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18th Guardians Consult

### Saturday Night Supper

This evening we want to read a letter from a colleague who has spent several years in Latin America. He wrote this letter to some of his friends and I want to read excerpts.

"It's not so hard to explain what I'm doing--volunteer service has been my life for many years. But now that I'm 32, some may wonder about when I'll settle down to a more conventional life (in other words--earn a living!). The following is an attempt to explain why I have chosen this work as a vocation. It's not a justification, since there is none. However, I've been richly blessed with special talents, and special talents often receive special callings. It's to a special calling that I've responded, and that's what I want to share with you....

Many thousands of miles from you, in a wide valley bordered by snow-capped mountains to the east and coastal mountains and directly under the landing pattern of huge jets from the USA, France, Holland, Australia, Germany, Spain, and all parts of South America just 30 minutes from a modern capital city of 4,000,000 people, lies a tiny farming village called Sol de Septiembre (September Sun). There are 2,000,000 villages like this on this earth that the world flies over every day and yet knows nothing about--2,000,000 human settlements that are not necessarily isolated but certainly forgotten.

The United Nations estimates that fully 85% of the earth's population lives cut off from any real hope of gaining access to the wealth, resources, comforts, and quality of life enjoyed by the other 15% of the earth's residents. You and I are part of the 15%; Sol de Septiembre is part of the 85%. You and I do not belong to the 15% because of how hard we worked to get there, or in these times of inflation how hard we have to work to stay there. It is not a question of initiative at all--it's a question of opportunity.

You and I, through no personal effort whatsoever, were born into the opportunity to be rewarded for hard work to expect spiritual satisfaction and material compensation in exchange for our efforts that a more secure future is a natural consequence of industriousness. For 15% of the world this is indeed true. But in villages like Sol de Septiembre, where I live, people have worked hard all their lives and still exist on starvation incomes, their children still suffer from malnutrition and are still pulled from school at early ages to work in the fields, and their future will be exactly the same as the lives their parents led, for ever and ever. The same story is repeated across 2,000,000 villages. Why? Because they live outside of opportunity.

The scheme that rewards you and me for our efforts and motivates parents to work hard because their children's future will be better, simply is not designed to incorporate more people into it. It can't for it depends on so many producing for so few. Access into that scheme is by far more a birthright than a natural consequence of diligence. This is innocent suffering and it cannot be eliminated by any of the formulas that you and I were taught to believe in. Can you imagine that? It was hard for me to. Pulling yourself up by your bootstraps depends first of all on having the boots and for 85% of the world there are no boots. For 85% of the world hard work and suffering are not endured because that brings the promise of a better future--they are endured to slightly increase the chance to simply frugally survive.

Many of you remember some years back when in the Peace Corps I contracted this strange undiagnosable disease. I did not have one cent to my name, yet during 2 months of hospitalization I got the best medical care available, including being shipped back to the states. I left people behind in the village where I was living who were chronically much sicker than I. But they didn't belong to the 15% and I did, even though I was monetarily just as poor as they.

We have seen in the 70's the collapse of all the traditional approaches of alleviating strife and suffering in the world. The massive airlift that rescued Berlin from starvation could not be repeated in Cambodia. The tragedy of Iran confirms what the world learned in Vietnam--military intervention is not a universal solution to aggression. The most sacred rules of diplomacy have dissolved overnight. Thousands of Southeast Asians have died on the high seas and in settlement camps while a prosperous world bickered over quotas. The most inventive diplomats alive have been unable to bring peace to the middle east. The world's economy continues to somersault and no plan seems capable of correcting it. This is also a time when all the major development institutions of the world are wondering what to do next. They have watched their efforts increase enormously in scope and cost and diminish alarmingly in effectiveness. Paul Tillich once talked about the "shaking of the foundations". He must have been thinking about the 1970's.

This is also a time of hope. The old always passes away for the new to step forward. One of the old forms is the practice of applying resources at the international or national level for development, expecting them to gradually filter down to where they are needed. This kind of "top down" development only works if there are structures at the local level that can receive and administer those resources. In other words, development from the "bottom-up". I learned about it from my Dad and Mom...My home town was in sad shape a few years back. Vacant stores up and down Main Street, a sagging economy based on seasonal employment, a high population of elderly and retired people, and a flight of the young towards the city. But then Winnebago realized that its problems were of little concern to anyone but itself--nobody was going to pull the town out of its slump except the town itself.

A business development corporation was formed. Land was purchased for industrial areas, and the rest is history. The town is full of life, with an attractive main street new and expanded industries, and perhaps best of all, young people who have decided to stay. My Dad, along with a lot of other people, made it happen, through plugging those local efforts into resources that existed but that had never heard of Winnebago before. The resurgence of a small town depends first of all on local efforts. That was the first lesson I learned. The second lesson was taught to me by my Mom. Through her faith and her work in the Church, she showed me that service to others was the highest calling, and that one's neighbor was as much someone halfway around the world as someone who lived next door.

