

CORPORATE DECISION MAKING

Legal Commission Meeting

We who are gathered here are no wise a decision-making body at all. We're not here to decide anything. But we're here to dig out data that we can recommend to the decision-making centers of the movement; the key of which probably these days, beyond the total Order, is the Area Priors around the globe. They will come together with the rest of us in September, and it would be fine if between now and September that useful data and those recommendations could be at hand. I may see a sizable number of them this spring, and it would be fine if something came out of our meeting today in any form, even in the fashion of guidelines, that we hopefully would be using to reflect upon the issues at hand, in the next few months, which would of course enable them to get their stewing going.

I look upon today, though I don't know what the Lord has in mind, as an exploratory moment. We've got together somewhat of a cross-section of us. We wanted men who had secular wisdom of various types, but who were very, very, very close to the Order for this first meeting. If we meet in the future, which I would expect that we would, we of course could call in anybody who has the kind of expertise that our guidelines point out that we need.

Most of you are perhaps aware that in August, September, October, November a group like this met to deal with our finances. And it was fantastically remarkable to me what happened. And the experts they called in were to me educators. I got an education. I'm convinced of it. Anyway, I look forward to what will come out of our time together. I have no idea what will be.

Perhaps I can remind you of where we are in terms of the operating dynamics that relate to the decisions that determine the actualization of our mission that we sometimes call the polity structure. And then maybe we can look at a possible agenda.

However poorly, we're concerned with using ourselves as guinea pigs who might in some modest way make some contribution to our time in the whole arena of corporateness as it relates to the decision-making processes. And you recollect that we are concerned in polity with creating tensional systems out of which we believe creativity will perpetually come. We at the moment are concerned with complexing those tensional systems, not taking the complexity out of them. And, rightly or wrongly, this is to avoid an architectonic form of bureaucracy, or to say it the other way is to push the bureaucracy to such limits that a total body becomes that bureaucracy relatively speaking, which takes away, hopefully, the possibility of the monstrosities Goodwin described in the New Yorker, I guess it was, in those three articles in which he summed it up by saying that the dragon of bureaucracy today just operates. And if everybody on the earth dropped dead, this old monster would just keep going, eternally. Somebody reminded me of this science fiction story where this big bomber, absolutely automatic, would come in, get re-serviced, re-loaded, re-fueled, fly out and drop its bombs. And 20 years after this bomber had destroyed everybody on earth, it was still coming in, getting repaired, refueled, restocked, and dropping bombs out where there was nothing left to kill.

Anyway, we want to avoid two things in our polity. One is any form of the medieval hierarchical construct of polity. And also, what is today I suppose beginning to worry more and more people, and that's the bureaucratic revolution.

In order to do that we try to build a tension between the global and the local. And in the local you have in this circle 84 Religious Houses around the world, 20 or 21 of which are Area Houses. In our scheme of the world we have 54 Areas, and 21 of them are developed. And I might say, that if we had the trained forces, you could shove that down the road a huge way. I think that probably the only Areas in which we will be temporarily deterred will be China and Russia, at the moment. Anyway, I put up here just the Area Houses. There ought to be, I think, 20 up there.

Around these are the satellites of the other Religious Houses. Some of these do not have any satellites. Others have maybe 12 or 13. Anyway, this represents the local dynamic. I might say we tried to do this continentally, and I think we failed.

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We used to think regionally. But there are 324 Regions, and that seems too much to handle, so we settled on the 54 Areas to represent the local. And we mean in the local polity-wise, local autonomy. Local autonomy in our definition only exists when that local does its local in a global context. This is what we mean by the Xavier principle, to use our jargon. We are not interested in the kind of local autonomy in which something over here is running its little thing and over here its little thing and over here its little thing. Each one of those locals is related to the globe.

