

CONVERGENCE OF THE CAMPAIGNS

Tonight begins a series of four campaign talks which focus on the programmatic dimension of what we are doing. Through the next week and a half, these evening talks will alternate with talks on the Way. Tonight's topic is "Convergence" which relates to our work this summer--the Convergence of the Campaigns. Our work across the globe finally has to do with the practicality of "The Way" or the engagement of the people of the Way in the social task of our time. This is an important summer which I believe will be seen in the future as a watershed or a time of transition. That watershed, for me, is marked by two major events.

The first is the second anniversary of the launching of the 24 original social demonstration projects around the world. The youngest of the projects is now two years old. That is a watershed, because after two years in any project a totally new question is raised about the future of that project and the global band of demonstration projects. We are dealing with that question this summer. The other watershed event relates to Town Meeting. Last year at this time we had completed the demonstration phase of Town Meetings in the United States and Canada, having held at least one Town Meeting in every county. This year a number of nations around the world including those in Europe and Australia have witnessed the same transrational geographic coverage. That is a watershed. I believe that never again will we find ourselves doing Town Meetings in quite the same fashion as we did over the last several years. The demonstration phase is over. We are now firmly into the saturation phase of impact, whether we are in a country that has had a lot of Town Meetings or one that has had very few Town Meetings. We are all doing saturation and that is a watershed.

Tonight, I want to talk primarily about the awakenment and engagement campaigns as they move toward a point of convergence. I would ask us to hold in brackets, for the time being, the question of the third campaign, although that is an important concern in our work this summer. John Dunne, in his book The Way of All the Earth, refers to an "atrocious enterprise" to which man commits himself and makes as irrevocable as the past. This term "atrocious enterprise" hit a responsive chord in my being until I realized the word "atrocious" was a strange term to use to describe a project oriented to the future. When I checked the dictionary I decided that Dunne must have meant "awful" or "dreadful." In other words, it is the "awe-filled" and "dread-filled" enterprise we have set out upon which determines where it is our future will be spent. We have decided that the one great task of history at this moment is to release the human factor in two million villages around this world. If that is not an enterprise which fills you with awe and dread then you are still asleep. We have taken two approaches to this task which we call campaigns; one has to do with impact, the other with demonstration.

The impact campaign is an immense series of events held in communities around the world which are designed to awaken people to their own human potential and to release that potential in the building of new community. That is our number one task. It is the task of birthing hope. It is also our first global priority. Anything and everything we do is evaluated in the context of that task. The demonstration campaign deals with a series of Human Development Projects

which are intended to serve as signs of concrete social possibility. They demonstrate that the poorest people are capable of transforming their own particular community. However, remember these projects, no matter what their number, are demonstrations for the sake of impact. The projects are tools for doing the primary task of human awakening. We could never have two million projects, but it is historically possible to envision two million awakened villages around the world. Nor is replication what we are all about. Every opportunity for replication can finally be evaluated only in the context of awakening every village. We do replication only when it is required in order to proceed rapidly and broadly with the task of impact and awakening.

In the midst of both campaigns are two dynamics represented in the summer symbol: "awakening" and "engagement". That symbol is doing an imaginal job on us. What we have discovered is that awakening and engagement happen in the midst of both campaigns. If you do a demonstration project in a particular village, awakening occurs first in that village and then the awakening spreads out from that village. On the other hand, if you hold a good town meeting engagement happens as a direct result of that town meeting. Awakening and engagement happen in both of the campaigns. They are both necessary to humanness.

The campaigns finally have one objective: the human revitalization of every particular piece of geography. That means working to transform the social structures in such a way that human life is renewed and the human factor is released. We are moving on the track of impact and the track of demonstration toward one goal.

