

OPENING ADDRESS

I welcome you to the Seventeenth Guardian Consult. My name is Don, sometimes known as Doctor Moffett. Just before I arrived here this evening there was an announcement over the radio - my car radio - that I thought you might be interested in. It was that the city bank in New York had announced their reduction of prime rate to seven and a half per cent. And Exxon had made a rather startling announcement that they had reduced the price of gasoline in their refineries to the distributors to the extent that gas should be approximately fifty-five cents a gallon for hi-test.

Now what about the time that we live in? This is the first of four talks this week-end. By the way, this talk will take very, very few minutes. And I will leave you within the allotted amount of time.

The first subject that I want to just touch on and kind of talk through with you is our times. You're as aware as I am, that we live in a time of radical change in which the cultural, economic and political dynamics of our social structures are going through unbelievable change. Values, technology, phases, sexes, races - everything - seems to be in some kind of process of revolutionary, evolutionary change. If one were to reflect upon our times, he or she would see the pace of change, perhaps the ubiquity of change, and the resultant search for meaning on the part of four billion people on this earth. Amidst all of that one is struck by the tremendous pressure now - so much more than in other times - and the fact of global community. For the first time in man's history or in human history we are faced with the fact of a global community, like it or not.

That raises the question of what then do you and I do about these times. Perhaps one response might be as basic as saying: "Well, we reflect upon the reality of these times, the situation we're in, and perhaps think a little bit about the legacy that we collectively or individually would like to leave to the world, or to our families, or to those that we hold dear." And we also think that in the process you'd like to make your life as significant as possible, as meaningful as possible. I think the only way to get related to the times we live in is to say we're living in a period of human history that none of us could have predicted but that we must finally conclude is exciting. These are just exactly the kinds of times that were meant to be at this point in history, and we have much to do. It is a great time in which to be alive. For each of us, you and I, can decide to aspire, to do our best, to make this life that we have significant, and to make some contribution to a time which history would look back on as a great time in civilization.

Or we have the obvious other kind of choice: not to so aspire, not to care or be concerned with too much about the future of our civilization, our global community. In other words, we can decide to beat a very easy, orderly descent to decent mediocrity. And, I guess, in thinking of those two choices that each of us has to make, we get very clear that there is a price to pay either way. Most of us are fairly familiar with the price being paid for success, whatever that may be. It means you put out, you lay it on yourself to do your best, you participate with a whole heart. That's called the price you pay for success. And I guess you raise the question, on the other side of that, what price you pay for mediocrity - and which is the better value.

Our times ask us to create - all times do - to think about our vision. We all have dreams. Even those who are loners have dreams. We have our Walter Mitty life. We have our dreams of greatness. We stand in front of the mirror when we're little kids and we pretend we're something else than what we are. And when we're adults - we wouldn't tell anybody this - but we probably do the same thing. And, sometimes, standing in front of the mirror isn't all that encouraging. But we do it, nonetheless. We have dreams of greatness for our civilization, dreams of greatness or significance for our own lives. And we're told, by the way, we're told by history that all great civilizations - and there is none that is an exception in terms of my exhaustive study in this area - that all great civilizations were born in adversity and nurtured by dreamers and adventurers and philosophers. And, when I think of this, we all have our meditative council. In my case, the guy I want to go back and talk to in that regard is Aristotle, because he had a way of simply and powerfully stating, at least in my opinion, some great philosophical realities that make sense to somebody as simple-minded as I. And when he talks about the "good life", he bases it on virtue and then goes on to tell you exactly what that means. He talks about temperance, justice and courage. He gives a track for my life to run on. For temperance Aristotle said that you partake of life in moderation, for the sake of the greater good of your own life. On justice, Aristotle said that you order your own life in such a fashion that you respect the good and the potential of everybody else on this globe. And, about courage, he said that you willingly undergo pain and hardship for the sake of the total good, your own and others.

Our times also lay a demand. What kind of demand, then, do we face? Now I'm beginning to talk about "What if and why not?" So we're talking about the Guardians now in my language. The demand, it seems to me, that we face in terms of the world we live in - I'm talking about the Guardians now, as well as perhaps everybody else - is for humankind to work for reasonably human society. And, as we sit here tonight - some one hundred and twenty Guardians - we're clear about one thing, and that is that we have colleagues. There is a network of Global Guardians. And it's a good thing we have that kind of colle-

giality, that kind of corporate reality, because we need community. You and I need community. There is a demand for corporateness that is very easy to understand. Ever since we created villages, some fifteen thousand years ago, to stay alive, we've been aware of the power of corporateness. People working together. And there's no way to talk about it rationally in terms of product or result. The 1960's freedom song, "One and One and Fifty Make a Million", tell my story. They don't add up. One and one and fifty don't make a million, but, in terms of corporate power, that's what we're talking about.

