

## HOPE BEYOND HOPE

## A Sociology of Spirit

1. CONTEXT: The task of history to be done from 1980 on is to create a spirit vehicle for those who care. The knowing task of rethinking the theological or ideological grasp of humanness for our times has been done, and the intellectual methods are in being to enable the rethinking to be done in any culture or belief system. The doing task which is the hallmark of our age has likewise been done relative to awakening people to their full potential and engaging them in self-determination, self-confidence and self-reliance; the social methods are in place to be taken to the 4,000,000 human settlements of planet earth. The Next task that remains to be done is a spirit task: the building of events in time and designs in space that will issue in a sustained relationship to history of profound humanness among all people. By the year 2,000 the secular, postmodern world will be practicing a new spiritual or ethical presence that will enable every human settlement and each human being to be human profoundly.

2. For this loggrange task we are well prepared, however much we feel inadequate. Our times are filled with a wealth of social constructs which freight this new time-space relationship: motion pictures, city plazas, mass publications, community and neighborhood centers, seminars, conferences, unions and professional organizations, national and ethnic movements and renewed local communities. These are the postmodern agoras, the forums and the temples where the religious modes of secularity are forging profound exercises, myths, rites and symbols.

3. The heritage of the Order: Ecumenical has likewise pioneered postmodern spirit modes to be transferred to the people of planet earth. In the time of knowing and justification we constructed a core curriculum (as in the Academy) based on Religious Studies I; now we are being RS-1 all over the world. In the time of doing and sanctification we did Global Community Forums and Global Social Demonstrations all over the world. We are people of faith and people of love. Now these will be intensified in Hope beyond hope. Hope is not a third term out of a sequence of three equal terms. Hope appeareth where faith and love have been realized. If either faith or love become weakened, hope vanishes. If we stop either awakening or demonstration engagement, the spirit vehicle will not emerge, if only because we nor anyone else will see no need for such a creation. Faith, love and hope are a beat like bump - bump - oompah. The third mode is an explosion ~~into~~ being itself. It is the consummation of the first two. It is an avalanche permeating the whole world. All we have done until now has prepared us for this moment. We will be our faith and be our love in Hope beyond hope.

I. 4. The first spirit vehicle that will be created is the TEAM. Postmodern people as people of action require a form of corporateness that will channel their lives into the totality of the world. The team is being created today as a spirit vehicle that enables people to cope adequately with the basic issues of our day. It arises where the humiliation of the Dark Night of the Soul and the rootlessness of the long March of Love have become intensified into an eeriness, a ghostlines which is the first element in the dynamics of Hope.

5. The team as a spirit vehicle first of all emerges at any time when the vision of a people exceeds the boundaries of their experience. Hope appears. The vision they have suddenly undermines their own operating context such as when a nation of people gain their independence from a colonial power. Suddenly their vision of becoming a nation goes beyond the ways they have operated until then which may have been a revolutionary movement for example. At such times such a people will also find their vision has overwhelmed their various modes for expressing themselves. Words do not seem adequate to describe the forms of government they wish to employ for example. Their vision even exceeds the means they have for carrying out their

BOUNDLESS  
VISION

daily lives. Nationbuilding seems to conflict with and even destroys their business or work life, their family lives and the like. Certainly when you envision the renewal of the 4,000,000 human settlements on planet earth there are no means easily available for doing so. Nonetheless the vision seeks embodiment in spite of this undermining, overwhelming and exceeding that is going on. Nation building does begin. Steps are taken to cover the whole geography. Villagers and community cores begin implementing renewal ahead of you. The lack of a sense of direction we are experiencing today is not the lack of vision but too much vision for the ways we have to embody it. It is not because we lack creative ideas for a new society; we have so many ideas. How do we corporately select the direction and corporately act on our selected approach? The team is called for.