My great illustration of that is one time I stopped by to see Frank Hilliard in London, and Frank and I were pushing it around a little bit, and he said to me, "Joseph, I want you to understand that, though I'm the prior of the London Area, I am responsible for the total mission of the whole Order across the globe." Well that's local autonomy. What that means is nobody finally is telling Hilliard what he ought to do over in London. That doesn't mean, and I'll come to that in a moment, that we do not have common operating structures. But Hilliard could only fulfill what we mean by the local function if he not only said but meant what he said about the globe. And I would like to believe that these kinds of things that I'm saying, though I'm using the jargon of untutored laymen in this area, potentially would relate to the operation of any complex organization or institution that happens to exist at this moment in history.

The global dynamic is what we call Centruns. They must not be seen in geographical terms. Otherwise you're building, I think, simply another invisible architectonic system. They have to occupy space. But you're not interested in having one per continent or one per area. Where the Centrum would be located in its multiplicity would be determined by the degree of service that was needed by the Religious Houses and matters of distance and these kinds of things. For instance, there might be one in a sphere; there might be another that would be continental. My guess here in North America, and I'm sorry it happens this way because it has to do with Chicago, is that it probably has to be continental. Maybe not. But in other places, it could even be on an area level. For instance, Sydney, which is so far away from everywhere, might very well have a Centrum there. Jim Bishop some years ago, perhaps prematurely, set up a separate house in Sydney that was to take care of all of Australia. Looking back on it, he probably was pioneering the fact that Australia maybe does need a Centrum, although I'm not pushing for that at the moment.

If you think in terms of what is immediately ahead, I would say something like this. Maybe Centruns would be located in four places in the world, like in Chicago and Hong Kong and Bombay and maybe Brussels or London. Or maybe this one in Hong Kong ought to be in Singapore, which could reach Sydney a little easier than Hong Kong. In these Centruns, Chicago, due to fate, would always be in one sense a home base probably. Maybe one day not. They tell me that Beirut is the point in the world which is easier for all people by air lines to convene. Well, it could be that something like that would overcome the fate-filled symbolism that Chicago is. But it would have to be something like that, I suppose.

Now, secondly, though we use the word "Centruns," when we use the plural, it does not apply to this kind of spatial diffusion. There is one Centrum. Though it may have four manifestations, there is only one. This is global, and if you had a multiplicity of Centruns, you could not maintain the tension between the global and the local. However, we do use the plural of Centrum, and that refers to the dynamics in Centrum itself. We call these Centruns, these four things (Centruns) within a centrum which is all of this, and these, as you know, are Research, Development, Operations, and Management. Here in Chicago all of these are now going. Rick Loudermilk and Art Smith pulled off the Management Centrum as an independent entity standing on its own feet, so all four of these are operating.

Actually, the foundational philosophy underneath all of this is just stark naked platonism, in which he said any government is made up of oligarchy -you've got to transpose that into the post-modern world -- oligarchy or aristocracy and democracy. In our language, power centers first of all rest in the total community. That's what we mean by consensus. The aristocracy was carved in the past by the seven families that moved from Austin, Texas to Chicago. About three years ago, they began to fade into nothing, at the pain of some of them. New leadership emerged in the community, but none of that had been very self-conscious. We were so small that we operated by town meetings. This only by necessity. When you have a huge number at town meetings, you can't hire twenty-eight 747s to fly people to one place, and too many of us operate this way anyway. And it will be increasingly so.

Now this is the Area priors (the Aristocracy). Then the monarchy, and this has happened in our day, as always. This is symbolic. That was their basic power, though they snatched power from here in the perversion of this. This is sticking out as sheer symbolism. Without this, this nor this could operate. That's behind it. Last

September, we had the first Area Priors' Council. This next year we're going to have to have it far more systematically. I tell you this burns the hell out of me. I just shudder at systems. That's right. What I fear is hierarchical systems. Not systems in which these development people would be working together, for commonness; the operations people working together for commonness. Oh, I mean these people here would be working with these people for commonness. And so with the others. And also these commission people would be working with the representatives from those commissions to get a common operating consensus for at least one year. Whenever you would have such things as Area Prior Councils you would be dealing with Oligarchy. Then we've got to have this. Councils here. But I tell you, I'm hard put. I even hate to go to representationalism. As soon as you've done that, you've already moved into Oligarchy. But we've got to find ways where consensus is on the local level. That, to be honest with you, I don't quite see. How are we going to do it? If you had \$600,000,000,000, we could get together and wouldn't it be easier?

