

CHAPTER II

EARTH TREMORS

Frontiers and Futures

Since time immemorial the crossing of frontiers has fascinated and frustrated the human race. Frontiers come in many forms. They can be geographic, economic, political, social, religious, racial and biological. In each case the crossing has expanded the world. Our 19th century ancestors were more prodigious than most in this pursuit. They pushed eagerly into new areas of habitation and learning, colonizing the last outposts of the planet and stripping away the "off limits" restrictions of all things sacred and mundane. This momentum was accelerated in the 20th century achieving results in technological invention and space exploration that would have stunned even a Jules Verne of the preceding century. The 20th century was greeted with unabated expectation and hope and its achievements have not been unimpressive. But at the pinnacle of frontier crossing when even the bonds of earth's gravity have been transcended the expected euphoria has been strangely absent.

Today the descendants of these frontier crossers find themselves in a very different mood despite all the "progress." They are afraid of the future. To continue headlong across the frontier at the same relentless pace produces apocalyptic scenarios in the minds of many. Exploration has been oriented to the higher, faster, newer, larger and more complex. The accumulative effect has been to take us farther and farther from the simple, the ordinary and the primary. At the moment we enter outer space and "feel at home" there, we feel less "at home" on earth. In fact, the domestic worlds of primary relationships have been neglected so long that they now represent the new frontiers of exploration. The time has come to turn our energy to what is behind and beneath, to foundations neglected and in disrepair like abandoned mines beneath the city. The collapse of our society will not be like the toppling of the Gothic arch, an engineering challenge that persistent efforts finally overcame. The collapse of modern society will be more like a cave-in caused by the giving way of the foundations. Such ominous rumblings are already being experienced. The places where they are felt vary, but a consensus is growing that something is wrong in the foundations. The exploration of the unknown lured our ancestors into exciting adventures but today exploring the familiar and discovering its defects demands the attention of today's pioneers.

Many believe that we have reached our limits and the boundary lines are not frontiers to be crossed but barriers, warning signs, to turn us back to explore what is wrong within our own environs. Not every boundary has to be crossed. If we are weary and wary of the future, that may be a signal that our existing systems are overburdened and that the time has come not to leave our present situation for new territories but remain and at least repair what we have damaged before moving on. The overtaking of people and institutions can be seen everywhere: in the professions, social movements, economic systems, political life, government, and individuals and even in nature herself. A whole litany could be recounted here. Two examples will suffice:

Built to the wrong scale, unable to deal adequately with transnational problems, unable to deal with interrelated problems, unable to keep up with the accelerative drive, unable to cope with the high levels of diversity, the overloaded, obsolete political technology of the industrial age is breaking up under our very eyes.¹

If I see things correctly, we are now living within the final phase, which is also the transitional phase, of an historical period. Precisely because this period is approaching its end, it can be understood, grasped, and characterized as a totality. It is that historical period which was shaped - in an extremely complex causal interplay of course - by the Reformation and the bourgeois Enlightenment, and which we can, therefore, call the period of Bourgeois society.²

Looking Back and Beneath

These quotes represent sentiments that come from within the Western experience. It would not have been difficult to have selected even harsher judgments from the "Third" and "Fourth" worlds. The rumblings in the foundations are being felt inside our own households. Whether one uses the language of "Post-Industrial," "Post-Bourgeois," "Post-Objective," "Post-Professional," "Post-Familial," "Post-Synthetic," "Post-Male," etc. it is clear that these authors agree that the present arrangements are not healthy. Such language threatens the established order for it shakes foundations that are already insecure. The critics are calling for a basic change in principles, priorities and practices. They challenge us to remember in different ways older and more holistic visions that see the connection of things and that appreciate the organic processes of indigenous growth and development. We shall take up these themes in detail in the following pages making as an overall case the need to shift from the top to the base and from the future to the past: in short to what lies beneath and behind.