*not for our own sake or place of vision but  
our for the sake of our mission and  
responsibility.*

ALL IS  
MYSTERY

6. Secondly the team emerges out of ~~our~~ internal experience of mystery throughout our total lives. God calls the team into being. An alien image invades our consciousness and we say, "I just don't understand anything anymore." Reading the signs of the times or understanding why in the hell the people in this project are responding like they are is as slippery as a wet water bed. There is no way to grab hold of it. "I just never seem to be right anymore." You go into a meeting with a thoroughly worked out plan and nothing ever goes like you planned it. It doesn't go badly; it goes greater than you ever imagined. Situations always seem to produce more than ~~it was prepared to handle. It seems to be a matter of one opinion over against an array of opinions.~~ It is not that nothing comes out of the meeting. But we together somehow say, "Nevertheless, we will..." This 'nevertheless' is the birth of the team. It arises only when humiliation is intensified. You never thought you could be more humiliated and suddenly you are completely and finally humiliated. You have no appeal except simply to be in the midst of the team. It occurs when the rootlessness of the Long March of Love is intensified to the nth degree and the two suitcases principle becomes your own most personal decision and principle. You become the pilgrim, the wayfaring stranger. Then and only then are you the team.

7. Teamhood emerges where these spirit dynamics that are the dynamics of hope come into being. In times past people bound themselves into teams to forage for food, later groups and extended families became sedentary to carry out the agricultural revolution, then in cities guilds of workers teamed up to launch professions independent of the feudal lords, then nations were born by revolutionary bands, and finally the industrial revolution took root in the towns and neighborhoods of the world by boards of directors or family trusts--teams. All of these are appearances of Hope. When life as it has been is trod to nought, teamhood emerges. It is the primary expression of Hope beyond hope. The group consensus is trusted as the leap forward that is needed. The group decision becomes my decision. A oneness is achieved transcending individual opinions. We enter into a common venture motivated by the team spirit. These days we find a tendency in the movement to say, "I am going along with this outfit if ..." The 'if' leads to a set of values individually held strongly. It is our condition that blocks the leap forward. The team is born when the individuals weigh up the values and leap in! Until people are in with both feet, 100%, there is no team. There is only "How can I and my values be served?" Where the 'if' is overcome, the risk is taken. When we risk ourselves to the team, we ourselves and our values are sustained, given back as it were, 100 times over. This is the most minute level of Hope beyond hope. To make the leap I must stand on the Word of eternal acceptance. Standing on the Word, it is the Word that sustains. But standing on the Word, I see the Word in history and concretely, in the team it is the Word finally that sustains me not my crummy colleagues. *and let the crummy colleagues be the team's crummy colleagues.* It is here that the exemplar as General emerges. In the team where all conditions are transcended, permission has been given to one, the team leader to speak the voice of the team, to strategize, to direct & the course of history. Commands issued are not the commands of his individual preference. The commands the general issues are the team's commands, history's

commands. Yet always there is one who leads the team's manouvers. It is not an office to be held. It is a mantle laid on the shoulders--first this one, then that one, then these three but it is always the one or the three who act as one.

POWER  
RELEASED

8. From this spirit vehicle a sociological residue issues forth: power is released. Where teamhood emerges, nothing holds us back. The world come of age takes its most local expression as history is made by the team. All that holds back the future are our human attachments to the past, individually or in groups--to comforts, to principles, to time honored values and to the defense of self. These have been set aside for the wellbeing of the whole community. Situations are completely shifted. With a gesture universes are invented. An urban street becomes a plaza ~~bugging~~ with life. A water system is installed in a village. Or an educationnal complex emerges in the hands of the local people. Prayers, particularly the prayers of the team, are implemented because the haze has been seen through. Bringing together a group doesn't necessarily create teamhood. Teamhood happens where all the intuitions of all the team members are included. The power released also binds the team further together. Discipline is engendered. Cohesiveness enables the internal tensions to be creatively employed and more power is engendered. The Hope beyond hope takes form ~~in~~ the team ~~as~~ the world of hope. The team can only win. Failures in other contexts become learning experiences for a new surge forward. The team only wins because it is one with Being, and Being always wins. It is not that the models as they are conceived are implemented to the letter. But the team's model enables Being's model to win. Therefore, we win, *being and us together.*

*when  
now  
now  
imagine  
below*

II.

