

## GLOBAL ORDER POLITY

My task is to pull together a picture of where we are in the whole dimension of polity, and to shove a little bit on it so that we can commonly reflect. I am going to talk about it in four arenas: First, the historical moment of polity at this time; second, the function of polity; third, the operating principles by which we move; and fourth, the machinery of polity.

Under the historical moment of the political, one of the great things happening in the 20th Century that historians will write about as they look back is the failure of the political in our time. There are many ways of talking about this. You can talk of its being a slave to the economic, of its being static in relationship to the cultural, or not providing a way for local people to enter into the decision-making process that determines their destiny. In other words, the political seems almost as impotent as the cultural dynamic of the social process. But with the coming of resurgence, there is a strange rise of local man. This is hard to believe because we have been brainwashed that local man - - and usually you will find this emphasized in bureaucratic parts of government or other organizations where they believe local man is either dumb or uninformed - - is incapable of entering into decision-making. We saw a classic example of this in the Nixon administration. Whatever else is going on, local man has risen to the fore. Indeed one could say the whole Watergate thing, was local people around the U.S. demanding a change. Local man defeated America in the war in S. Vietnam. That wasn't a few hundred thousand regulars in the N. Vietnamese army or the Vietnamese people or even the Viet Cong. It included them, of course, but also the people of the U.S. who said, "We shall not wipe those countries out". As you look around the world, how many governments in the last 18 months have fallen or been called radically into question, in various forms, including our own, by local people.

But today, whatever is taking place in the political, there is no choice but to enter into the arena of globality. I do not know if it will be called "globality", but the nation has no choice but to be global. A whole new form of nationalism is coming into being. A few years ago, when Africa came down hard on Negritude and broke themselves and the rest of the world loose to see the uniqueness of being black, an African person collared me and said "Africa has moved beyond this". Today Africa is not turning back in upon itself as some may have thought, but is moving outward, and this is the trend. Nations have nowhere else to go but global.

Now the business community is probably the one global community around the world and therefore it is running the world. Nations around the world are puppets of that business community, the economic community. It is hard for us even to see the depths of this statement. It is not that small nations are under economic rule here or there. The economic community's control is shot through everything. It is hard to get back into the political dynamic and see how it can work in a global community such as the economic, but when we showed our polity machinery to the Guardians a year or so ago, they used that machinery to talk about their corporations, and they just became ecstatic as to how it could be an effective polity instrument.

Another thing that is hitting us in this historical moment politically is that we see the rule of not government, or people, but methods. In other words, profound consciousness itself is that which rules today. We use such mundane statements as "The person who does their homework is in charge the next morning." Well, it is not that they are in charge, in some autocratic way but that their methodology has given them a way to bring off the next morning. Look at Global Community Forum. When you go into a community and put on a Global Community Forum whereby that community can discern its own relationship to the globe that is impinging upon it, it then rises up and makes a response that affects its destiny and the direction that the civilizing process is going tomorrow. What allowed that to happen? Methods. If one uses the manifestation of profound consciousness, which is method, it goes through superficiality to the profound consciousness of another which is at the same time trans-rationality. In other words, method goes through all walls. Maybe the scriptures articulated this when they said "Deep speaks to deeps". I'd like to say that this is the way it has always been. Now, mind you, that is looking back from the midst of the 20th Century. You know how they have articulated this before: that you had certain charisma or maybe you were born of blue blood or maybe you were trained to be a king or nobleman or something like that. But in whatever way they put it in their universe, looking back we can see methods were that which ruled.

The function of polity. The function of the political dynamic is glue. It keeps a society stuck together. It allows people to relate, to interact, to select and to move into the future. We use structures for that. Another way to put it is that structures use the glue, or the structures are not the glue but use the glue and therefore are secondary. The structures are functional in a particular situation. Even the word "anarchy", if you look up the technical definition in the dictionary, means the state of society where there is no supreme power or law. One of our congressmen is going to Spain to participate in a community they call a community of anarchy. It is a voluntaristic grouping of society in lieu of the state. Many times in our history and certainly a few hundred years ago the category "people" was even more important than the category "government". Technical anarchy, so to speak, spreads the decision-making process as far as possible.

