

SIGNIFICANT ENGAGEMENT

We'd like to consider the issue of significant engagement. Let me begin with a story. I call it "Before the City" (though Franz Kafka originally entitled it "Before the Law").

Before the City stands a doorkeeper. To this doorkeeper there comes a man from the country and prays for admittance to the City. But the doorkeeper says that he cannot grant admittance at the moment. The man thinks it over and then asks if he will be allowed in later. 'It is possible,' says the doorkeeper, 'but not at the moment.' Since the gate stands open, as usual, and the doorkeeper steps to one side, the man stoops to peer through the gateway into the interior. Observing that, the doorkeeper laughs and says: 'If you are so drawn to it, just try to go in despite my veto. But take note: I am powerful. And I am only the least of the doorkeepers. From hall to hall there is one doorkeeper after another, each more powerful than the last. The third doorkeeper is already so terrible that even I cannot bear to look at him.' These are difficulties the man from the country has not expected; the City, he thinks, should surely be accessible at all times and to everyone; but as he now takes a closer look at the doorkeeper in his fur coat, with his big sharp nose and long, thin, black Tartar beard, he decides that it is better to wait until he gets permission to enter. The doorkeeper gives him a stool and lets him sit down at one side of the door.

There he sits for days and years. He makes many attempts to be admitted, and wearies the doorkeeper by his importunity. The doorkeeper frequently has little interviews with him, asking him questions about his home and many other things, but the questions are put indifferently, as great lords put them, and always finish with the statement that he cannot be let in yet. The man, who has furnished himself with many things for his journey, sacrifices all he has, however valuable, to bribe the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper accepts everything, but always with the remarks: 'I am only taking it to keep you from thinking you have omitted anything.'

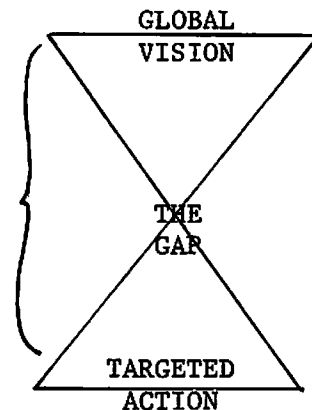
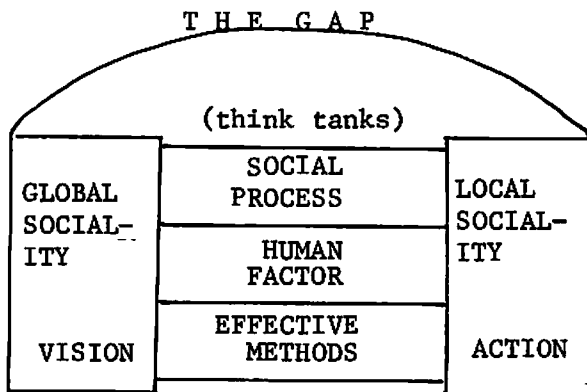
During these many years the man fixes his attention almost continuously on the doorkeeper. He forgets the other doorkeepers, and this first one seems to him the sole obstacle preventing access to the City. He curses his bad luck, in his early years boldly and loudly, later, as he grows old, he only grumbles to himself. He becomes childish, and since in his yearlong contemplation of the doorkeeper he had come to know even the fleas in his fur collar, he begs the fleas as well to help him and to change the doorkeeper's mind. At length his eyesight begins to fail, and he does not know whether the world is really darker or whether his eyes are only deceiving him. Yet in his darkness he is now aware of a radiance that streams inextinguishably from the gateway of the City.

Now he has not very long to live. Before he dies, all his experiences in these long years gather themselves in his head to one point, a question he has not yet asked the doorkeeper. He waves him nearer, since he can no longer raise his stiffening body. The doorkeeper has to bend low towards him, for the difference in height between them has altered much to the man's disadvantage. 'What do you want to know now?' asks the doorkeeper; 'you are insatiable.' 'Everyone strives to reach the City,' says the man, 'so how does it happen that for all these many years no one but myself has ever begged for admittance?' The doorkeeper recognizes that the man has reached his end, and to let his failing senses catch the words roars in his ear: 'No one else could ever be admitted here, since this gate was made only for you. And now it will be shut.'

I'd like to talk about four things: the issue of significant engagement, the dynamics of social change, the strategy of catalytic action and the style of the transestablishment.

I. Significant engagement is really the issue that we've been dealing with these two days. And we've been dealing with it by doing it. You might say that our battleplanning has been nothing more than rehearsing our decision about our lives over the next decade. I feel deeply privileged to participate with a group of people that has decided to spend their time in this fashion.