9. The second spirit vehicle that will be created is the GUIDE. People in teams not only require a team leader who is a General exemplar but also require a practical spirit person who journeys the group and the individuals through their path in the Other World. The guide is present in all groups and organizations. He does not hold a position but plays a role critical to the sustenance of any team as they carry out their task. Guidehood emerges in one or more members of the team where the weakness of the Dark Night of the Soul and the ineffectivity of the Long March of Love are radically intensified into ceaselessness, another dynamic of Hope.

10. The guide comes to be whenever the vision of a group surpasses the very being of the group itself. Its vision, for no reasons one can tell, intersects or cuts across the potential emerging in the group. A group of farmers are living together in a community collegially although competitively until they envision the mechanization of their farms and their potential is intersected required new forms of community and new agricultural patterns. It is like their vision to mechanize leap frogs even their own dreams of wellbeing up until then. All the practices of their lives are exploded needing new techniques and new organization even new family patterns. It happens to us in setting up beds when all the beds are in place but someone intrudes with a more human space arrangement and all the beds must be reset. Or we have plans to fill the old songbook covers with a new songbook when someone suggests we must symbolize the radical turn we are in in the 1980's calling for a new cover, with new titles and symbols. If the new is not embraced, hope dies. At such moments even the competence of the farmers or of ourselves is exceeded and you move into the future as though you are flying by the seat of your pants--none of your preplanning works. There is only you and the task before you and you lay down the tracks ahead of you as you go 90 miles an hour. We were in a time like this in doing the town meeting campaign in 1975-76. No one knew anything about direction but we were catapulted into intense activity hardly knowing what the next move would be. We were more alive than ever before in our corporate or individual lives. You wonder why we do not go back to that accelerated style of life--dare we do that to ourselves again?

*the  
vision  
beyond*

11. Internally at these moments you experience being on a rapidly moving tread-

mill with no way to measure where you are. You seem to be going no where. "What is the good finally of doing all of this? We may work to awaken and engage people for 50 years; and yet when we die, there will be just as much suffering in the world as when we started." There is no answer to this kind of question. It is all true. Suffering will always be 100%. Futility floods through your being. Everything is still unchanged. I am unchanged. Others, too, are unchanged. Life is still life. Weakness is so intensified that ~~that~~ life itself seems to be never ending. You become drained even when you thought you had nothing else to drain out. You dig to the bottom of the well of life and there is an immovable brick wall. There is only ceaselessness. Ineffectivity is present on every hand. It is very hard to get anyone to step to the front of the table anymore. Everyone experiences, "Let someone else do it, not me." The principle of catalysis becomes stepping aside rather than demonstration ~~is~~ that others may pick up the vision and the task.

12. <sup>it is ceaselessness</sup> It is here and here only <sup>not</sup> guidehood emerges. We are catapulted to the edge of life only to find ourselves propelled to play a new role, a more powerful and demanding role of guiding others on the Way. Since we do not know where we are going, you would think we would find a guide or simply choose someone, anyone, to be our guide. But it is like we are tricked spirit-wise. In seeking a guide and knowing a guide is needed, we go outside the pail only to discover that by going that distance we ourselves are put into the position of guiding others. We can reject the task, but the possibility lies before us to pick up. We have been over the spirit terrain before. We know the agony and the glory of living as a person of faith. We now are leading others through to faith. There is the agony and the glory of loving all of life in deeds. Now we are leading others into such active love. This is familiar ground to us. We know the necessary paths, the hurdles, the dangers. ~~You~~ see the Way. It is not that ~~you~~ have arrived some place and call others to come be where ~~you~~ are. It is more like ~~you~~ are the guide, and novices appear to walk along with ~~you~~ on the same path. It is just as difficult for the guide to walk that Way as it is difficult for the novice; but the guide has done it before. It is a joint venture. Here ~~you~~ embody the exemplarhood of the Sage. Regardless of your age or sex you are looked to to have ancient and contemporary wisdom. Whatever you age you have wisdom beyond your years. You are a detached observer. You have the wisdom of the centuries. You not only know more than anyone else, but you know what you do not know.