Well, what is that glue? The cultural is the glue. And the political exercises the glue. The political dynamic ought not to go out blowing a trumpet announcing that it is making a great big old decision, for what the political dynamic does, is to manipulate the symbolic. Here or there it manipulates the symbolic structure globally so that consensus is possible for local people throughout the globe. Let me give you an illustration of this. Maybe it is a wierd one, but I think nevertheless it is indicative. Take, for example, the Vietnam war. Military operations being architech-tonic or authoritarian have command at the top and it goes down to the bottom. This works well in a world where your society's glue holds it together from top to bottom, that is, in an essentialistic universe where you have static relationships. But in a dynamical society that does not have a mission, or does not have the symbols to hold itself in relation to who it is, or even to decide who it is, what can you do? So, you saw what the political experts did. They tried to bring group dynamics into the army. And can't you see it? Here comes an attack by the North Vietnamese, and what do they do? They call a buzz group to decide what they ought to do. Well, you know what is going to happen; they are going to retreat or loose disastrously.....Consensus is far more basic than any one decision. The way in which the political processes of the dynamic would work is to keep the symbols and the images and style evenly and commonly available in all parts of the globe to all peoples on a grassroots level. And when this happens, everything that we know about symbols or images and common reporting and accountability would come into play. And of course you can immediately see the importance on the local level in such things as spiritizing, the work of ecclesiolas, col-legiums, etc. Such dynamics as these are that without which the political dynamic does not go on.

The operating principles: first of all the mission determines the polity. In other words the question of polity probably always would stand over against this. Are we now bringing off the global mission by operating in this way with our political dynamic? Is this going to get the task done? Will it allow us to do the task, the job of mission today? Such things like "the power is in the center of the table" is a great picture of that. Where a group is operating, everybody has a chance to actuate this principle. The power is in the center of the table and you can reach out and grab it at any time. I remember the first time we began to use that, I had the horrifying struggle, of saying.. "Well now, we are going to have to vie for status of who is going to lead the group." Who is going to be making the big decision?" or something like that. But that was not it. What you saw, was that we were after the major contradiction and if somebody else is doing the first one that comes up, then you move on to the next step into the furture and where the nextcontradiction appears. You are always after that which is necessary to catalyze the situation or to demonstrate. Therefore the power is always in the middle of the table.

Then again, decision-making is global-local decision-making. Each person is responsible for the total mission. This is Xavierism, and what a great image. When that image explodes in our mind, it is left for us day in and day out, to find ways of having it imbued into every pore of our lives, where we do the local in the global context. Or, I do the global revolution in the midst of the local here. And this is what local autonomy is all about. You just think, here is my postage stamp in the midst of the world, and God is giving me the possibility and, indeed, the command from all of history, to create all history at this point before him. That should solve thousands of any kind of polity problems. Later on I want to talk about polity tensions, not polity problems.

I know, for example, in a global ITI program where it has been immersed and refined and immersed and refined and immersed and refined, around the globe, you go in and do the ITI which represents the best wisdom of the global situation in that particular local. You go in to do it in the local, not dismantle it. I used to think of myself, because I taught so often, that I had sharpened skills as a teacher, but over the last few years, I sit with my mouth open at my colleagues, and especially some of my indigenous colleagues that go in and take something like the global ITI and, boy! SHOOM! They bring it off. But, you see, they don't bring it off as little kids wanting to do their own thing, or exercise their own pet creativity, they bring it off because they embody the globality of the ITI structure and can dare to move the global into the local. This last trip, A.M. Joseph, What a prior that man is. People kept saying about what he could do to the Indians that he was with. But, you see, the fact was that A.M. Joseph has become a global prior, that was what made him able to move in the situation.