Remember, we began by articulating our global vision, or if you will,



global sociality. In other words we set before ourselves a comprehensive view of the world in which we operate. Gradually over the weekend we've been moving in the direction of what we might call local targeted action, local sociality. The first and the last sessions well represent our times, for we stand caught between a comprehensive global vision and the demand for local action. This is the gap. We stand "in between" and have been dealing with this gap in the think tanks, as well as contextually, in our talks about the social process, the human factor and effective methods. What we have been saying is that in order to bridge the gap which everyone faces, we must deal fundamentally with the social process in which we find ourselves and the pillars of humanness -- phasiality, sexuality and rationality -- which are the basic building blocks of every society that hopes to renew itself. History has never been bent without dealing with the definitudes of humanness and methods of effective action.

As I looked at the products of the vision session, I was impressed because it seems to me that our vision is a global vision with three primary thrusts. The first is to establish movemental credibility. This is absolutely crucial if we expect to bend history. The second is to expand global guardianship, which is exactly what the guardians are all about, i.e., the mobilization of forces. And finally, we are seeking practical ways to promote catalysis, methods for catalyzing programs, and bringing our missional thrust to bear upon society.

The contradictions we discerned also seem to be dealing with the gap. They reflect three basic thrusts as well. One relates to fragmented images of the guardians about themselves. Somehow, we have not developed a self-understanding, a self-story, that is adequate. Further, we are faced with a traditional mindset in our local communities and within ourselves, whether in respect to our jobs or our missional involvement. This contradiction relates to questions of leadership patterns and grassroots opinion. Finally, we are faced with undeveloped and ineffective use of forces, for at least 6 or 7 of the contradictions point to the issue of significant engagement. That really shouldn't surprise us. This issue of significant engagement is not only what we see as we look at society, but what we feel when we ask ourselves the question, "Where are we?" Every awakened person, and I might add some of those who perhaps only intuit their awakening, struggle with the same question: "How can I take this one flickering flame of life that I have and stuff it into history?" "How can I live this brief moment that's allotted to me in the most effective way on spaceship earth?"

The awakened person experiences pain that comes from clarity about the world, a special pain that perhaps others don't feel so intensely. Whoever is awakened is seared by the understanding that most people of this world today are destined to die without having grasped what it means to live profoundly or to experience profound human community. With this knowledge also comes the frustration of being ineffectual in dealing with what we know. It is as if our minds have rushed a thousand miles ahead, and we're standing here confounded by the fact that we cannot come to grips with what needs to be done. We can't come to grips with the vested interests and the biased social structures that we face. We can't even come to grips with the fact that we are so tied to our jobs and our communities, that we cannot find time to do the global tasks that we consider must be done.

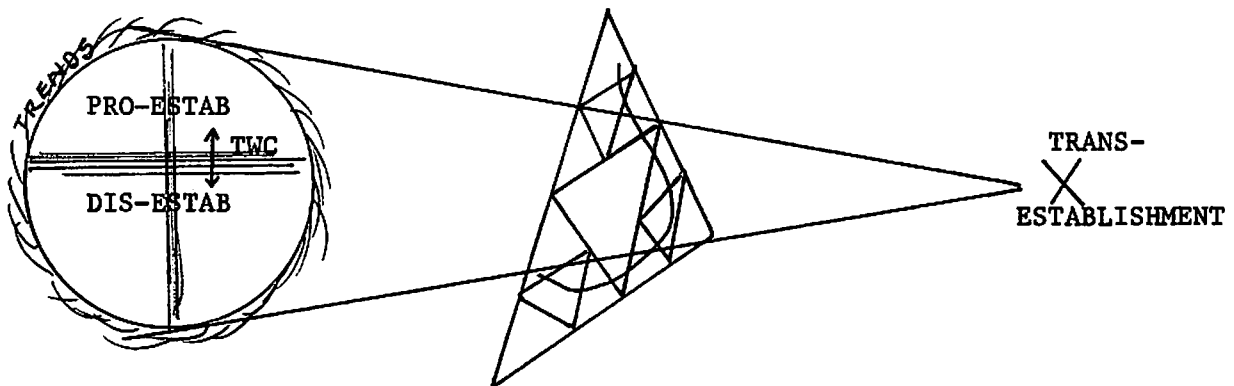
We also experience a crisis in effectivity. This crisis in effectivity is the very subject of LENS methods. For instance, consider the methods of corporate action. The crisis in this arena is amply depicted by the plight of the Vietnamese boat people. The world community has not yet been able to deal with the fact that thousands of refugees are floating across the ocean, stranded and uncared for. In spite of the 35 years of UN organization and experience, that problem remains unsolved. Let's also look at problem-solving methods. How long have we known that we have an energy crisis? How long have we known that the price of oil and the cost to developing countries is spiraling? Due largely to this, the debt of developing countries is now not \$100 billion as it was in 1974, but close to \$300 billion. Yet we are unable even to arrive at a national plan of energy for the United States. Or consider the methods of motivity. The United States -- after 200 years of government of the people, by the people and for the people -- constantly finds itself on the defensive with respect to people (as in Iran and Nicaragua) who are acting out the story we put into history at the birth of our nation. We find ourselves at a loss to deal with authoritarian situations, and to identify with the plight of innocent suffering.

