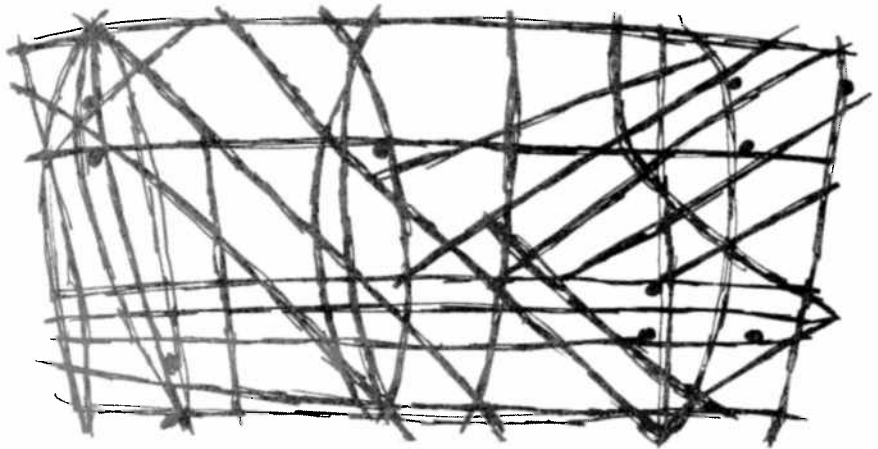


THE WAVES OF THE NEW SOCIAL VEHICLE

The Marshallese people have devised a fascinatingly unique method of navigation. As citizens of an ocean-nation, they were very aware that their lives, one way or another, had to do with the movement of the great waves of history. They called them the Great Waves of the Pacific. As they rocked up and down, and back and forth, riding the waves in outrigger canoes in a million miles of ocean, the people grasped patterns from the way the waves beat on their canoes.

"Stick Chart" of  
the Marshall Islands  
showing the pattern  
of waves between the  
dots (islands).



A Marshallese who really understands navigation can look down on the ocean from an airplane and know where the next island lies, just by observing the pattern of the waves. Using these patterns, the people are able to navigate between islands. In all of the water, the only thing that interrupts a wave coming from the east is an island. Only the islands make wave patterns. What are the islands and wave patterns in social demonstration that we must learn to read before long?

In the last few months, it has become tiresome to hear that we have a global economy. Two years ago, we felt we were standing out on a point saying, "global economy--all the goods of the earth belong to all the people." We were afraid to say that in LENS courses. Since the energy crisis, everyone knows this is true. The illustration goes something like, "There was a blow-up in the middle East, and the Arabs decided to take a new relationship to the world. Suddenly, I was waiting in line at the gas pumps." This illustrates a new self-consciousness that everyman's life is not shaped by psychological "warpedness" or how people treat us, but rather by the great waves of history. They shape the mood of the people and affect how people interact.

The New Social Vehicle is coming like a wave. Many of us thought we would bring it into being. But the New Social Vehicle is coming like the tidal wave in the "Poseidon Adventure"; fast and hard. There is nothing we can do to stop it. Our only freedom is in relating ourselves to that New Social Vehicle in whatever creative way we can. Standing where we are, we can attempt to alter, bend and bring human form to the new society. That free deed is Social Demonstration.

Three things are foundational to the emergence of a New Social Vehicle. First, it has fundamentally to do with an alteration in a group of people. The group suddenly sees itself just the same as all other people on the face of the globe. Secondly, the group's context, symbol system, or piety, changes through the death and recreation of its formal religion. Thirdly, new methods of operation are required. The patterns of action to get things done in the old social vehicle no longer work.

The collapse of old methods is the cause of vocational crisis in our time. It is the source of an unbelievable paralysis for people. Although one is aware that something radically new is coming into being, one finds himself participating day after day in the same old modes of action.

The Summit Conference on the Economy met to take radically new creative steps to deal with the world's economic crisis. However, they found themselves dealing with the same old analyses and solutions. In the Marshall Islands, we found people paralyzed by exactly the same victim image we found on the West Side.

Social demonstration attacks victimism. It takes a body of people and performs a miracle, a deed which the operating context of the old social vehicle says is utterly impossible. For example, it is "impossible" for a group of people to sit down on the West Side of Chicago or in the Marshall Islands and do anything significant. It is "impossible" to have decent preschool education without massive amounts of funding and a new building. On the West Side of Chicago, we built a preschool on a shoe-string. In Majuro, one drags a coconut log out into the village plaza and sits a teacher at one end and a student at the other, and Majuro has a demonstration preschool.

