. To deal with how we are organized and our mission is to be a demonstration for how any group in society can deal with its identity, can deal with its purpose, can deal with its function. To deal with the contradictions facing the realization of our vision is precisely what is necessary in order to be an impact on society in general. In other works, we are not turning in this weekend, we are focusing on our task and our future but we are doing it for the sake of society. We are doing it for the sake of addressing the major malfunctions in the world at large.