All of us whether we find ourselves assigned to the symbolic order or to the role of guardianship, experience this frustration of ineffectivity. I submit those assigned to demonstration projects experience it as well. Yet this very frustration offers hope for it allows us the opportunity to deal not only with what we sense and feel but with what the whole world is sensing and feeling.

I'm reminded of a story that I think deals with the issue of effectivity. A Texan was travelling through Mexico and stopped to watch a cock fight along the road. He stepped over to the guy who was putting spurs on the cocks, and said, "Hey, José, tell me which one of those chickens is going to win?" "Oh señor," said José, "you see the red one, he is the best one." "You sure that's the best one?" asked the Texan. "Sí Señor, he's the best one." So the Texan put all his money on the red cock. The cocks were let loose and within 15 seconds the red one lay dead on the ground. The yellow one was strutting around victoriously. The Texan ran back to José: "I thought you said that the red one was the best one!" "Oh señor, I did. The red one was the best one, but the other one, he's a son of a bitch." Dealing with social structures also is no time for sentimentality. Instead, we may all ask what it means to be an S.O.B.

II. We want to consider briefly the dynamics of social change. Some years ago at the summer research assembly we built a model which I think is still applicable. We described society as a spinning sphere generating

TRENDS



a wide variety of trends. We said that anyone looking at society objectively would see that some trends are originating from the pro-establishment, and some from the disestablishment. These two parts of society stand in creative tension with each other. Every person falls into one or the other category, although with varying degrees of commitment. The critical factor for anyone who has decided to create history is to get beyond an identification with either the pro-establishment or the disestablishment. To do that you must forge a vantage point on history, or a third position relative to society, which we have called the trans-establishment. This involves developing a screen or tool for identifying and analyzing societal trends, and an ideology for evaluating them and our own strategies. We did that in 1971. The analytical tool is the social process triangles. And the ideology we stated as "All the earth belongs to all the people", i.e., "All the goods of all the earth,

all the decisions of history and all the gifts of humanness belong to all the people." That to me was very radical at the time, yet almost a decade later it strikes me as on target. My point is that anyone who decides to be the transestablishment must have a place to stand in order to understand history and to create future direction.

We began to discover also that society embodies a second creative tension within both the establishment and the disestablishment. Each includes people who care and those who don't. It doesn't matter whether they stand primarily in the pro- or disestablishment. Care for the future is the critical basis for forging concerted action between the transestablishment and the social forces which will bring about future change.