It has been suggested that we should use the word "confluence" instead of "convergence". Again we went to the dictionary. Convergence is the movement of two things toward the same point. Confluence is the arrival of two things at that point when they flow together and become one. Think of two great rivers moving toward a convergent point. When they reach the convergent point and become one river confluence takes place. The time of confluence is not here yet. We are still on the track of convergence. At some point in the future, we will be able to apply the term confluence to our campaigns and then we will have a new day on our hands. And our basic programming will change.

We have been engaged in the campaign of impacting the world for several years. In the midst of pursuing that campaign the world has changed before our very eyes. We all know that and have described it many ways. The manifest contradiction of communities around the world is very different these days from what it was two, four or 10 years ago. One way to describe that difference is to say that "the victim image has died." There has occurred a new birth of determination to be locally self-reliant. People sense they must stand on their own two feet and take responsibility for their own destiny. If that is the case the real issue is the creation and provision of methods to enable that new responsibility to be enacted. It is exactly at that point of manifest contradiction that the impact campaign is beginning to zero in. We have begun to experience a change in the objective that we set before ourselves in the impact campaign. There was a time, some years ago, when it was really fine after a weekend event to report that we had awakened five people. We would write their names on a piece of paper and turn them into the office that maintained the mailing list of awakened people. In those days the challenge was to break through wherever we could on a one-to-one basis in order to change human life. These days, when we go out to do a town meeting campaign we face the possibility of transforming a whole community with just one event. If you do not believe that you should have been in Mississippi two weeks ago and heard those

people talk about how a town meeting attended by anywhere from one to ten percent of the population had in fact changed their whole community. Perhaps on such occasions we begin to get a small hint of the ability of the impact campaign to transform whole districts, states and nations.

The myth factor has begun to become more prominent these days. If you grasp the stories, symbols, songs and celebrations out of which people live, and if you get those transposed toward the future, a power is released that does, in fact, transform the whole society which stands before those symbols. The banner which states, "Mississippi is Leading the Way" is a direct assault on the myth factor that holds that State in being. It points to a genuine change that is going on across the whole State. One of these days when you take a trip through Mississippi there will not be one community that you can stop in but what you will hear somebody say, "Did you know that Mississippi is leading the way?" Now that is the power of the myth factor to transform the communities, districts, states and nations in which we live and work. It is a matter, also, of transforming the structural relationships that sustain human life in every community--the economic, political, and social.

There has been a new discovery about the contentless-ness of those forums that we do all over the world. The Town Meeting is not a content-filled forum. It is empty! It is a zero. It is a nothing! And the content that fills that method is the content of the local community where you work and the content of the people that participate in that forum. Therefore, those forums have built within them the ability to focus in on the particular contradiction of the nation or the community and to accentuate the trends that are shaping the future of that nation. We are learning that the only thing that is constant in our work is our method. That is the foundation, that is the key, and that is all we are about: the method. You trust local man to provide the content. All we do is provide the method whereby the content of that community can be externalized, related to, interpreted and then used as the basis for deciding what the future requires. Therefore, we are discovering that we can be quite flexible in our implementation of the programmatic tools that we have. We are learning what it means to be flexible in focus while constant in method. And that is the key to the future.

One of the most impressive things about the Mississippi campaign is that set of letters received from mayors, local community leaders, and people all over the State addressed to the Governor's Office of Citizen Participation, telling about the town meetings. In about 75% of the letters the writer testifies to the high quality of leadership. That said to me that many of us across the globe have learned to get inside the methods so that the issues, problems and contradictions of a local community are genuinely addressed. The variations and the flexibility required by the situation are, therefore, no longer an issue. They are, in fact, the promise that community has for us.

In doing the impact campaign, another thing has become apparent. In one community after another doing the forum is like shoving your fist through the middle of that community with one great impact; then we pull the fist out and go away. It has become apparent in many communities that the fist hit exactly the right pressure point. That spot begins to swell and bulges appear all over the state or the nation. These bulges are the towns that have not only been awakened but have decided to take their proposals seriously and have started to transform the community as a result of this single impact event. As we hear about what has happened in towns across Mississippi, we see demonstration communities emerging. Convergence is getting close to confluence when that begins to happen.