I am convinced that restoration of stability in the world today depends greatly on the capacity of local villages to take charge of their own future. It means revamping the local economic base; it means creating structures for local administration of health, education and welfare activities, it means legal incorporation and the initiation of some form of local government. Most of all it means training local people how to anticipate their future and work toward it. It means training leaders not only to lead but also to serve. That's a big job, and it's my job.

The Ecumenical Institute and the Institute of Cultural Affairs are involved in such efforts in many villages in many nations. We do this work as volunteers not because there is any virtue in not getting paid. You just couldn't pay people enough to do it, and most certainly the villages where we work can't afford it. The donations we receive go directly into the programs that the villages initiate. Again there is no virtue in not spending much money on ourselves. It's simply a counterproposal to the fact that development agencies that start spending a lot of money on themselves quickly discover there is no way to draw the line on what's enough. Their personnel develop the mindset that they are doing a job and compensations are based on increasingly rising expectations of what the job is worth. Here in Chile, Peace Corps Volunteers earn 4 times as much as the average rural income. The consequence of this is that economic security alienates you from the people you are supposed to be serving. I truly miss sometimes the "comforts of home", but I just can't have them and still effectively do this work. And if it's going to be one or the other, I choose the work, because it's not a job, it's a way of life. It's the greatest life I've ever had. It's not easy many times the discouragements are hard to take, but I can't think of anything I'd rather do or that is more necessary.

The people of Sol de Septiembre feel that way, too. In a year and a half they have accomplished the miraculous. Soon many of them will leave the security of their homes to go help other villages do the same thing. Why? Because their efforts have paid needs to be carried to other villages. I'm proud to be carrying on a family tradition of community service, and very grateful for what my parents taught me.

Robert Booher

If you came one morning and shown to this very small room and spent the morning reading and meditating and then heard the bell of the noon meal, wandered down to the dining hall. Walked about two feet into the room and stopped, just stopped. For the forum was a large table desk just heaped with five vegetables, three breads, at least two meats and cakes ready for the noon meal. And he turns to the prior and says: "This is poverty, what does chastity look like"?

Some of us in this outfit who these days are loosing their parts bit by bit, finger by finger. There are also some of us who are having difficulty these days naming the parts we find scattered around. Lyn and I discovered we've been reading these great epics for the last year, year and a half, like Centennial and Hawaii, and have had a great time discerning the recreation of civilizing process in these incredible epics of civilization. We found that I finished and Lyn began to read Cheasapeake. Lyn, came upon a little paragraph one day and she said "That's it". I want to read it to you. It's my experience of these days. The part of the story we are in is the beginning of the pulling together of the community along the Cheasapeake that will become the primary community of the region. And this is one of the founding families--the Paxmoore who are shipbuilders. And he has in his imagination decided to create a new kind of sailing vassel for the Cheasapeake. The paragraphs before go on to talk about what he could do with his tools, with the tools of his carpentry trade that have become the tools of the ship-builder. And then this paragraph begins:

"But always lacked the essential tools without which the workmen can never attain the true mastery. He did not know the names of any of the parts that he was building. And without the names he was artistically incomplete. It was not by accident that doctors and lawyers and butchers invented specific but secret names for the things they did. To posses those names was to know the secret. With correct names one entered into a new world of proficiency became the member of an arcane brotherhood, a sharer of mysteries. And in the end a performer of miracles. Without the names one remained a bumbler or in the case of boat-building, a mere house carpenter."

The experience of these days has been, waiting for someone to name what we are doing. Or better name what we need be doing next, if only someone would simply declare the name and all of us could nod our head, then there would be a big corporate sign of relief. But all we've been given to this time are some signs and I discovered some more signs this weekend simply by participating with you on what we've been doing. I noticed for example when I was in group "A" and I think it was Lee reporting on what was happening in the field that three years ago only an Area Prior would be selected to give. That something happened.

There has been a shift on our trek we discovered that the guardian event was the primary happening that people pointed to--as symbolizing something new coming into being. We also noticed that a qualitative difference in our visitations when there was guardians present, as opposed to not having a guardian on our team. There was something qualitatively different in the visitation. We in the symbolic order sensed that the guardian represented a part of the new that was coming into being that we have yet given a name to. Again this weekend, my interior during the meals was conscious that we've had some incredible events in these meals. I sensed awe had entered--it floated in down on top and around our tables. At first I did not understand the happening. I wondered if you felt that too, I don't know how to name the event but possibly it's something like this: You've discovered yourselves standing accountable for your decision in a new way, in a depth that you did not perceive was possible. That you have said yes to standing accountable, accountable before the world for all the innocent suffering. You have perceived and decided to act upon your consciousness. And maybe more it is saying yes to the accountability that our future requires. Accountable for the practical concrete commitments we have made to the world in terms of our intent and programs. You did not say yes without hesitation, but you said yes.