The term, "post," suggests that we are moving out of an epoch. That is inevitable in the historical development of living things. But merely crossing the frontier to escape a world we have created ourselves, is not the answer. In a new place or in a different time the same destructive practices will continue. The past cannot be forgotten, indeed must not be forgotten. When it is, we are led into a continuing crisis. What might yet save us is to remember what lies beneath us and behind us. We may then be able to face what lies immediately around us and ahead of us. The beneath and behind are foundational. They provide the base for building in the present for the future. We are the Post Auschwitz, Post Viet Nam, Post Hiroshima, Post Selma generation not in the sense that we must forget these events, but in the sense that we must remember their lessons and move beyond them. We cannot continue as though they never happened, for that would be to guarantee that they would occur again. The frightening prospect is that each time the stakes are likely to be raised. A major thrust of this book is to argue that we have neglected and devalued the very foundations whose corrective powers can redress the imbalances. The imbalances manifest themselves in the exploitation of the "haves" over the "have nots", in the violation of human rights, in torture, in racism, in sexism, in ageism and other patterns of pathological behavior.

The approach of this volume in exploring the importance of basic community, therefore, will at first be downward and backward and then forward. We will examine the underside of human community to try to understand its origins and nature. This is a very deliberate choice. It is based on an old adage, collaborated by many years of experience in studying the breakdown and the rebuilding of community, that the only thing you start from the top is digging a hole in the ground. Everything else is from the bottom up. We are all earth bound, dust-to-dust creatures. We are part of the soil. "Soil care" is intimately connected with community care and developing a caring community. To assume that we can be spectators viewing the human scene from some lofty vantage point, or that can be disembodied spirits unattached to time and place realities of our land and people, is to succumb to a dangerous illusion. Our structures of reinforced steel may rise to impressive heights, but they are still earth-bound. And they are made from earth's elements. Furthermore, not all progress occurs above ground. Growth requires times for lying

fallow, times for turning over the soil and allowing its own healing and restorative capacities to function. Chemical additives to force growth eventually exhaust the soil, and heavier machinery to increase production only make the soil more compact. Nature's own economy is forcing us to change.

(The) natural economy, ultimately, will determine whether we live or die and whether, enroute to survival or extinction, we will manage to maintain social and political forms that are compatible with the real and natural world . . . The natural economy, in the end, will determine the relationship among our three human economies (household, collective, market).³

"I have seen my village die," said the old pastor, not so much with bitterness as with a deep sadness. He had not spoken up to that point during the meeting of clergy in Leipzig where Ruth and I met with them to learn about their struggles to care for their communities. He was about to retire, he explained, having spent most of his professional life in three small villages. He continued to explain, "One village has disappeared altogether because it sat on a rich soft coal vein. Only a big hole remains there now. A second village is slated for destruction for the same reason. It is mostly deserted and houses only vagrants. The village has become so violent that no one dares to walk through it anymore." For years he had cultivated the growth of human relationships but now as he retired no fruits seemed to remain. His was a sad parable of sacrificing the small in favor of the large in an age dominated by scientific bureaucracy.

Especially since the end of World War Two, science, as a profession, has become big, official, capital intensive and bureaucratic. Which is to say, its heroic age has ended. The day of the great lone wolves, embattled heretics and outsiders - the Faradays, the Galileos, the Pasteurs toiling away in modest laboratories and private garrets with make-shift instruments - is at least two generations behind us . . . Bigness, thickly structured professionalism, and government-corporation subvention have become indispensable to progress. . . . It has forfeited its human scale and that is a grave loss. It means that science too joins in the ethos of impersonal gigantisms, which is among the most oppressive features of our Kafkaesque modern world.⁴

Among the fears that are being aroused by the earth tremors felt throughout the whole superstructure is the fear of displacement. For Americans this fear takes the form of the anxiety that USA may no longer be Number One in the world. This is the fear of losing what one have or can control. Most of the world, i.e. the "Two Thirds World" no longer will tolerate the burden placed on them to keep the other third of the world rich and secure. The "haves" are being threatened and in turn are becoming increasingly defensive. The quick and massive movements of troops to the Gulf in 1990 are but one symptom of a deeply insecure people. Growing military budgets, increased concern for institutional maintenance, more and more self-indulgence are all evidence of a defensive mentality. And the tremors from the ground beneath only add to this growing insecurity. These warning signals are not only external but also internal. They represent neglected truths from our own root systems. One example of this earth tremor in religious establishment is the rediscovery at the base of the "people's church".

