

TOTO, I'VE A FEELING WE'RE NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE **JUN 25 RECD**

An Individual Position Paper

"Both streams well up from the depths of primordial essence. Life startles us at first; it seems somewhat beyond the law, somewhat contrary to nature, somewhat like a transitory counteraction to the dark eternal fountains, but deep down we feel that Life is itself without beginning, an indestructible force of the Universe. Otherwise, from where did that superhuman strength come which hurls us from the unborn to the born and gives us - plants, animals, men - courage to grasp that vision which can embrace and harmonize these two enormous, timeless, and indestructible forces, and with this vision to modulate our thinking and our action."

Nikos Kazantzakis

The world is now experiencing the intensification of "The Great Transformation" of our times. We as a people and as the Order have been prophesying this event since we first taught Cultural Studies I. The event is now upon us. A new global society and a new lifestyle are being born.

No new birth occurs without great pain. The old forms are dying. The political structure and forms can not contain the new. Look at the political process and you see two military-industrial superpowers escalating ever closer to global vaporization. The clock is now set a 5 to 10 minutes from launch to destruction. There doesn't even seem to be any structure for negotiation or reconciliation. The 3rd world nations are experiencing tremendous internal and regional tensions because the resources necessary for their survival and development are being poured into the superpower stand off.

Were in the midst of a global economic crisis. Petro-dollars from the old rich Gulf states were deposited in Western banks. The banks loaned the money to the 3rd world. When resources were diverted into the military confrontation America's budget deficit resulted in a rise in interest prices. This has exacerbated the 3rd world debt default situation. Short term fixes will only postpone the problem.

Existentially the people of the West are paralyzed by the nuclear option. The people of the 3rd world are more victimized by the growing difficulty in finding the basic resources for survival for the next few days or years. Chronic droughts rack the Sahael and Africa. There are few resources to provide even immediate relief.

Whitin our Order we are also debating the North-South issue, we experience new demands on our polity, our financial structures are in crisis. We are experiencing a vacuum in our spirit life. The old forms and structures no longer sustain us in the way they once did. They seem dry and boring. They do not provide the spirit refreshment they once did. We are experiencing a longing for meaning. Why am I doing all this activity? There must be something more to life than frantic activity, however important the activity. Our pluralism has pushed us beyond doctrinal and cultural bias but rituals intended to be inclusive seem to lack depth.

This is the moment we have been praying for. Now is the historical moment of the Great Transformation. The old forms are breaking up, the new is being born. In this context we are searching for ways of pushing ourselves through a paradigm shift in our own lives and in our corporate life. A mutation of consciousness is at hand. History requires it. If we chose not to do this task, history will chose someone else.

Someways we have talked about ourselves in the past have been:- 1) we change History by changing society 2) History is transformed by human beings 3) The Great Transition requires disciplined spiritual guides. 4) Our role is to be a midwife to the birth of a New Social Vehicle and a New Religious Mode 5) this task requires a mutation of consciousness.

Individual transformation is occasioned in meditation by focusing awareness on the consciousness of consciousness. Most of us go about our daily lives unaware of our internal thought processes, how the mind thinks, what it says to itself, its fears, and what it ignores. The beginning of transformation is simply to watch or pay attention to the flow of awareness. This gives us a new awareness and perspective. It gives us access to volumes of information processed by the brain at the unconscious level. Anything that brings us to this kind of mindfulness, or choiceless awareness has the power to transform consciousness. It is absurdly easy to do this and anyone of normal intelligence can do it.

This process also allows us to pay attention to stress, pain and discomfort rather than to avoid them. Properly attended to, pain can answer our most crucial questions, even those we did not consciously frame. The only way out of suffering is through it. Conflict, pain, tension, fear and paradox are transformations trying to happen. Once we confront them the transformation process begins.

We have the ability to either avoid or pay attention to stress, pain and discomfort. Recent discoveries in psychology and neuro-physiology help us to understand these two choices and to see why attention is a deliberate choice. The brain is divided into a right and left hemisphere. The hemispheres interact constantly but they also have certain specialized functions. The left hemisphere is the rational categorizing, dividing, naming function of the brain. It controls speech and language activity. We usually associate the "I" function with left brain activity because it is the part that can analyze and talk about experience. Right brain activity is more emotional. It gives speech its inflection and is more musical, more sexual. The right brain sees patterns, trends, directions and the whole picture. It thinks in images and it controls the intuitive process, or the flash of insight. In classical terms it is the heart while the left hemisphere is the mind or in Freudian

jargon the conscious and the sub-conscious.