I think that if one were to talk about corporate power, he or she would have to make a couple of presuppositions. And one presupposition it would seem to me would be that the group would have to have the potential to be significant in terms of the globe. And the second presupposition would be something like there must be a receptive environment; that is, the rest of the world has to be ready to receive that. And my language for that kind of environment is "the invisible college". This is composed of countless individuals, that are in sympathy with and believe in basically that which you're about as a group. They are supportive. And you may never know them. So I kind of think to myself that the Guardians might be the pebble dropped in the lake, so to speak, and the ripples that we create would touch these other people.

Then we come to the challenge that we as Guardians face. Don Elliot said he's been here for fourteen of the seventeen Guardians' meetings. And I don't take any credit for this, but I've been here for all seventeen of them, since 1972. It reflects almost eight years of growing, a group growing, a group of imperfect individuals, from thirty-three - that was the number present in January of '72 - to the some twelve or fourteen hundred Global Guardians that exist today. And we've dreamed, we've thought up what we might do, and, by golly, if you look at our track record, we've done it. We've been helped and pushed now and then by our peers and by others with whom we associate. But basically we've set objectives and we've accomplished those objectives.

In terms of the challenge before us, what does history today require of us? What does the Guardian guard, if you will? And those are two separate questions. First, what does a Guardian guard? The Guardian guards the group of which he is a larger part. We are responsible in a very, very large way for the well-being and the future and the potential and the catalytic impact that the Institute has, that the Movement has on the world. I think also, along with our larger group, we guard what I would call the recovery of human dignity; to bring into being the human society that the world is looking for today. And I think we have a chance to be a sign, to be a catalyst relative to recovery or rearticulation of human ontology. Human sexuality, human phaseality, human rationality: all are part of this new human society we talk about and yearn for. All are part of this weekend that we're going to experience together.

We face the challenge of how do we engage. This is part of your conversation. I don't have the answers to how I engage, or you engage, or how we as a body engage. But my guess is that this weekend we, collectively, as a group, will be able to address ourselves effectively to that kind of challenge. It makes me think - and I'm the subject of this example - what if I stopped asking - and maybe this applies to some of you - "When will the Institute use my gifts effectively?" "When will the Institute tell me what to do next?" and asked "What can I do?" - now, for the Institute, for the Movement?

I think another challenge has to do with the kind of visions that you and I have. What if, what if we could catalyze what Boulding called the "invisible college"? What if we could hook up with the countless people who feel very much as we do - those of us sitting here in this room? What if that which we and countless other people, without even being able to talk about it, are about, would come together and become the catalytic force in forming a global collegiality.

What does our future look like? In Mississippi, the reality, the physical happening of Town Meeting and the physical presence of the Human Development Project - two things originally, basically divorced from one another have come together, have converged, in other words. And there has been a catalysis. We heard about it at noon at the board meeting here today. It's a very exciting example of the kind of possibility that exists when these dynamics come together.

This weekend we've assembled here for the Seventeenth Guardian Consult. We are going to go through a process that's been proven and that's extremely powerful, and you'll appreciate that by Sunday. Using the LENS construct we will deal with and plan for our future in relationship to our involvement with the Institute. We will articulate a strategy for ourselves. Now LENS has some basic ingredients to it, one of which is the comprehensive perspective. That's basically what's going on tonight. We're going to raise in these methods this weekend the question of being effective; that is, doing the right thing. This is as opposed to efficiency, which is doing things right. You are going to concentrate this weekend on releasing the potential that exists in this room - and elsewhere. Peter Drucker says this is the greatest single responsibility of management. He's a colleague. We are also going to deal with developing practical, rational plans relative to this strategy.

Our timeline is very simple. Tonight, Friday night, we're going to go through a vision analysis. You've done some of that work in terms of the conversation and we're going to spend the rest of the evening on that and then have a little time for some fun. Tomorrow morning we're going to deal with contradictions, blocks that stand in

the way of our vision. Saturday afternoon we're going to work on proposals. Then we're going to have a celebration beyond your wildest dreams. Sunday morning we're going to work on tactical systems for the proposals we've created.

Each session has a conversation, a discourse, a think-tank and a plenary. There will be four sessions. And the result at the end of the weekend will be a product you can take home with you, a strategy. You will become familiar with the LENS process which will be invaluable to you no matter where you are or what you do. You will have experienced a weekend of hard, productive work. You will have in your strong hands a final document, and, I predict, we're going to have a lot of fun. I think we'll go out of here with an attitude that says something like "I have gone through with myself the process of saying 'What if . . .?'" and I'm going to go out of here saying "Why not?" "