Now let us look at the campaign that demonstrates the power of local people to renew their community on behalf of all of history. We have used the term primal community. Every year that term becomes more appropriate. It is incredible how the hope of the world is rapidly turning away from macro, national and state structures to local communities. People know that whatever is going to happen in the future is going to happen first in their local communities. There is now a hunger for quality community. Whatever community I live in, I want it to be a human community. I want it to be a place in which I am proud to be located, one to which I would be pleased to invite others to come and be a part. Because the hunger for primal community is abroad in this world, any community sends out ripples when it demonstrates that it is struggling and striving towards a new quality of human life which releases the human factor. We have seen news clippings from all over the world. The reports that have been written about these demonstration communities are amazing. When those reports are released they send out ripples. People regain hope simply hearing that other communities are rebuilding their structures. I have seen that happen very graphically this year in Korea as a result of just two projects. A television station did a 30 minute program on Kuh Du E Ri Human Development Project. The Saemaul Undong magazine did a four page article about Kuh Du E Ri. Ripples are created when that happens. At the assembly in Mississippi two young men from Delta Pace showed slides about the transformation of that town. It was a very fine slide show and they had written the script that goes with it. At one point one slide showed a broken down building - the old post office - an interior shot and an exterior photo. The next picture showed that building transformed into a model pre-school which is now one of the best in the State of Mississippi. All across that huge crowd of 500 people there was an audible gasp. That ripple which was released by one community and moved across the whole state was a great illustration of how people are hungry to see similar things happen in their own communities.

The key to that, of course, is the dynamic through which every one of these communities is a community committed to service. The understanding that these demonstration communities must move out to inspire and catalyze other communities is precisely on target. That is the point of demonstrations in the first place. Global social demonstrations are not community development projects. Built into the self understanding of a human development project from the outset is the need to turn outward and to act on behalf of the whole world. In fact, the harsh judgement of history is that any project community that does not turn outward to others will be written off and thrown into the trash can of history.

We had a great visit with some of our Korean colleagues this winter in Kuh Du E Ri. One night we held a meeting attended by 50-60 village residents. We asked them how many would be willing to leave their farms for a period of a month, six weeks, or three months to work with villages in India to share with them what they knew about developing a community. About 12 men stuck their fist up in the air. "We'll go!" We said, "But wait, you do not understand. There is not very much rice in India and you will probably be hungry." They said, "We will go." We added, "But you need to know, there is no kimchi." They continued to thunder, "We will go!" That kind of spirit of turning outward in service to the world is exactly what is meant by communities working on behalf of the world.

The term repository has been used to describe the resources that are available in a nation, a broad geographic region, or the more immediate region, that are needed by a particular village for its renewal. I want to suggest that we re-orient our thinking about the repository. We are beginning to understand that the first repository is the village itself. This is the primal repository. It is what that village knows about local life and transforming its economy, social relations and education that represents the most important set of resources and tools in the world today. The first level of repository is the awakened, engaged village moving out to other villages. The second level of repository is the guardian network that immediately surrounds a demonstration village. The third level of repository is comprised of the resources of the nation at large.

When today you ask certain basic questions about human development projects you get different answers than you once did. For example, when we first asked, "How do we decide to initiate a human development project?", we said that a band of twenty-four projects was needed around the world, one in each of the twenty-four time zones. These days our answer is that in the geography of a nation or an area a demonstration project is necessary in order that a project enable the whole task that is going on in that geography. As you begin to swirl that value you get a different answer to this same question. If you ask the question, "What are the criteria or the values in choosing a project community?", you get a different answer as well. Now the answer relates to locating a project as a reinforcement for the impact campaign. Last year, when the US12 were initiated we drew 12 big circles on the map of the United States in such a way that those circles more or less covered the whole geography of the country. The brochure said, "Within a few hours drive of anybody who lives in this country there will be a demonstration project." Then we looked for a potential demonstration community somewhere close to the center of that circle. That is a whole different way of approaching site selection than we have had in the past. Today these projects are fulfilling a broader kind of role in our total effort. How do we evaluate projects these days? There is a certain set of questions or evaluative criteria that are used in the initiation phase, and a different set applied to a project that has been in actuation for two years or three years. One set of criteria might be the five pillars of a mature social demonstration community: the stakes in operation; the guilds functioning; a quarterly community town meeting; regular work days; and on-going training in leadership methods. Still another question is, "How do you phase the development of a project?" In our first projects we concentrated on the one small community for an extended period of time. Now we start a project and within a very few months that project is out doing town meetings in other communities.

