

JOE MATHEWS' COMMENTS FOLLOWING PSU REPORT ON THE REGION
December Plenary, 1969

Gene was extremely helpful, in that if what he has here on the board in principle isn't what is going on, you haven't got any region, no matter how you do it. What I fear is the architectonic approach that he's made here, which on the one hand makes unavoidable the monolithic system; on the other hand makes impossible the insight that the local congregation is in no wise a part of nothing—and it seems to me that these are two basic presuppositions without which we don't even know where we're going. If the local congregation becomes a miniature of something larger than itself, then it's not right. Now, the business of the triangles—you're far too late for that question. You should have come twenty years ago. For in the broad abstract that gives us the triangles here, there's much against, I suppose, the instincts of everybody in the room; for this was highly intellectual, and you go to the social, but then if you think of the intellectual in relationship to the social, it takes care of that problem, but that's crucial, I think, to see. We've tried to work more before on this. In high abstraction you have you have your knowing, doing, and being. Now, the way you check yourself is, on every level there's a correct relationship to this abstraction. That avoids the architectonic system. I want to repeat that. This is God, you see. There has to be a direct and independent relationship with God and the local congregation. And then there has to be a direct and utterly unique and independent relationship with God and the region. And they're not the same. And how you get this clear sociologically, I'm not sure. And I'm not sure of all of this, but for a long time my mind has gone this way, and it holds the value Gene was pointing to and also what's in that document is fairly close to this, in principle at least, but that's a damned hard thing to get your mind around. I suppose the rest of you have found that to be true.

Now there's no doubt but what sociologically you have your training institute, but think of that as a dynamic; and you have your action centrum—and that's a horrible name. But think of that as a dynamic and not as an institution; and your religious house as a dynamic. Now when you begin to think that way, you've got to write the word "nothing" here. Now relative to some other value your local congregation is nothing, but relative to your local congregation this is nothing. And it's got to be nothing—period. Otherwise it's not going to play that dynamic role that insures that the global computer is programmed by the grass roots and to be the guardian of the flow from that community in relationship to the global. Therefore it's nothing. It's really catalysis, or the catalytic agent. Now if you think that fundamentally you have formulation, re-education, and remotivation. These are the—and you were going to do your dynamics here. By golly it was easy to do that universal church, and that was not the local congregation we did. Don't ever get that mixed up. That's easy to do this in relative abstraction. You come to this concretion, that dynamical sociology—it's extremely difficult. But the key this way, to use our jargonese, is remotivation, respiritualization if we can dare use that term, is what you mean. And so here. And so here. And since you start with your triangularity, you also have to have an essentialistic category on each side of this. But this is your final category that determines your whole triangle in terms of your dynamic relationships. Now, if this is nothing, in the sense that it enables—I'm going to call this the local for a moment—it enables the local, the only way it can enable that local is not to be a reproduction of it, I want to insist. Now you've got an education job, you've got three kinds of an education job going on if you're going to enable this over here. One is radical education—that's RS-I and basic theological et cetera. But you've got another kind of education—we're just beginning to build the curriculum there—and that's the new religious mode, or spiritual nurture, which over here is fundamentally at that point, as you can see. And then here, your education—and we have just barely started—this is your permeation curriculum that's got to go on here. Just think if you were the New England region, you'd have to be responsible for reeducating every mind in the new social vehicle. And that's all that permeation courses would really be about. Now then you've got that complex. We call that penetration. But in the larger sense of penetration. But when you take penetration and put it to what I want to call the practical,—I don't like that word here—that this radical re-education is the most hard-headed course recruitment program you've ever imagined. That's the action part of this. And here you have education, action, and nurture, or else you're wrong here, you're not relating to God, or to your master abstract triangle. Now then, let's go to the second one because it's easier.