For cultural and biological reasons the left brain tends to dominate in most people. It has even been known to take over functions for which the right brain is superior. We confine most of our conscious awareness to categorizing and organizing. The left brain cuts off the conflict with the right and we lose the meaning and the ability to see the whole context.

There are techniques that can reduce the barriers and allow two-way traffic. This integrates the two functions. Brain activity is usually dissynchronous between the left and right hemispheres. Meditation and other psychotechnologies harmonize the brain waves and the brain functions as if in synchronous orchestration. Meditation lowers the barriers between the two sides of the brain and lets unclaimed material emerge. This material is in turn named or labeled by the left function and we say, "of course" to a previously buried insight.

Whole brain knowing is much greater than the sum of the two parts and different. John Murray Middleton called it the "central mystery of all high religion." Kazantzakis speaks of harmonizing both opposing forces in the brain (the heart and the mind). Finding the transcendent centre, the unknown but central realm is found in the lore of most cultures. Murray calls this the "soul." Huxley the "best of both worlds . . . the best of all worlds." Or in the words of an Eastern thinker, "There is more to balance than not falling over".

There are many intentional systems of transformation but all focus awareness on awareness. Most focus on something too strange, complicated, or monotonous to engage the brain's analytical left half; breathing, a candle flame, music, a blank wall, a koan, a paradox.

Meditation is one method that has been used through the ages to trigger the transformation process. There are many other methods now being used. Experimentation is being done with all sorts of meditation (Buddhist, Zen, Tibetan, Christian, Kabbalist), bio-feedback, autogenic training (self-suggestion), and body disciplines like yoga, Rolfing, and running. Individuals find different methods more helpful than others. Some prefer complicated philosophy, some prefer rigorous discipline, others respond better to simple techniques. Concentration and insight meditation are archaic methods refined through the ages. They start you on the transformation journey.

Marlyn Ferguson in "The Aquarian Conspiracy" describes 4 stages of the transformation process based on thousands of historical accounts and proliferating reports of contemporary seekers. The Entry Point - this is often happenstance. It can be a thing that shakes up the old understanding of the world. It could be a token interest out of boredom, curiosity, or desperation. It could be a spontaneous mystical or psychic experience or the intense altered experience

generated by a psychedelic drug. Some play games at this point with drugs, or the occult. Some are afraid to go on at all, the non-rational is unnerving. Some hesitate because they don't know where to turn next.

The second stage is Exploration. Having sensed something is worthwhile setting out to find it. "Deliberately letting" the inner knowledge come forth. Some try many techniques, shopping for the best method or teacher.

The third stage of Integration, the mystery is inhabited. Although he may have favourite methods or teachers the individual trusts the inner "guru". There is a wavering between exhilaration and loneliness, fear is centered on the disruptive effect on old relationships, goals and values. This is a more reflective stage. People want to know, in the left brain sense, what has happened. Some explore subjects in which they previously had no interest, e.g. music, quantum physics, psychology, brain research.

The fourth stage - Conspiracy.* The new paradigm not only works in our own life but it seems to work for others. "if the mind can heal and transform, why can't minds join together to heal and transform society. The great social implications become apparent.

Those who have used these techniques have been called mystics. Esoteric is probably a better and more precise term meaning "matters understood only by those who have special knowledge or interest". Mystic implies something beyond the scope of human experience.

The exoteric path has been more fully explored by the Eastern tradition of Buddhism. Our Western post-Einstein physics has an uncanny resemblance to the one unified universe world view of the Eastern religions. It is almost as if physicists have described a face of reality known in the Tibetan Lamaseries thousands of years ago.

Meditation is an important experiment for us at this historical moment. Meditation allows the individual to see our interrelatedness, our place in the world. Most important it helps us open ourselves to individual, corporate and global transformation.

*Fredan takes the word conspirator (The Aquarian Conspiracy) from Kazantzakis's Saviours of God - The Preparation, The 1st Duty:-

And I strive to discover how to signal my companions before I die, how to give them a hand, how to spell out for them in time one complete word at least, to tell them what I think this possession is for all of us together to put our steps and hearts in harmony.

To say in time a simple word to my companions, a password, like conspirators.