13. The spirit residue of guidehood is renewed spirit. A spark ignites where guidehood is going on. Small sparks of creativity occur minute by minute, and the people of the community have the task of capturing them alive. Each spark is like an atom that must be split and expanded until it becomes an ocean of new forms and inventive events. Spirit is not just an inner feeling of vitality that comes-and-goes according to the whims of some invisible force in nature. Spirit is an environment that is built out of the small inklings or atoms of creativity that are bubbling up inside communities all the time. It is new life that fills your total being. It is "living life where life was never yet dreamed of nor hinted at." It is beyond our immediate hopes to Hope itself. It is when the up's and down's in life are transcended--neither one can trip up your spirit well-being. It is the up's these days that seem to trip us up. We get accolades and merit badges as well as a few nasty press releases. And it is the accolades that beckon us away from corporateness to individualism, away from guidehood to surface-ism, distracting us into unfaith and into wanting to be somebody in the world. No affirmations and no defeats need deter us. There is only the task ahead. We are each others guides--guides who say no as well as we are able to say yes. Yes's and no's are equally affirmations when you live in Hope beyond hope. This is everlasting life realized now. You can reject life, of course. But it is there whether you participate in it or not. Rejecting it is no trivial matter. When you reject life, when you reject life, when you reject the Holy Spirit, you separate yourself objectively and matter-of-factly from Being itself. It is open or hidden suicide. The glory of life is never our glory; it is the glory of life itself, glory of the Final Myster that

coes to us in an exceedingly lively form.

III. 14. The third spirit vehicle that will be created is the GUILD. Where there is a guide in groups of people who have invented teamhood, there also emerges a community that encompasses the team with discipline, study and symbolic life. The guild is present where there is a vehicle that ties the people into the past and into the future; it enacts the liveliness of life as it has been, is now and ever shall be. It binds the team or set of teams together in an environment of interior steel and external cohesiveness for the sake of the destinal effectiveness of the team. The guild is present in society where resentment is intensified until existence itself offends and provokes to profound actions amidst all of our actions. It exists where expenditure is intensified to life-long commitment, dedication and crucifixion--a death lived entirely on behalf of the whole world. Here the human being, the team and their community become nothingness--the nothingness that is sheer spirit, selfless and one with the Divine Creator. This nothingness is an essential dynamic of Hope.

15. The guild as a spirit vehicle emerges where the vision of the people illuminates their whole life. Because they see an utterly new global society coming, they also see the utter mystery that the future is. They see a new day; therefore, the immediate direction to go in is unclear. The very style of their life is illumined by and conditioned by the vision they have of the future. If they see a global society coming where all men are brothers, they live like global people, inclusive in their diversity, a people "for all seasons". If they see a new religious mode coming, a new Church, they become a new mode in their own solitudes, corporates and journeys. Also their vision itself exposes the tragedy present in the world. Some of have said there has always been starvation in the world, but today in the light of our opulence and abundance we see it more poignantly. The million starving in east Africa are not the only tragedy. The greater tragedy is the fact they will never know the profound humanness available to them in our day yet denied them; they have spent their whole lives trying to sustain themselves for one more day. Our vision of a greater world enables us to see that the merely human is also the fully human. In the movie, Norma Rae, you see a woman--a person filled with inadequacies and overwhelming personal problems who nevertheless was profoundly human. The profoundly human goes over against the impossible and wins. This is Hope beyond hope.