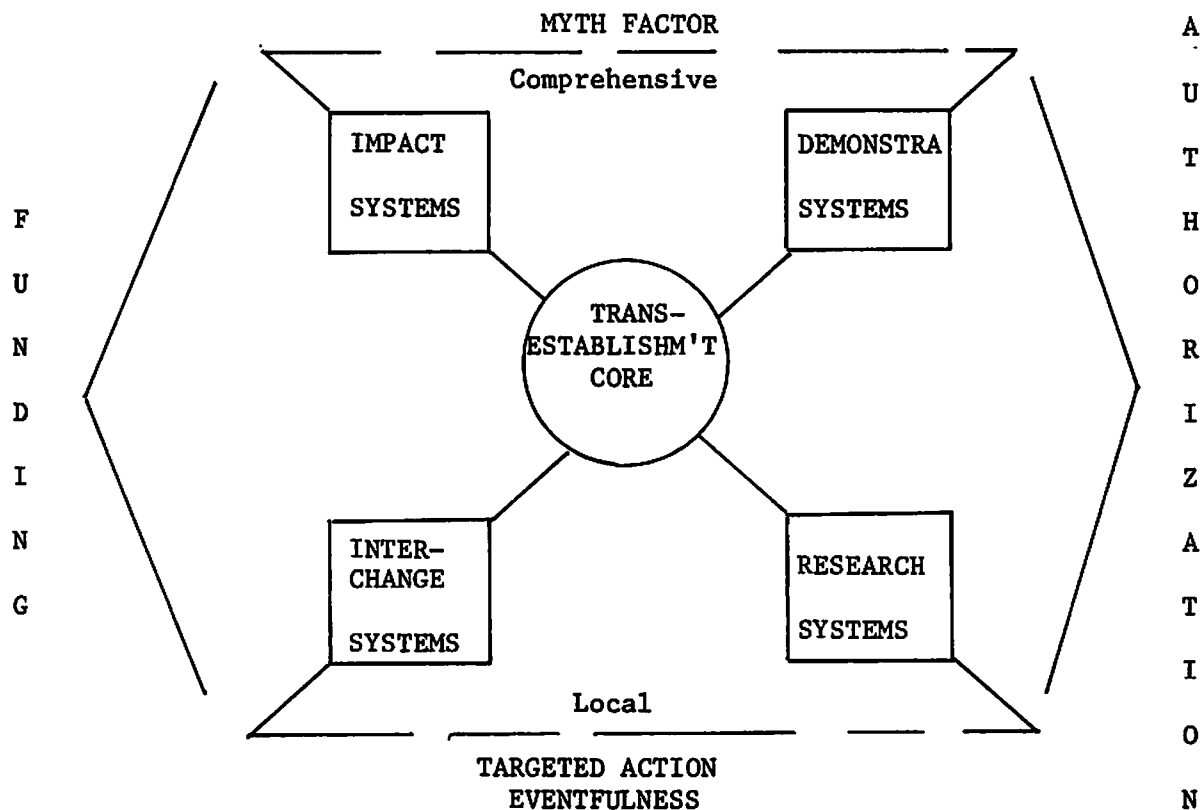
Further, from the vantage point of the transestablishment, we discovered that there were pressure points in society. As you will recall from the talk on the social process triangles, we identified 9 pressure points for social change, which we imaged as the fish hook strategy. All pressure points must be addressed simultaneously if change is actually going to take place.

LENS and the contradictional analysis that we've participated in this weekend emerged from this concept of social change. We're out to open up people's vision to their future. We have no answers, in one sense, for the content of profound humanness. We simply open the dialogue and force people to consider their care for the future and their responsibility for all of humanity. On the other side of the practical vision, contradiction analysis is the critical step for unblocking the social process so that it can develop freely.

III. We also realize that effective social change requires strategic action. Yet we cannot always move directly to unblock the social process. More often, the required strategy is one of indirection. I'm reminded of the origin of bullfighting strategy. The objective of the matador is to confront and kill the bull. You understand that the matador has more than one strategy available to him. He could, for instance, get 100 of his best colleagues, line them up across the ring and charge the bull. However, after losing several colleagues, he might look for another way to do the job. He might first study the bull. He might then discover that by employing picadores, he could loosen the neck muscles of the bull so that the animal's head drops slightly. Further, by employing his red cape and gaining some control over the bull, the bull could be positioned with his front legs together. This opens up a small hole about 2 inches square in the bone structure at the back of the animal's neck through which the matador can thrust the sword. That innovation allowed bull fighting to become the great sport that it is today. It also saved the lives of a lot of colleagues.

This type of strategic indirection lies at the heart of catalytic action. We discern ways of moving so that we can most effectively mobilize forces and configure tactics. Otherwise, we might just as well number off by 30 around the table and go off and do individual tactics. But a shotgun approach like that would greatly dilute corporate power and undercut our single thrust. By the same token, we need an indirect way to move on the pressure points and to apply leverage to the social

process. So we came up with the whistle point strategy of social change, consisting of two factors and four systems for the configuration of tactics and forces.



The myth factor (you noticed a lot of that bleeding through the battle-planning this weekend) and the action factor form the two poles of any strategy of social change. The one holds the piety or long-term vision, the other the effective methods of practical action. The myth factor is heavily emphasized in columns I, IV and VI of the tactical system worked out this weekend. The action factor becomes the maneuvers and force configurations which implement the tactical system. The four systems -- Impact, Demonstration, Research and Interchange -- form the foundational framework and momentum-building drive of the movement. Originally, training was one of the four systems, but in fact training is more of a component and a key implementing tactic of each of the four systems.