This doesn't mean that you don't adapt. But usually, the adaptation comes first of all, I always check myself, it usually comes from sin. And thank God, not from the staff usually, we are enough of a global outfit, but I mean the sin of the people participating in it. They say "Well, we don't do things like that here." Now that's just the same as if you are in South Chicago or Peoria or Ohio. Or in India or Latin America or Frankfurt, or in the Pacific. In fact, so far, I have had the opportunity of teaching or lecturing in 8 out of the 9 continents and everywhere you find exactly the same excuse. "People don't operate that way here," they say. Now, mind you that still does not mean that you don't adapt, but you adapt out of the global model, and then only when absolutely necessary. I remember sitting in with our colleagues one time when we had the heat on us as a group, and we saw indeed, that the program had to be adapted. And the tremendous corporate action of that body. "Now, what are we going to do to meet the need so that this thing comes off." And then deciding what they would do, in a step by step manner, so that it could happen. And yet, on the other hand, you have to be utterly loose. I used to say to people when we were going out at the beginning to teach, we had to learn to teach RSI swinging on a vine. Unless you have got that kind of flexibility or dynamic, you don't finally adapt.

The third thing under the operating principle would be complexifying tensional relationships. In other words we create tensional systems to avoid the architechtonic and to expand the bureaucratic. It is to spread the consensus base out and out and out. This is part of what we have known about corporateness for a long time, that you and I never do anything without checking with another colleague. And so this same thing is applied here. Consciousness is born out of tension, and we know that to live in the midst of tension, is to be ready to live where awe takes place and not to be afraid of it, but to dare to embrace it and take it into ourselves. Then, we have the opportunity to be sensitive to the mystery, as the local situation becomes transparent and is given back to us anew; for us to act in that particular relationship.

Well, then underneath the operating principles, global polity also has a platonic base. Maybe it would be helpful to walk through what page 6 is all about. I like to call these the machinery of polity. These are the machines but they are not the key of polity. They are the brickabrack or that which operate so polity may move on, so to speak. For example, at the top is a triangle showing the platonic based, the democratic, the oligarchic and the symbolic. Then down at the bottom you have a picture of the 54 areas which represent all the houses around the world and the bands inside are the four centrums with the 6 nexus proposed for next year and the little dots around each of the nexus are the commissions. And this gives a picture, then, of the inter-relationships drawn differently than the triangle at the top.

Let's look at the Democratic triangle for a moment. First within the top triangle are councils. The councils at the top, we have councils at all levels, starting with the House meeting. You know we have never really designed the House meeting formally, but, we could not live without it. There are retreats the house takes, or quarterly meetings or whenever, to battleplan and to get the house prepared to move for the quarter. We have let some of our councils drop, like the regional council, moving to metro-council. One way or another, and with great pain, any time a council drops, you suffer in the polity dimension. Yet at the same time, I know good and well that we should not have a council unless it is missionally oriented or has some task to carry out. Councils give the broad base of consensus. Also, especially today councils are constantly bringing in movemental forces, so we have got to broaden that base more and more. It is even more crucial now to be broadened at the base of consensus to include the movemental forces since our turn to the world.

And then Collegiums. Oh my, it is like never should any decision be actuated in a House during the day of any kind of importance that is not an automatic working out of a larger decision that has already been consensed on, and at that morning collegium where everybody is present, both those that work out and those that work in and the men and the women. Everybody sits around that table when any kind of important thing is called for consensus. And whenever we take the collegium and bastardize that with nit-picking or bitching, you see what happens to us, we destroy the base of the polity out of which we operate. The basic collegium is far more important, maybe in the houses than it is anywhere else, although, I don't know what we would do in the centrums if we did not have it.

The PSUs. That is not just the formal PSU, but all types of planning, and creating models that build the common mind.

Next the Oligarchic triangle made up of Commissions; Houses with their educational nurture, their missional thrust, etc. and the Centrums, which are set up according to the degree of service needed. We usually say, we will never move a religious house. Somebody said we ought to close down 10 religious houses and increase the number of people in other religious houses. But, my God, what that would do to us. That would just destroy us. And yet at the same time the centrums can move like folding up your tent, moving to another place where they would be of more missional service. Now, the one in Bombay is folding its tent up and moving into Taj Gunj, and we are creating a new nexus to go into Nairobi, for unless that nexus is there to freight, in the first instance, a development etc. funnel, or band or power line into that place, we are not going to come off there. Then the Commissions are made up of those with expertise, guardians and others that sit down and view the issues. They are not decision-making bodies, in the narrow sense of the word but without them we could not even move to make an effective decision.

Then, the top triangle is the Symbolic, the monarchy dynamic made up of global priors, house priors and the panchayat. The area prior as a global prior, in one sense is not area prior unless he sits with the priors of the houses in his area. For an area prior can only make an effective decision in conjunction with his house priors.