16. And yet when the vision exposes life as it is, the human being as he or she exists experiences nothingness. You disappear. There is nothing of the "you" that you have always known left. You certainly cannot be anybody ever again. You are gone. It is a deeply frightening experience. Like the cartoon character that presses her wrist and goes invisible, you are not even visible to yourself. Being is using being. The universe goes through your existence. And you are left feeling used--not by anyone but by history itself. This is where resentment is intensified until you didn't think you could resent life, others or self any more. The anger inside builds until you are nothing but a vibrant silence. You keep asking out of you resentment, "Who says so? Who says suffering will always go on? /Who says there is no limit to knowing? Who says so?" And the answer comes back, "God says so!" You are nothingness. Expenditure also is intensified here. Where you are being used by history itself, you simply are expenditure. A comet burning itself out in 30 seconds across the sky is no different than your one life going rapidly into the Void.

17. Here and only here guildhood is born. Where life is sheer nothingness, there you are one with Being. There you are so engaged that you join hands with the League in history, with the invisible college, or the like. You are swept along

THE  
ILLUMI-  
NATING  
VISION

YOU ARE  
NOTHINGNESS

by the grand sweep of history itself. It is no wonder you will and can work with anyone. All people are contributors to history's destiny; therefore, you are more than a mere atom in the universe. You are a calvacade of power altering the course of history itself. In the guild you enact archaic symbolism because you are as much as one with the ancients as you are with your fellow human beings today. Our daily office becomes a living dialogue and surprises break through to you through the ancient poetry. Depth study also is discovered. The books on the shelf are my books. They don't belong to their authors anymore. I possess the wisdom they have stored up in their pages. But study is not just books. It is the deep ponderings of illiterate people who study the ways of nature and of history. It is any way you prepare yourself for history, for life, for the future. Finally guildhood is synonomous with sainthood. In the guild every human being has the possibility of discovering that he or she is a life laid down. The only question is where, and maybe how. In sainthood all of life is cared for and every deed is a carefilled deed. In sainthood all of life we are enabled to say: "Over my dead body...." And hope is reborn in an act.

GUILDHOOD

18. From the spirit vehicle of the guild history is changed. It is the guild with its symbolic life, its study life, its spirit life and its disciplined life which enables us to be always on target. Being on target consistently occurs where consciousness is maintained. Life in the guild becomes an art form you and your team are constantly creating--orchestrating it like a grand symphony. Once you have lived in the guild you have tasted the blood of the Other World and you constnatly pursue it. Where life is nothing, quite, quite nothing, there it is everything. You have rendered up all of your gifts to history--let them go. YOu have becom-e nothing by being the guild. And there all your gifts are given back to you plus more. More depth in the old gifts and more gifts you never knew you had. A corner of history has been turned by the guild, and there is no going back. You have put your foot on the top of a toboggan slide and there is no retreat. Your life is never the same again. You do not even know yourself anymore. It is Childhood's End; adulthood has come. YOur consciousness has become so advanced that you can be asked what the timeline is on your pout, and you know exactly what is being asked of you and what decision you have to make.

HISTORY  
CHANGED

IV.

19. The fourth spirit vehicle that will be created is the PROPHET. Where guildhood nurtures the team and the guide, there is born the ultimate in human adventure. Here there is the one who sees into and through both time and space. It is the prophet who articulates Hope beyond hopw. He says what everyone else knows but cannot find the courage or the words to express. He sees doom but thru the doom he sees the radically new. He is not a follower of fads but one who truly sees the vision of the people. The prophet is present in society where suffering and unfillment are intensified into a savific presentness. This is the final and foundational dynamic of Hope.