That's these three top here. Obviously this is social permeation. And if you break that down to the next level, I'm not sure what you have. But what we call permeation that we haven't even started, really, here is fundamentally going to involve the region in a deep way, both in terms of the master (note: relevant triangles are in Regional PSU report. --Eds.)

consult construct and then in terms of the guild construct. Now I want to come back to this for a moment. That's the practical side of where this kind of practical penetration is here. Over here, why your task is cadre creation or formation—don't get that mixed up with formulation. Cadre formation—you've got to see to it that a cadre, if you've in the region, is in every last local church. Not only are they broken loose, but this educational complex, but they are actually organized into cadres. And here's where our return to the local congregation is going to have to hit hard. And those of you who will remember our collegium of a few weeks ago saw that one of the basic prerequisites for the reentry of the local congregation was that they had to be located adjacent to a religious house. This is why that finally throughout the whole region they're gonna have to be taking care of cadres. That's the concrete practical action here, as the recruitment of courses is the concrete practical action there, and this permeation of the public school system and of the business and the legal and the social workers, et cetera, on the regional level. Now, this has always been sort of the hardest for me. Obviously it's faculty training there—I mean obvious to me, I don't ask you to agree with that. This one is a bit of a problem—I've got leadership development there, I don't like it. The one that I often replace it with is local guild nurture. And maybe that's what it should be, I'm not sure. And then here, I don't like my word, but I'm pretty clear on it, this is where the religious house, the monk-a-month, the monk-a-year, constantly is developing spiritual giants—I don't think of them in terms of the local congregation, but that's the way they're going to operate—they're going to be spiritual giants in the region, that once you get one of these giants, his power is going to go forth far beyond his local parish. Well, I just think in terms of the spiritual movements of the past, that a giant, Gautama, was born in that little town in the southern part of Nepal, and I forget the name of it, and he was local in that way, or he was local to India, and WHAM!--the power went out. And so it's gonna be with every giant, spiritual giant, that you create in that religious house—you could use better illustrations than that. But this is the respiritualization or the remotivation—to use a more secular language. Now in one thing there isn't a damn thing exists there. Just nothing. But a fantastic goingness. Now where I would like this group to work, but I don't blame them for not doing it, is then in the broad sense your polity construct. Well what is that? Is it a council? Is it a faculty? Is it a—what's another thing, Gene?

It's almost as if—and remember in dynamical sociology you've inverted from structures have a dynamic to dynamics have a structure—the structure is the means and not the end in dynamical sociology, so that here's just one blazing fire of dynamics, here and here. But even that doesn't get at it. The interrelationship of that is just all hell itself broken loose, a volcano of power and force. And then you've got some damn little silly assinine puny structure in here. This is the nose cone. One day we've got to get to this, but this is so acute relative to our own situation that the fact that it isn't there now wouldn't surprise anybody. Now I've just jumped off of here what Gene was pointing to. He's right! That, by golly, this has to relate to what's going in the local congregation, but its direct relationship is to God. Its relationship to the local congregation is, how can it adequately feed and nurture and sustain and develop and mature the local congregation which increasingly, I'm believing, is the only reality that you can ever point to with the term "People of God." Just that local. Everything else is for the sake of that.

Fred Buss: Well now, say again how it is that the knowing, doing, being arrangement makes that a nothing relative to the localis?

Sometimes I say it this way to myself: three people could do that, just three people. But those three people have every spirit man in that region organized to do it. That's one way I talk to myself about it. And then another way I talk to myself about it is that the local church has to be very highly structured. This has to be very loose and fluid. Otherwise this will gobble up this. And you'll have simply spiritual aristocracy.

Carlos Zervigon: Doesn't that have something with the geography of it? I mean the local is grounded in geography, although it has to take on new kind of structures to get out of geography. Its the kind of thing that what a congregation, cadre, and parish are made no sense when you get out of geography.

He hit on a very crucial point. You see, we always call this the region. Hell, it's not the region, even though I hate this word, I'll use it: this is the regionalis. It may have the form of the micro, it may have the form of the macro, it may have the form of the metro, it may have the form of the region, it may have the form of the area, it may have the form of the continent, it may have the form of the sphere. Anything short of the global. Therefore it is never primarily geography. Geography comes into it, but, it's never primarily geography. Where I'd want to insist that geography is a primary category for the local.