Then, if you want to look at the dynamics of the three poles of the triangle - lower left is the global, lower right is the local, and at the top is the symbolic. There is a tension always between those. A creative tension: commonality and then consensus and guardianship: you have that tension going on all the time. How in the world, for example, and here I am speaking out of my own thinking. How in the world would I dare to make a decision about moving a House facility, or about changing

my budget, without all the House priors in that area sitting in on it, or without checking the centrums to see what in the world the relationship would be with the legal part, or what the common model is around the globe. It is like, again, spreading your base of consensus, spreading it, spreading it; you don't care if the whole movement is sitting in, in fact that is what you are after. You never make a decision in the closet. In principle, you make a decision standing before all creation.

This leads to all sorts of tensional relationships: between houses, between areas, between area and centrum, within centrums and between centrum bands. In one sense this is intensifying an image of corporateness that we have operated out of for a long time and that we mentioned earlier, of checking with our colleagues. Now apply it to tensional relations. You get tired, you don't want to do it and you think, now I have to get off my can and go find the prior in another centrum band to get their reflections and critique. My tiredness or resentment tells me they won't be there - they will be in a meeting or somewhere else, and besides they don't really understand my perspective. They have their own interests and screens. So the tensional relationship produces a variety of concretions. Yet if we collapse the tension we face provincialism and idolatry.

In other lectures during the council we have talked about the role of centrums and the area so I won't repeat them here. However we probably need to see again the fluidity within these tensional relations in order to keep it dynamical so nobody could locate a source of power other than one at a time. Chicago as a power base was unhorsed by the area priors. The area priors were unhorsed by the global centrums dynamic. The centrum dynamic was unhorsed by social demonstration projects but social demonstration is an area dynamic. And so it goes, and the process must continue. Polity is dynamical.

The Symbolic, as you know, again the guardian of the comprehensive, cares for the deeps, and watches over the election. But, it can appear anywhere. It could appear in the ecclesiolas, could it not? It could be at your House Churches, because the symbolic dynamic is working there, obviously. Or it could be in some strange thing like the Global Panchayat Trek. For example, it bore the symbolic function, in the deep sense of that word, the care of the symbols out of which the total order lives. In the 1974 summer research assembly we planned for social demonstration, and Town Meetings but that is not enough. The trek team elicited the wisdom around the globe and stimulated the brooding process so all could be involved in building consensus. The team would ask questions, "Is this the place?" or "What shall we do here? Can you do it? Are you excited about it? Are you ready?" Then you bring back the wisdom gathered around the globe and pour it into the summer research assembly, and you bring in the work of the research assemblies held in the other places. Now by this time, do we make a decision that we will have eight social demonstrations? Well, yes we do. But we confirm the

consensus that has already been made. Sure. But the major decision is to guard the process that the grassroots consensus-making procedure may go on. That is the crucial part of that whole symbolic dimension of the polity dynamic.

Well, anyway, the shocking thing here is the breadth of the decision-making process or the consensus making machinery. Finally, each of us picks up the total mission wherever we are and moves into the future and into our task. And then, after all of that, the decision before, in the middle, and on the other side is to trust. Well, you trust your colleagues, knowing finally like yourself they are not trustworthy. You trust the method, knowing finally that you and I can crimp the methods. We trust the mission and then sometimes we even fog our own understanding of the mission. Finally, we trust in being itself. We trust in God, that is, the one that gives us the tensional struggle of creating polity in our time and the great life to be lived today.

I have been speaking with passion. That's fine, but if I have been speaking like I have got anything wrapped up, that is not what I meant to do at all, only describe the context of polity and tensional relationship going on. The great broad issues are going to take care of themselves. Because we are going at them constantly and mostly indirectly, in every situation moving and working with them, experimenting here, creating a tension there, wrestling and shoving and moving. In fact the very way we have ordered our council architecture and space for example, will indirectly tell us more about the polity dynamic than many lectures or discussions. Out of all this we can trust Being to bring off tomorrow the way Being is going to bring it off, and that is the way Being has always brought it off with his indescribable love for all creatures.

---Joseph Slicker



# REFLECTIONS ON POLITY