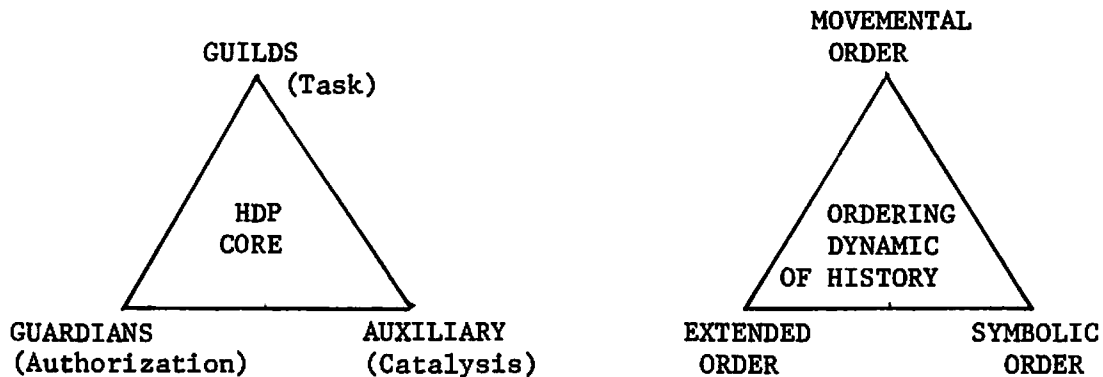
Impact systems hold the programs we've been developing for the impact campaign -- GCF, CYF, GWF, LENS and special issue forums. Research systems involve very practical research, the kind that's done in the Global Research Assemblies and that's done by Research Centrum throughout

the year, whether in respect to the voyage or Chicago Urban Lab. Demonstration systems involve the Human Development Projects around the world, including the 232 village projects in Maharashtra State. It includes Training, Inc. here in Chicago. But I suggest that demonstration is also what we're doing this weekend. This kind of planning is a demonstration to us as guardians and to the movement as a whole of corporate power. Demonstration is not just doing visible projects; it's primarily the style of our doing that counts. Finally, interchange systems deal with channels of communication, internal data exchange, data processing, personnel flows, and with the general categories of knowledge access and common memory, which are crucial for any group that decides to undertake effective strategy.

As related to the tactics created this weekend, impact systems encompass much of columns IX and such individual tactics as guardians events, speakers bureau and public media. Demonstration systems include the tactics of program endorsement, methods presentations and in a sense "wine presses." Research systems are embodied in column IV and in the individual tactics of program documentation, budget preparation, corporation targeting and all the practical research necessary to build implementing maneuvers. Interchange systems are amply reflected in columns III, VI and VIII. The other tactics not covered by these systems relate to authorization and funding which will be mentioned in a moment.

We have called these factors and systems whistle points, that is, places to stand in society (given the pressure points) to catalyze an avalanche of social change. In most avalanches that I've heard about, however, those who do the whistling often get buried. So it's extremely important to be able to move and move rapidly. You can not stand around and simply watch the avalanche. You've got to be well ahead of it. This is only possible if we remain constantly in touch with the currents of history. This is the strategic function of research systems. Here too lies the importance of authorization and funding to the movement, for without them there is no realistic framework for impacting society. These two elements are reflected largely in columns II and V of the tactical system.

Next, let's consider who is going to actuate these whistle points. Somewhere in the center here there's a group called "the core" which takes responsibility for these systems and for the myth and the action factors. In the HDPs, we call them "auxiliary" and at other times



the "guild" or the "guardians." Whatever you call them, that group is totally responsible for the whole. No one who is part of the core can claim that his job is only one particular aspect of the systems, or of the strategy or project. His responsibility is for the whole.

Looked at in a broader, global perspective, this core is the ordering dynamic of history. In fact, it has three aspects, but constitutes one ordering dynamic with one mission and one discipline. It is comprised of the symbolic order, which lives out of vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. All time -- 24 hours a day -- is missionally assigned time. The extended order differs only from the symbolic order in that its assignment is to live out in society because the mission requires it. Finally, there is the movemental order, whose members, because of fatedness perhaps, are not privileged to participate in common structures except on an occasional or informal basis. Nevertheless, like the extended order, they participate fully in other ways with the symbolic order in one mission and one discipline. I don't know exactly where the guardian dynamic should be located in this triangle. It is clearly part of the core that takes responsibility for the ordering dynamic in history.

