

MAJURO REPORT
Calling Forth the Abundant Life

I want to talk about what we have learned in Majuro relative to the edge of economic development, maneuvers, development and time.

You know from having Marshallese in your midst, that part of the world has a unique kind of humanness and subtleness. I think the most significant thing that we have done in the Marshall Islands, as a body of people in history, is to learn how to use our lives to elicit the spirit in local man. That goes back long before we even conceived of Global Social Demonstration, to the labors that began there in the early 1970's when our staff was limiting its work mostly to the high schools and doing the training of people. When we talk now, especially the Guardians Consult focusing on economic development, and looking at that integrated, comprehensive screen our colleagues pulled together from their trip to Israel, what we have learned about calling forth abundant life by abundant expenditure on your behalf, is right on target. I would have to say, from our work in Majuro so far, the key has to do with finding out again for ourselves just what it means to bring the abundant life to people.

Marx was right on target when he focused on the economic in his writings decades ago. When he did that, you could understand how the economic and the abundant life were tied together. Especially with local man in the 85%, the abundant life and the economic are almost identical. When a community or an individual or a group of individuals signal to themselves that they are living out of the abundant life, they have to do it with that basic fundamental part of the social process, the economic. It is true in the Marshalls, where they live right on the edge of nonexistence, that you don't have any other choice except to intensify what the ecology people are focusing on today -- everything is recycled; everything is used. Every aspect of what a person does is considered in relationship to future implications in the Marshallese society. If they didn't, they wouldn't have life on that atoll. They have to recycle and use and reuse and reuse everything. There is not enough surplus to express your perception of living an abundant life in a political form. Nor is there enough abundant surplus to express your understanding of the abundant life in a cultural form, in the first instance. Because the social process is one, all of that is there, but the primary, overwhelmingly first level symbol that comes forth of living the abundant life is just food. And you share food -- you take your extra food and use it as a way to care for your neighbor. For me, when you touch the local economic vehicle and get into dealing with the 85% and start manipulating and getting the community to dare to manipulate its economic life, you are dealing with a primarily spiritual reality. You can't forget that; you have to know it every minute you are there. Our learning that over these past years has been the

objective accomplishment of our work together in the Marshall Islands, far and beyond anything else. In dealing with the economic life of local man you are dealing with a spiritual reality. I didn't think I would ever hear myself say that, but I firmly stand here with as much integrity as I have and announce it to you.

What has happened in the Marshalls in this time (and we know we bear the burden of being United States citizens and have to take responsibility for it) has been a de-spiritualization of the Marshall Islands, because the economic realities are denied by a large injection of U.S. dollars. 80% of the payroll in our social demonstration comes from your tax paying money, and the rest comes out of earnings. The contribution to the human process for that 80% is relatively phony, in the sense that this is a slick way of getting a dole system in operation. What that has done to a people is to rob them of the way they had for thousands of years for experiencing their living of the abundant life. You participate in a community ritual of taking food to your king. You know that there is something going on there that is deep and powerful and yet it is spiritually dead. It is a dead form. Yet, you remember that at one time this was the way you experienced and lived the abundant life, and it is all gone. I don't know how that ever gets recovered.

I am excited that we have our thinking and our being, and I hope now our doing, around to the point where we dare experiment radically and in depth with these very things, to see if we can elicit authentic spiritual recovery of what it means to be and live an abundant life in these local situations. Now, everything else fits under that in one way or another.

I'll say a little bit about what the Marshalls are like. One good image is that if you picture yourself as living in Denver, the nearest town to you would be in Tijuana, Mexico, in one direction and Portsmouth, Maine, in the other direction. That is a little bit exaggerated, but not much. We sing "On a clear day you can see forever," and know that on a clear day you can see the next island out of your back door. It is about ten miles across from our atoll to the next atoll. It costs \$200 to make that round trip from where we live to our next door neighbors, if you can find a boat. There are only four boats that make that trip, and if they are all over there you can't go back and forth until somebody raises enough money there to come over to Majuro. The people are spread very thin over the islands. There are 70 villages in the Marshall islands on 27 atolls. They are small villages, some atolls having as many as six and some having just one. Even though some of those villages are on the same atoll, for three or four months of the year you cannot get back and forth because of the wind. You have people, local man, living in small groups struggling with what it means to be a human being building his destiny.

Our work has primarily focused on Majuro, the district center. It is on an atoll, shaped like an egg, about 25 miles long and 5 miles wide with 25 miles of road that goes around halfway on one side. At one end is the traditional village of Laura; about 2,000 people are living there. When you get down to Laura you realize that you are headed towards the 85%. But when you get to Majuro, you might as well be in Uptown, in one sense. You have 8,000 to 10,000 people in an area of land that is smaller than Fifth City, with just two or three two-story houses. But it is a wealthy,

wealthy community. The 15% in the Marshalls are there in Majuro. They are the ones who live off the dollar and whose spiritual suffering is the greatest; therefore, you have the place of potential breakloose.