This weekend--I remembered that last summer we tried to force the leap. What is the leap that needs to be taken we asked. We hammered on tables and on each others head in order to force the leap, but it would not appear. The great leap decides to appear when it decides to appear. Yet I think there are indications that the leap has happened. All we need to do is find a name.

What have we noticed? In many ways we have already decided how we will move. One, we've decided that we are going to move intentionally, on the reformulation of the operational modes of the societal structures. That's nothing new--we said that at least 10 years ago if not 20. However there is a difference between declaring and perceiving it as having begun to happen. We know it is now possible. You look at the trek record of LENS. We said three years ago--Loudermilk and I had this long meeting on nights, we said that the one thing we've got to do in the next two years is establish a trek record for LENS. That's what we've been out to do. This year we discovered that the trek record is established. The question is where do we move with this reformulation tool that is now very useable and effective. There are 100's of social structures to penetrate. Which are the most strategic? Irregardless of the many unanswered questions, we've decided that now we will move practically to reformulate the societal structures.

The other arena where there seems to be some clarity has to do with the next preliminary moves towards awakening the two million: select a strategic geography in which we pull together a cluster of awakened communities. In that cluster we would do various impact

strategies and we would do establish our training designs that would create a self-conscious movement which will have within its operating context a representational decision to move on the community of the larger territory in which it stands. That's a long sentence! You start naming the places where we've said we were going to work with the cluster communities, and then you reflect on the questions you have asked about that cluster "What am I going to do besides have a few town meetings?" All of our questions are--after town meeting what do we do with this body of awakened people? In terms of training, in terms of reformulation modules, on and on and on. We are in the midst of working on the practical answers to that question.

Then the third arena that seems obvious is that we've decided to create a movement. But we are no longer naive about what that creation entails. The movement is not three/four folks showing up for ecclesiola. Movements are massive! When a society is shifting it's posture, movements are massive. It means thousands of people operating out of a new context. However we sense that it is the essential next step. Now I ask myself if up in Marshall County, Minn. and you have all of this operating, that is you've decided the societal structures that you are going to focus upon and use the impact formulation tools that we now have available to us, that are the right tools, and that those societal structures are related to the servicing of the resources necessary to recreate the local communities of Marshall County in which you have already began to do multiple impact events, training and formation of self conscious body of people. And there comes into being around Marshall County and maybe those 16 communities, 10 communities or 8 communities, a body of people who says "This is got to happen to the rest of the world". What happened in Marshall County? My suggestion is that we brought into being a new ethical posture. It is the ethical posture of profound humaness. Therefore the question of getting to the two million is simply a tactical matter. No longer strategic in nature.

Well I don't know if any of that makes sense to you. One of my colleagues said "I thunk and thunk and thunk until my brains dried up!" Time and time again we all keep pointing to the same future direction. In many ways we are pointing to the doing of demonstration parishes.

What is it we are doing? I don't know the name yet, but I know all four of those dynamics are happening. In Mactan there is a new ethic operative, both in the structures and in the hearts of people in Mactan.

Now in the midst of this swirl I ask what's happening to us. It is a question more to you that call yourselves or have at least taken on the name Guardian. What's happening to us? What is it, this new thing I feel, happening in my being? And I have very vague ideas, but one of my clues is from an old firend; Warriors of God by Nigg. Some of you read this a few years back, didn't you? Now if you put on your contentless word glasses so that your Christian bigotry doesn't blind you, much less influence the hearing, you will hear this. He is talking of the Fransciscans here, the Fransciscan Order. "Finally we

should mention the late community of Penetance as the third Order was originally called. This was no mere substitute for monastic Order (symbolic Order). On the contrary it played a tremendous part in bridging the gap between the spiritual and the worldly attitudes toward life. It maybe regarded as the intregal part of the whole Fransciscan movement. The emergence of the Tertiaries. The emergence of the Tertiaries was the fulfillment of Francis's own deepest desire to penetrate the world once more with the gospel (the word of possibility). As Benedict the 15th said on the occassion of the 7th century of the founding of the third Order, (Talk about our being a young order) on celebrating the 7th century of existence he said "Francis conceived the project that no founder of a regular order has yet imagined, to cause the religious life to be practised by all." (The new ethical posture), the role of the third order of the Tertiaries whatever they were called was the critical ordering element that he perceived.