As I consider the role of catalytic action, it seems to me that anyone who decides to change history and to do it comprehensively must create new forms of engagement for other people. That is, we're not here to do things. We are not here to renew two million villages -- not simply with our own bodies. Our only hope is that the world will decide to renew two million villages. Our only task is to create the forms of engagement which will induce and enable that renewal to happen. That is exactly what a human development project is: occasioning the opportunities and the understanding that allow local people and the world as a whole to pick up the practical tasks and responsibilities of community building. It requires configuring time, space, tasks and relationships. It means calling forth human productivity where there once was none.

Guardians especially are qualified (its part of their daily missional stance) to experiment with their lives in the invention of new forms of engagement. If you experience frustration, that's very appropriate, because living in the gap and dealing with the issue of significant engagement occasions frustration. I was pleased to hear about the location of Mother Lode Industries in Lorimor. They manufacture knit skiwear. Guardians have spent at least 1000 man hours in setting up that company. The same can be said for most every industry in the projects. It's time also for guardians to decide that LENS is their special responsibility. Why not a multilingual cadre of guardians prepared to market and facilitate LENS in any country of the world? What a great opportunity to create new forms of engagement and to offer others the opportunity to do the same thing.

IV. Finally, let's consider the style of this core or ordering dynamic, which we have called the transestablishment. How would you recognize it, if you ran into it? The first quality is Xavierism: living in the mundane midst of the breaking-up of civilization, wherever we find ourselves, yet loving that brokenness to the hilt and inventing the new forms of humanness that the future requires. This is a rigorous commitment -- not to be taken lightly. Like those tactics you articulated this morning. These are not ordinary tasks that people routinely do. They are life and death to you, and won't happen unless they are. And if they are, then every morning you get up and literally dress in those tactics. This is as true for us in our daily jobs as in ensuring the most comprehensive tasks of our mission.

The second aspect of transestablishment style is "being prepared to risk." I was struck by the statement of Pope John Paul II recently in Chicago. He commented to a gathering of Franciscan brothers that since the world is intent to seek security in possessions, knowledge and power, it will scarcely understand those who choose poverty, chastity and obedience. Don't be surprised then how the world sees us. However, I find myself tricked at this point. While I'm quite willing to risk possessions, knowledge and power, I want to risk them on my terms. This of course is simply an attempt to eliminate risk. Or else, I discover that when I finally screw-up my courage to risk, the risk suddenly disappears, and in its place another more demanding risk is laid on me. As a result, I experience that I cannot be selective about risk, for risk comes at me as part of all of life. Unless I've unconditionally decided that comprehensive risk is what I'm about, I'll simply box myself in. When I do unconditionally accept risk, I experience freedom, from both worry and concern -- i.e., problemlessness. I can pick up my life and move it, like wearing an impenetrable armor of endless possibility.

Third, the style of the transestablishment is "on behalf of." This involves experimenting with my life on-the-line. And it's on-the-line with respect to the moral issue of our time -- the fact that millions of people today are cut-off from the possibility of participating in their future, whether this reveals itself in the paucity of goods, in being victimized by decisions of others, or in being cut-off from using

their own gifts. Living "on behalf of" requires corporate action bedded in community. We mourn a great deal these days the loss of community, whether in our companies, professions or home towns. However, community is not lost! It's everywhere. It's just a matter of seeing it and of awakening it, even among those from whom we expect nothing. Consider the given situation and the people that we work with daily. Those people sense community. It's simply a matter of giving them the eyes to see through their situation. Everyone lives potentially in community. Structurally, the critical issue is to create participatory polity structures wherever we are. Right there is the possibility of living "on behalf of" and of creating opportunities for participation as well as the life-giving accountability that goes with it.

Finally, being the transestablishment makes us the S.O.B.s of history. On the one hand, this means enticing the future into being through strategic indirection, which may occur in the form of a town meeting, a Global Women's Forum, a Community Youth Forum, LENS or otherwise. It doesn't matter why people come to a town meeting, but once they are there, they are seduced by the future. They sense new community, and they are enticed to participate. On the other hand, being the transestablishment may mean forcing the future, or sculpting the face of profound humanness on everything we do. It requires us to position ourselves in such a way that history will have to deal with us, hopefully creatively and with compassion -- but we cannot be ignored. When I adopt this stance, setting myself before the future itself, I feel like Joshua must have felt before the walls of Jericho. Do you think he really believed that the walls would fall when the horns were blown? What was it like to stand before such uncertainty? I'm not sure -- perhaps a little foolish and a little maddening. But I am clear that in the words of one poet: "The freedom to care is not easy. It's not a gift given, but a choice made." Take care.