We are never as an Order going to do all the Marshall Islands. I am clear about that. I have sites for 27 preschools right now and the Marshallese are coming in from these 70 villages to be trained in Majuro as volunteer teachers. You meet with the village council and talk about what needs to happen and they say, "We want a preschool." We say, "Okay, if you want one you have to support it." You cannot have a government salary in there. If you do you have destroyed the village, because there are dollars where there were none before. You have also destroyed your preschool, because you don't have a preschool you have a wealthy lady and a family with money. They gather together five villagers and send them for the training.

A group came in from one of the atolls on the last field trip. Two of the ladies had never been off the atoll, had never been to Majuro. That is like somebody from one of those towns in Oklahoma getting down to Dallas for the first time in his life when he is forty years old. You just wonder how they are going to learn to be preschool teachers in that short a time. It is exciting to work with our staff in that preschool. They are learning ten times more than they ever thought they knew about what it means to run a preschool. The Majuro teachers, as they teach their Marshallese colleagues, are learning about what it means to run a preschool better than any of us could teach them. All the island women have time for is to pick up the structure--the contentless form of the preschool. Then they get back to their local situation and they know better than I do that it is the ritual, the pattern of the day, the rites, the songs, and the decor that transform the lives and bring spirit into that community. They get the content out of the situation and have it grow. That is an exciting thing that is happening.

We are working with local industry in a very difficult situation. You have to put a rather massive injection of capital in there to get your equipment, but we are trying to do this without a massive injection of capital to cover operating expenses. We figure we can pull the operating expenses out of the economy as we go along. This is a huge contradiction that we have to look at very, very, seriously. The 85% do not have surplus capital to cover operating expenses of something new. The money that is there is turning over fast just to keep you alive at a very minimal level. The hardest problem with the sawmill is that if someone is going to cut lumber he has to get paid so he can eat that week. To have to pay him means that you have to sell wood to someone else who can afford to buy some coconut wood. You cannot export it. It all has to be done locally. In Majuro that is tough because of the money economy. The outer islands have a system in which they can be supported corporately with food and housing while they invest a little bit of their time with these new tools to produce a surplus. But in the district center where you have a money economy and people are just scratching day after day to get that buck, it is extremely difficult. I have discovered that all of my training and all of my images told me that there was always a little bit of extra capital lying around, either in time or in money, that I could scrounge up. You

get down to the 85% and it is tight, tight, tight. The temptation is, for those of us who have the surplus operating out of our guilt, to dump that operating expense in also but then you start building a dole system of your own. We have gone down that path in our experiment and discovered all that does is kill the spirit. It kills his spirit and it kills your spirit and it probably kills the spirit of those back here who loaned the money. The only redemption in all this is to say that as we go along we are learning about ourselves and about what we have to do.

I have good news to report! TASC finished this year in the black! It made a profit on a quarter of a million dollars investment. At Christmas we were \$17,000 in the red, and we finished the fiscal year, March 31st, in the black. I swear the only thing that let us finish the year in the black was your having Oklahoma 100. It kept the House alive in the midst of trying to shake that quarter of a million dollars in such a way that you could come up in the black. I learned coming back here just how fragile we are about spiritual dynamic. If you had only done 30 Town Meetings in Oklahoma, you would have had another year in the red out there in the Marshalls! That is part of the excitement of being in a global Order.

The last thing I have to say is on maneuvers. I have a list here of the maneuvers we are doing between now and June, if you are interested, and there are these reports. We call them the Hess report, because the first letter had Hess' name signed on it. If you want to keep updated on what is happening, go get the Hess reports. Every month you have to fill out this much paper work, or you feel guilty. They are divine accountability. They tell you where you are so you won't get lost in your own maneuvers. What this does is tie you in with the globe and with the other social demonstrations. That is the thing that is the most important out there. The maneuver of Majuro or the maneuver of the Marshall islands is in the midst of a global social demonstration. If you are ever assigned to Oombulgurri or Fifth City or the Marshalls, you need to know this, especially if you have read Sun Tzu where he looks disparagingly upon the protracted campaign.

We are still back in first world war tactics in the Marshalls. I mean it is trench warfare. From the first day we were there in 1970, we knew it was going to be a protracted war. What you are doing in these other social demonstrations is not like that. So to put it this way, Majuro makes sense as a maneuver only as a part of a global social demonstration maneuver. Majuro in itself, from what we know about living in life and what has to be done in the world, is dumb. But doing it in the network of the global social demonstrations, it is key. They redeem each other. The global social demonstration maneuver would not happen without places like Fifth City, Oombulgurri and the Marshall Islands. We would not be in those three places if it were not for the grand maneuver of global social demonstration. The corollary to that is the replication. Without the replication school, the maneuver of the 24 will be protracted warfare in itself of the worst kind.

What I have learned being back this time, and what we knew before I left and what we are working out with our interior, is how you stand in your local assignment and hold those global maneuvers at the same time. You read Sun Tzu and you can get tricked into reducing your context and

trying to apply that book in a reduced context. You need to apply it to the global in your local situation at the same time. In the midst of the global demand when I stop and think, I discover the delightedness that I live out of in the Marshalls and I suspect the same thing for you happens here as you take care of yourself on this end.