These Centurms, as we look at them, have to do with our mission, our task in all its forms. And in each one of these locations there would be a dynamic. There would be one of these dynamics that we call Centurms. But then, to overcome the geographic connotation, it's like there would be one Development Centrum around the world. And we are much further down the road on this than even, oh, two months ago I dreamed. We are on the way. It looks as if in the next couple of months we will get \$80,000 out of two foundations in West Germany. That's interesting, isn't it? Or you think that last year Joe Thomas raised roughly \$96,000 in SEAPAC. For us that's a miracle. It looks like a foundation in Great Britain is going to give us \$20,000 for work in India in the next couple, few months.

And these are just illustrations that this is already beginning to happen. The men in Europe are raising money for their own operation. Yes, and I would want to make this clear. Keep in our mind all day long that money we raise is program money. And this next year that'll be \$2,000,000, I suppose. And then the money that we live off of, the food and in-out-of-the-rain costs we earn ourselves would be \$5,000,000 including all the Religious Houses overseas. I think it's important that we see this and keep it clear. It also makes our polity more delicate. Nobody gets paid nothing, so to speak. Anyway you see this. And then you'd have to draw circles that relate these others. There is one Research net around the globe. Not four or nine. There is one Management net around the world. And one Operations net.

Now the interior life, and we're not so clear on this, is taken care of by what we call commissions. And the commissions do not make the Operating decisions. They are the guardians that keep the decisions somewhat coordinated where they relate to our internal life. And one of these is the Assignment Commission -- if you want to use other language, this is personnel. But for us the crucial thing relative to glue and polity are these long sheets of assignments that come out. Not only in terms of where we're stationed for a year, but in terms of where we go to teach with those two suitcases that are always packed, as well as innumerable other places where your fate is decided for you by somebody else. One of these is the Fiscal Commission. And one of these is what we call the Interior Life Commission. This has to do with personnel relative to the task. This has to do with interrelationships within our group, which as large as we are now is increasingly complex. And these people watch over that. And then we have the Legal Commission.

These commissions do not make decisions in one sense. They review decisions. They watch over decisions. Fundamental decisions, say thinking just of Centrum for a moment, are made by these four Centurms within Centurms. For instance, there isn't someone that's up above the Management that lays out a policy for Management to follow. Management makes the decisions. And so with Development. And so with Operations.

Then we also have another complication, and that is that we divide ourselves up into Congregations. We have four Congregations. And this is the arena in which the total body takes care of each other. When you boil it down, that's what it is. And yet in one sense it belongs here, because, if you're trying to locate what we used to call power centers where decisions are made, those Congregations are absolutely crucial. They make decisions on behalf of all of us. And this would be replicated in each one of these. How they would be interrelated I am not quite sure. As a matter of fact, this whole arena is still fuzzy for us, but I think we have gone far enough to see that it is absolutely crucial to us. And I suppose clarity will come as we move on.

We have five people within our group here at Centrum, I mean within a Centrum, who are on these commissions that relate to the Centrum dynamic here in Chicago, which is the only one that's realistically existing at the moment. But ever since the Guardians have really moved, we have used them as an extension of these commissions. Now the next time you meet, I think we probably would need to open up this group and bring in

some other Guardians who are not directly a part of the Order. Right now we're exploring, to do a little thinking ourselves. Each one of these commissions would function in that fashion. Some of you who were here last summer remember that we had a group of maybe 25 people, some of whom did not belong to the Order, who were making assignments of us for the year. One of them has since joined the Order (Bob Booher.) I used to walk in there and say, "God, who is that eating up our destiny?" But it is clearly interesting that it doesn't make any difference. It doesn't make any difference. The job needed to be done, needed to be done rationally. And obviously we know in our day (they didn't know a hundred years ago, I suppose) there are as many different schemes of rationality as there are stars in the sky. There isn't one.