Several principles or patterns set the stage for creation of a chain of social demonstrations around the globe. The first fundamental pattern is that any social demonstration has to deal with all the earth and all of the people. That is, social demonstration does not mean having some unique situation, such as three times the normal funding, before anything is done. Globality means replicability anyplace, anytime. What we did on Majuro can be done in any aboriginal community anywhere across the face of the globe. Even the participants in the consult are interchangeable.

The second principle involves discerning the key point of paralysis. It is never found where it is easy to do something. It would be easy to plant violets in Oak Park, for example, and you might get a whole network of people to do so, but that is not the crucial sign. One looks for the place in society where people's sense of what has to be bent and shifted is so intensified, that these issues are focal points of anxiety and concern. One looks for the points of paralysis where it is obvious nothing can possibly happen.

Take decision-making. It is clear that there is no way for people in the United States to make a common decision to act. We cannot get together within the White House, Congress or our communities as Democrats or Republicans. Diverse elements in every part of the country cannot make common decisions. We see, however, that if common decision-making does not happen, the structures of society are going to collapse.

The Local Community Convocation or Town Meeting, is a social demonstration of people coming together to make common decisions. It is a revolutionary act, not a reforming act. It has nothing to do with solving a particular problem. In the Marshall Islands, everyone knows that the people need better housing--they live in rusty tin shacks. A social demonstration does not mean the creation of some kind of housing program to give the people a better place to live. The Social Demonstration in the Marshall Islands was that a forgotten body of people were turned around to where they understood themselves and could forge a new way to deal with their contradictions and problems, thus pioneering on behalf of the whole world.

You ought to see some of the people begin to grasp how the gifts of the Marshallese people are needed for the whole world and that, indeed, they are once again in charge. That begins to be a Social Demonstration, not just reform.

Social Demonstration, in creating something unique, elicits wonder and strikes at the profound. It has to do with welding a people back together by demonstrating possibility within the established structures. Transformation of a local school on the West Side of Chicago or in Majuro is a sign to local man that creation of the new is possible within the present situation.

In 1971, we analyzed the Social Processes in terms of future vision and contradictions, then developed 380 proposals to deal with the imbalances. We discovered that we only had to deal with nine arenas that were particularly critical. These are called the nine pressure points.

Inclusive Myths, the pressure point at the top of the social process triangle, involves the creation of story; the way people articulate to themselves what their lives are all about. The story that people live out of, and their attempts to identify themselves as a people, is the crux of a fundamental paralysis.

Then, to the right is Community Groupings, the process of giving significance to the patterns of human settlement, and forming the various groupings of people where action takes place. This is "primal community."

Basic Roles, the pressure point which involves the individual's participation in society through a role, is next. Advertisements in Time Magazine a decade ago, which featured successful businessmen apologizing to the younger generation for their participation in the establishment, illustrates this aspect of the social process.

The Guardian's consult is a demonstration of life, power and of taking radical responsibility for society in a way that has already dealt seriously with Basic Roles.

Communal Wisdom, and particularly Social Morality, has to do with the concept of responsibility. Man still operates out of the old concept of hierarchical obedience, taking responsibility when a superior tells him to do so. A new concept will emerge from a rearticulation of Social Morality.

Formal Methods provides the means for man to act out his responsibility. To tell a man he is responsible without the means to be so is sheer folly. The issue is how one enables the assembly line worker to act out his responsibility for the whole company.

There are three pressure points in the political arena. Knowledge Access, in Significant Engagement, provides access to the information which allows men to make significant decisions. One of the problems in Majuro is that the man who owns the biggest egg farm is running out of egg cartons. His only source of cartons has been those people who fly in from Hawaii, and happen to bring some back to Majuro. He does not have the Yellow Pages from San Francisco or Los Angeles to find out where to write for egg cartons. So, we are going to send him the Yellow Pages.

The second political pressure point is Bureaucratic Systems. It is the mechanism through which things get done. Bureaucratic systems were not invented to block action, but somehow the operating image has become confused.

Deliberative Systems, the third political pressure point, is the process of creating a consensus in society. In the past, by voting once a year, Americans formed the new consensus for society. Voting no longer works. The problem became clear in 1968. Voters found their choices at the polls had nothing to do with creating a consensus for the future of this nation. Watergate impressed upon us the need for new mechanisms whereby people can make the decisions which affect their lives.

