

Joseph W. Mathews

THE TURN
INTO
THE TWENTY YEAR MARCH

Excerpts from
Closing Address
Summer '72

T86

I want to share with you where I see the breakloose of the Holy Spirit being given form in our time. We have made the turn. Three years ago we made the head-on impact of the local congregation and in that moment we knew that we had to move into the social dynamics of the times. You do not attempt to concretely renew the local church for any other purpose than mission to the world. The holding chart, relative to daring to touch society, was that of articulating our operating ideology: All the earth belongs to all. Prior to that, I think, two other dynamics had to be held. One of them was a relevant anthropology for our moment in history, or to use religious language, a relevant doctrine of man. And still beyond that there had to be brought into focus an effective mythology in and through which could become the new image of man who had broken loose in our time. These dynamics, an ideology, an anthropology, and a mythology, have to be there the moment anyone takes seriously the radical alteration of the social process.

Underneath the ideology, if you mean to be a serious social changer, there has to be an operating model or a tactical system which is built upon a foundational analysis of the dynamics of society itself. That was accomplished last year. I have thought that perhaps the most important sociological contribution the research assemblies have made up to this point are those social process triangles which unveil the fact that society is dynamical in its very essence. Then, the final step is to build the practical means for change itself, which is fundamentally what you have done this summer. Those are the five things: mythology, anthropology, ideology, social analysis and practical systems for accomplishing it.

Our holding chart for this summer was again five-fold, but quite a different kind, for it had to become specific. The first aim of this summer was to get around the bend, to turn the spirit movement directly into the world itself, into the task which had always been that of the church when it grasped with authenticity what it meant to be the church. That turn had to be made. The second job that we had to do was to condense and specify last summer's practical vision. The third thing was to delineate the strategic objectives by emphasizing tactics to get clear on the strategies so we could then write the tactics. The fourth thing was to build the operating machinery whereby those strategic objectives could be realized. And lastly our aim was to provide the means of human motivity. Without that and without the imagery of the other world, anything that has been done here would remain utterly sterile. This holding chart, in the broad, you have fulfilled. That is fundamentally what I mean when I say that we have turned the corner this summer.

I want to try, as best I can, to make the first effort to analyze the inner dynamic of the summer. The work done with the tactical systems began with the seven major nodal clusters. At the end of last summer the climactic work of the assembly was the 77 Proposals Booklet. Now these proposals and subproposals were plotted relative to that dynamic in society that could occasion their operation. That plotting revealed seven nexus of proposals or what we called the clusters.

The first cluster is inclusive myths. The second one is in the style triangle called community groupings. The third one has to do with final meanings and social morality. That triangle called final meanings is really RS-I -- in relation to myself, in relation to the ultimate in life and in authentic relation to my neighbor. The scream in our day is for a new morality based upon an ontological grasp of what it means to be a human being. The fourth one is formal methods which deals with the awareness that in our time we have lost that kind of education that enables a human being to be human. In this moment in history methodology has to do with Being itself; that is, we have passed the time of some kind of eternal realm of knowledge that you hand to someone and he becomes a human being. No, you give him a methodology by which he forges his own efforts. This is the key, I suspect, to the reform of the whole educational process in the world today. The fifth cluster is knowledge access in the political triangle. This delineates the ideology that all of the images and all of the gifts of humanness belong to all people. The next one, number six, is bureaucratic systems. Through the economic dynamic we are going to require that they become globally controlled. The last cluster, deliberative systems, is also in the political arena. That is getting at the fact that local man must have a way in which he can genuinely participate in the decision-making processes on a global basis to determine his own destiny. In one sense, you begin to have here the direct strategies that the Movement has before it in its efforts to change society.

From these clusters of proposals and your analyses of these various relationships, you built, what I like to call, indicative tactics. Now anyone who intended to remain abstractly a revolutionary would have gone home. Well you did not go home. That means that you saw that nobody ever has and nobody ever will make a direct assault on society in order to change it. The one who actually changes society comes at it indirectly. It is like if you want to shoot something over there, you pull your gun and shoot over here. Now that is what you did when you, to use your language, took forty catalytic clusters and "swirled them through a wall." You were after those places you had to "shoot" to change the whole wall.

You came up with nine such points. Now the shocking thing to me about this is that I never before knew how to accomplish the social revolution. I never knew before how to go about actually changing society. Now I know. Your work tells me. It is the same gift that the other world has been for me. In the past, if people came up and asked me what life is all about, I had a hard time answering them. But not any more. What is life all about? Why, it is about mystery, and it is about freedom, and it is about agape, and it is about happiness, period. Now I know, and I cannot say that too strongly. I know. It's the kind of know that the Orthodox Church means with their word believe. I tell you I believe your pressure points.

Now let's look at them. I call these indirect strategies. Although, when you are standing on this side there is nothing indirect about it; I mean you die in what you are doing. The first pressure point is Post-Modern, Secular Mythology: a way in which man can once again find his way through the inner deeps of what it means to be a human being without getting