Now here in the last part of this, oh yes, now, these Houses are not under Centurms. There is this kind of a tension constantly out of which consciousness is born. Of course this whole scheme is based on what man has become aware of simply in our lifetime, really that consciousness is born of tension, not as the psychologist would like to think, otherwise. We now are coming to have awe before tension, not simply fear of it. Fighting is a part of life. Deep down below anything you and I can look at. And when that goes, then consciousness is gone.

Now you had to have a symbolic dynamic. And the symbolic dynamic in this is neither global nor local, and it's transparent. And therefore must always be nothing. Like I've often said, at least once a year they ought to get together the Panchayat and everybody piss on them to keep reminding them that they are nothing. They are not a group of people who send out orders to the uttermost parts of the earth. I don't think we're clear on even what we mean when we say this is symbolic, but we're clear on a few items related to it. And that is that they are not what in the past were the head men. Any of them. Also, you are quite well aware that what we call the Panchayat now, the five, has almost become Mickey Mouse, not because anybody makes it Mickey Mouse, but because that group could not even possibly represent this dynamic we're spelling out, although it was through that group that we have learned what we have learned. In the meantime, they are operating in this little hunk of the whole scheme as if they were this. The day after tomorrow, this global Panchayat has got to come into being. What that would look like and how you go about it, I do not know. It may very well be that you're going to have to have a symbolic Panchayat that is composed of portions of symbolic Panchayats -- especially you young ones are going to have to think hard in that area. Now I also believe myself, though I'd be hard put to make a speech on this, that that kind of thing is your new kind of executive coming into being. You almost don't want to call him an executive any more. I mean top echelon executive. I don't know much about how this is directly related to corporations, for instance multinational corporations, but my intuition says that there is a relationship. And that maybe they would be some of the most important resources for us to learn from and for us to adjust anything that we have learned now.

One or two things. That's pretty well our dynamic. If you'll notice, you've got a tension between the local and the global, and you have another tension between the symbolic and the global and between the symbolic and the local. But it's a tensional untension. That's part of where, I think, in the future you're going to have to do some hard thinking. We know now that there is power in symbolism. But it is a different kind of power than you're dealing with in other places. You have your tension in the Centurms, and you have your tensions here in your areas. And you have your tensions within each one of the manifestations of Centrum. Some of my colleagues who I think, I don't ask them to agree with me, still operate in the architectonic image, this drives them absolutely haywire. But I believe you must not simplify these tensions. You have to complex them. And when I accuse them of that which I did there, I've got to say that's in me too. The way I accuse them of thinking is also in myself.

There are probably some long established principles that will come out today and the next times we meet. And I'll not try to pull those out right now, except one. The decision is already made and has been made for years that we are one body and not two or three or 84. We are one. And let's say that's a basic presupposition. How you hold this multi-faced monster together as one is where our underlying problem is. Some of the issues, then, in the broad picture are: Those relating to ownership of property. Those relating to the interchange of moneys, banking, currency transferal, that kind of thing. Those relating to the legal constructs in many places. Matters having to do with trust laws. And with taxes of a variety or sorts that I do not even understand. Then all of these matters and more that you know of have to be seen through, at least for me, two sets of glasses. One is through our nation. Minus the ones in Canada, you've maybe got 42 Houses in this country. And then internationally. Now you may come up with a scheme in which you don't have two things. At the moment, in my mind, we've got two sets of practical problems: how we get this done in this country; and then, secondly, how we get it done around the world.

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