Lyn mentioned Friday our pulled together of the Ordering Dynamics necessary for the reformulation of any society. Remember that in that triangle there are three dynamics--the Symbolic, the Extended and the Movemental. We've checked at least 15 sources, and in most sources the Symbolic dynamic of the ordering of society is on the lower right hand side of the triangle--it would be on the Cadre pole. On the congregational pole is the Extended Order. On the Parish pole is the movemental Order. When you work with the triangle for two/three months you experience the pressure on the Extended Order Pole. When there is a movement about to birth and a new ethical posture coming into being, those that bridge the gap between the symbolic (which are the radicality of the discontinous, they are the radical symbol of the new) and the mass movement are the extended order. Our best wisdom on the Extended Order right now is in what we call the Guardians. Therefore if you feel a little heat I think there is good reason. There is no ordering without symbolic order, the radically discontinous. There is no re-ordering of history without the extended order, those that stand in the world but not of the world's context, but the context of the symbolic order, those who stand before incredible disciplines required to forge the structures that allow the mass movement to come into being. That is all very abstract. But I sense it's now happening.

What is your sense of this next move? Your first response might well be to rush out and have 14 PSUs to get this all clarified. We are finding ourselves in the midst of creating the form, the style and the role of the extended order and long for clarity. I would not be surprised if the pressure you feel is internal than external, that incredible heat inside your skin about what you are doing these days. We've got time, we don't have a whole lot of time, we've got time.

Now I really didn't know where to go after this. Its only insight I have, and that is a long dry spell since August. (Since the fron). I put down the name of this column as the glory of the now. My clues were Dick Wanger and Annette. Something happened, something happened when Dick swirled through the profundity that's now his life. When I listened to those two I heard the voice of hope, and I saw a demonstration of profound care. I experienced the presense of the sacred,



that happened to me then every place you show and that did show up. People hearing the voice of hope. They are seeing the demonstration of profound care. And they are sensing the sacred in their midst.

There is a story that Rob Duffy told me--it's from India. It's the story of one of the government officials who had come to one of the villages we were working in, and began to push one of the elders of that village. He was pushing him in the arena of "You know that these people are religious and they are out to convert you. And he went on and on and on. Finally the elder of the village stood up and looked him straight in the eye. And not in humor said, these people are too holy to be religious! That's what I sense in Dick and Annette.

Then there is this fuss of defining the new ethical posture. I repeat what Lyn said when we started. Long time ago we got said the contentless word of life and there were four made parts. One, the stuff the situation holds the promise of fulfillment. The stuff of this situation holds the promise of fulfillment. Not another situation. Two, new life is possible. And has indeed appeared in this situation. As I stand in my freedom and before the claim of the neighbor upon my freedom I discover my responsible self. The only do I've got to do as the received one of history is to stand present to and respond to the innocent suffering of all the world as a sign of social repentance on behalf of all of the world. Now I think that's going on in Mactan and in Marshall County and in Boulder. We're doing all we've ever known about the contentless word of life.

Soon as I discovered that, I knew the name of what was going on in North America these days. And Again Weigel helped me here. The two nations of North America, believe that 1984 is the time of their demise. It is coming, they say, you look around, we are Rome in our final days of existence. You look at the news in Canada and that is what you see, what you hear proclamation of past glory and future trouble. Now in the midst of that you have all these local communities, local people standing up and saying "This is a new day for us" "We are going to rebuild our community", also you have a bunch of folks like us running around these continents saying: "Look at those local communities. They are alive." It is not a time of sunset but sunrise. Not sunset, sunrise. But the mythology will not allow that declaration to stand. Ofcourse I don't want you in my local community, they said, because I have to stand present to the possibility of the new world. Let me die in peace. Maybe I can last a little longer if you don't interfere with my last tactics of survival. Here in these two nations we are in the midst of a war of the primal images of profound humanness. We are the symbol of the new ethical posture that is coming into being. We are the primary symbols of a new mythology. Therefore we are going to get the first crack for we stand over against the prevailing mythology, we are an offense. Nevertheless we have discovered that we are the symbol of the new ethical posture of our day.



A friend of ours helped me at this point. He said it two years. I think this is our story now. "You just look at me--I am the answer. Unseemingly as it may sound to you, I was sired by the mystery as the result of Jesus forcing the kingdom. What he did broke loose something that brought into being one of the most powerful spiritual thrust history has ever seen--the Christian Movement. Christianity is ofcourse not the only spiritual thrust in history. Time and time again the kingdom has been and still must be forced if man are to be human. But here I am and turn around and look at yourselves if you can and there you are. We are the residue of the life and the death of the barefoot Jesus. And the hour is now come again. And the Kingdom is being forced across the world. And the one thing we have learned from the man of Galilee is that the kingdom is not forced with someones life, it is forced rather with someones death."