Here is where convergence happens; demonstration is necessary to impact. Demonstration is the localized credibility that allows the impact campaign to proceed. It may well be that in the future the kind of demonstration that gives credibility to impact will take multiple forms. For example, in Japan the Matsui company has been working with our colleagues to do some town meetings in a company town west of Osaka. If that work over the next few months in cooperation with the company and the city government is a successful demonstration it will give credibility to the town meeting campaign across the whole nation. That, and other forms of localized credibility will come into being in time.

My last point is simply called "movementalizing." Perhaps we are really pointing to the third campaign when we talk about convergence for the focus is finally on the task of movementalizing any particular piece of geography. We are moving toward a new relationship with the world, one characterized by the

term "massiveness". We have used the term "mass impact" before. At the moment, however, the word "massiveness" seems more appropriate. We are leaping to the kind of massiveness that will, in fact, catalyze social transformation in whole nations, states and communities. We have talked for a long time about structural revolution, or working through the structures of society instead of standing as the disestablishment over against them. But do you know what structural revolution means finally? Structural revolution means revolutionizing the structures. When that begins to happen then something new is going on quite beyond what has been done before. The primary concern is not whether 10,000 or 100,000 impact events get done in a nation. We are interested, rather, that the structures which create this entity are themselves revolutionized to the point where the relationships between people and their community, between community and community, between community and local government, between local governments and the state, between private and public sectors are being changed towards an enlightened focus on the local.

The task of framing these days is also different. At one point the purpose of framing was to ensure that the guardians surrounding your work stood as a protective guard. That was defensive framing. Framing today has become operational or offensive. We talk to people in networks, political entities, or institutions in the interest of enlisting them as allies, advocates and advisors who will, in fact, work to release the human factor. That is different. We are enlisting these people to enable the transformation of human society. In Japan the educational network is strong and reaches from the national ministry to every locality across the country. In that national ministry there is a subdivision called social education. This division is charged with working with the volunteer groups involved in citizen education, citizen participation and related activities. That is a network. Doing Japan may very well involve that network in doing Japan. To frame that network requires enabling those involved, out of their own decision and for their own programmatic purposes, to see the possibility of the human factor being released in their work.

We are now moving toward confluence and it is our revolutionary task. For the time being we will hold the two campaigns imaginably separate for strategic reasons. When you have two campaigns you can play one off over against the other. The tension keeps things moving and alive, and that is good. Any leader knows it is good to maintain creative tension within the campaigns. The job of everyone in this room is to learn to orchestrate the total movemental task in his or her particular geography. As I listened to the reports about Mactan and India I knew my colleagues there were doing the same thing I have been doing in my geography, yet what they were describing was so far removed from what I was concretely doing that it seemed as if they were talking from another world. However, they are my colleagues doing the same task that I am doing. It is a question of orchestrating the campaign within the given situation, in order to achieve the one task. That orchestration is going to look different from place to place around the world. There is an urgency in learning how to make those strategic decisions, to stay free to move and to move by strategy rather than by immediacy. When we get to confluence I hope somebody will let us know. When we move towards the point where the two campaigns become one we will see awakened society - an awakened city, an awakened state, an awakened nation. We will see we have arrived at the point of confluence and must undergo a new mutation of our program in order to deal with the new situation that has been created in society.