20. The prophet as a spirit vehicle emerges wherever and whenever a truly practical vision emerges. Hope that is hope for Mankind is never the first good idea you get. Go slow on whether or not the future you see is the vision needed or no. You know a practical vision has come when the vision itself stands you up tall. No consultant or town meeting stands you up tall. It is only when you see for yourself a practical vision that you get stood up tall. I see that the world needs profound humanness; therefore, I become profound humanness. A practical vision enables you to throw your shoulders back and walk tall even when your insides are caved in. People without a practical vision cave in when their insides are caved in. Where a practical vision is present, the people respond to adversity with a "this shall not be so! This, our vision, shall too come to pass!" Where a practical vision is a new world is put forward--a new conomics, a new politics, a new culture. With a practical vision even sworldy success is a possiblity--people get jobs where there were no jobs, towns are cleaned up where they were neglected and families which were no famillies are recreated. For us

THE  
PRACTICA  
VISION

it has meant that we get invitations to come here and to come there. Everyone wants Hope beyond hope people around. We were asked back recently by an agency who simply said, "You people never give up." That is Hope beyond hope. I am convinced such people are the people of God who in history cannot mess with. Two critics recently lost their jobs by messing with such people. The greatest temptation we have these days is to get sucked into someone else's temporal hope. The people of Hope always accept support and success with a grain of salt and a wink in their eye. It is like all your dreams come true, but it is never the dreams you wanted that come true. The really new world is not your ideal world. God's vision is not your vision. It is the Beatific Vision.

21. Internally, it is as though you did not do your practical vision at all. It is Being's presence in you, through you, with you. Being is you. You are not your own. You belong to God. You are like a man from Mars. My finite existence is absorbed into infinity, and all my particularities are relativized. Here and here alone do I have the possibility of being an American. Here I choose to be the American I am with all the ambiguity that entails. No village, no nation is worthy of my whole life, least of all my own nation. I belong to history. I am captured by being and have no existence on my own. Yet this is not lightly done; it is extremely painful. Suffering is intensified beyond what you ever thought you could bear. It is clear here that Being itself suffering. Existence is pain. Pain is perpetual and ever more acute. There is no shutting it out. I become the leperous beggar through whom I see suffering humanity. Unfulfillment also is intensified. All I ever wanted in life is finally denied me. I don't know how this is true and also it is true that I get all my dreams. It does not make sense. I only know it is true. This is not a gruesome thing. My desires simply are beside the point. I have no desires for I desire only the Mystery. I myself am utterly a nobody.

YOU ARE  
A CAPTIVE

22. Therefore, prophethood is born. When you are captured by being, being speaks through you. You become Being's mouthpiece. In olden days frail, weak, ordinary human beings were able to say, "Thus saith the Lord..." These human beings became mediums thru which history was made. I imagine the prophets were people who kept surprising themselves by what was said through them. It is like they could care less about themselves. Any assignment they get is a new opportunity to discover what Being will say and do through them whether its the highest paid job in town, or washing the dishes. Both are grand ventures. Remember that prophets get stones thrown at them for what they say--people kill them. But it is the no risk risk since Being always wins. The prophet is a dead man. He or she is crucified before their crucifixion. The prophet speaks the radical indicative that is present. He says it the way it is. "The economic world has ended. A new world is at hand. In the new world a new economics and a new politics is being born; we must watch our cultural bias here. Yet a cultural world is taking form." Whereever such a word is said a new context is left behind. You can argue with it or even object, but you have a new context on your hands. Here the exemplar Poet comes to be. A new world is at hand and new language is invented to express this new world. Old images won't do. It takes poetry. It's like.... You become a poetic expression. You are the human drama.

PROPHETHOOD

23. Where the prophet is in history, there life is reborn. It's a resurrection. When the radical indicative is spoken, decisions are made. None of us have any choice. Whether we say Yea or Nay, we decide a new future. "He who is not with men is against me." Even the nay is as human as the yea. No moralism here. All is new either way you decide. Both go home to the family and change things. In the office they are utterly different. Both are literally in a new universe. The spoken word has pronounced a total death, and in speaking it it has become true. No vestige of the old remains. It is gone. You try to go back to enjoy the old

LIFE IS  
REBORN

life again and it is dust in your mouth. The old universe is literally gone.  
And yet you are the same you always were. The universe remains our universe  
even though it is unaccountably new. I am ME, the same as before yet unaccountably  
new.