Anticipated Needs, or the modes and methods of planning, is at the heart of the economic wave. The civilized world today demands demonstration directed at these nine pressure points. The Majuro consult was a radical demonstration simply because all nine points were pushed in ten days on the island in the following ways.

Inclusive Myths--The Marshallese have a new story. The first historical era for the Marshallese encompassed ancient times. A second period included rule by the Spanish, the Germans, the Japanese and the Americans; 500 years of continuous oppression. Now, their New Day Song states, "We are going into a third time. It's a time when we go back into the beginning, and yet it is the time of moving into the future." That is the new mythology of the Marshallese people.

Community Groupings--A group of people (those key businessmen), grasped themselves in a whole new way, caring for society.

We transformed Basic Roles through the work we did with elders. The transformation occurred not in giving significance to that phase, but in giving new power to the people who possess the memory of society.

Knowledge Access--All the expertise in building, refrigeration, and oceanography, just overwhelmed those people.

Bureaucratic Systems--We left a list of 21 miracles that Majuro could do without waiting for the bureaucratic wheels to turn. We are breaking loose the image that local man can do something in society.

Deliberative Systems--We engaged in that process of bringing forth consensus by talking to people and grasping underneath what they would like to see happen. In Majuro, the people want to see themselves as a unique body, and yet, sense the need to move into the 20th Century.

Social Morality--The Marshallese were able to experience responsibility in society through struggling with an inclusive operating model or vision.

Formal Methods--The people received systematic exposure to the problem-solving, corporate and motivational methods as a secondary effect of the consult. These formal methods were grounded in the Marshallese heritage through the stick chart, the land holding system, and in their singing.

Anticipated Needs--This was the pressure point stressed above all the rest, in the consult. There is now a plan and a practical vision in the Marshall Islands.

Social demonstration must be directed towards the nine pressure points. We must find ways on behalf of the whole world to create demonstrations uniquely within each of those nine.

The Local Church Experiment is one such demonstration. The Bicentennial Demonstration is the wave of the future. It was shocking to realize that the Lord had collapsed half the governments of the West through last winter. We had to comprehend that the Local Community Convocation is not some interesting device to recruit people to courses. It is a radical social demonstration. It provides an opportunity to tell the U.S. that, relative to Deliberative Systems, we are at a critical point.

Why did God decide to have the LCC initiated at the time of this nation's 200th birthday, and at a time when governments are called out of being? This coincidence is related to our response in history. How do we give our 20 years of insights on decision-making to the world? If the Bicentennial is not the vehicle, then what is? Finding and using that vehicle is a radical social demonstration.

Social demonstration in terms of the 5th City presuppositions has the dimension of reduplicability. Our pilot demonstration is 5th City. Reduplication was crucial in Majuro. We knew that you couldn't deal with Majuro unless you dealt with all the Marshall Islands. Everything we built was a pilot model, being reduplicated in Jaluit, Ebon, and around the islands.

Social demonstration must deal with all the people and focus upon the people who are the most hopeless, the most left out. It has to deal with the depth problem. It has to perform radical change. It has to break loose not only new modes of action but a whole new context of understanding what life is about. The pressure point is creating a symbol that nails down that new future for people.

This is a time of social demonstration. For whatever reason, we as a body of people have a unique opportunity to serve the world. As the people who have a global network, we can talk very practically about having social demonstration all around the globe.

New consults are indicated by the waves of the future. We articulated a practical operating vision in 10 days in the Marshall Islands. This task alone took three or four years in 5th City. We felt the burden of standing on nothing and taking part in a raw invention. Yet the recovery of vocation, the sense of wonder, the fun that the Majuro consult released, was unbelievable.

Many colleagues are planning to go to Majuro. One business student, with rudimentary bookkeeping skills, received a scholarship for a work-study program on Majuro to help businesses get back on their feet.

The man in charge of Montgomery Ward's correspondence course in refrigeration offered to send a kit to Majuro, complete with refrigeration unit, tools to fix it, gas to run it, and everything else necessary.

This type of response shows the Majuro people that we, as Western people, can take what we have developed, in many ways at the expense of the rest of the world, and give it away, not on our behalf, but on behalf of the rest of the world.

Our fact is clear about this stick chart. It will not be too long before the Marshallese people do consults in the United States about what you do when life is suddenly being rocked up and down. They will tell us that you do not run to a psychiatrist because your life is being shaken by the great waves of history. They have discovered that when life is in turmoil, you do not collapse. Instead, your life is given new direction. It will be a great day, when that kind of globality happens.

--James Wiegel