Something with earthquake potential has been rumbling through the Roman Catholic world for a generation now. Some dangerous things are being remembered: that all baptized women and men are responsible for the life of the Christian community; that all social structures - intimate ones and immense ones, civil ones and ecclesial ones - are put under requirement by the Gospel; that the world truly can be reconstructed into the kingdom of God; that the reconstructions are glorious after the pain, doubt, fear and

struggle, but not during the remaking. These are dangerous memories, and they are shaking some foundations.⁵

Efforts to ignore or drown out these disturbing signals from beneath will only make things worse. Listening and responding is an alternative response and one that can uncover surprising resources as illustrated from the following story. The event described below took place at a church convention that I attended shortly after returning from a two-year assignment overseas on peace and human rights.

"I have been displaced too!"

"Oh, oh," I said to Paul Boe, sitting to my right, "Now it finally comes!" We were both attending the convention of the American Lutheran Church. It was September, 1974 and the issue of the "armed uprising" of the Indians in Wounded Knee, South Dakota was still in the minds of the delegates. Representatives of the American Indian Movement had requested time at the convention to make a report. National funds of the church had been given to them two years earlier to help them bring their concerns to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. They had done this through a "march" to the East coast called the "Trail of Tears March" which recalled the terrible forced march of Indians a century earlier from the East coast to what is now Oklahoma. Lutheran money and the hospitality of Lutheran colleges and institutions had facilitated this march. In Washington D.C. the marchers had taken over the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to force a dialogue with the authorities. It had been an embarrassment to many leaders of the Lutheran Church and efforts had been underway at Detroit for several days to keep them off the platform. Eventually a compromise was reached and an unofficial session was allowed for the American Indian Movement to make its report, but only after a long day of business. It may have been expected that most delegates would choose not to remain weary from a heavy day's work and wary of the confrontation. But very few left. The Indians faced a large audience.

My comment to Paul Boe had been triggered by a shout from the back of the auditorium by a person who had identified himself as a farmer from North Dakota and asked to be heard. The discussion from the floor had followed an eloquent presentation by the representatives of the American Indian Movement. Among the speakers was a member of the jury from the trial in St. Paul of the Indian leaders from Wounded Knee. The jury had been selected with great care to find as many politically neutral people as possible. I suspect that being a member of the PTA might have disqualified you from the jury. At the end of the trial it became a "hung jury" for they could not agree. After nine months of testimony that had their consciousness raised to a point where most of the members of this jury of carefully selected "silent Americans" were prepared not only to dismiss the charges but to form themselves into an advocacy group on behalf of Indians. They called themselves the "Why Wounded Knee Committee". Such behavior by a jury was unheard of in American jurisprudence. The woman who spoke for the jury that night in Detroit had never made a public speech before. She was scared to death but she had to speak and she did so with eloquence. The comments from the floor had been amazingly positive. Despite the fears of the convention leaders, the delegates were more than ready to deal with the issue. They were sympathetic.

I wondered as I heard speaker after speaker from the floor, when the other side would make itself known. In my experience such critique usually comes at the end of the meeting and from the last row. When it appeared the floor discussion was at an end and a request to speak came from the back from a Dakota farmer, many of whom I had been informed were angry over the

church's support of the American Indian Movement, I thought that we were finally going to hear the other side. I looked at Paul and I think we both expected the worst.

I had not been in the United States during the Wounded Knee affair. I was living and working in Geneva, Switzerland for the Lutheran World Federation on issues of peace, justice and human rights. But I had followed the event with great interest. At that time Paul Boe had been a national official of the church and had been the one who had secured the money for the American Indian Movement. When the siege of Wounded Knee broke out the Indians had invited Boe to come to Wounded Knee where he shared those days of siege with them. Afterwards Boe had refused to testify against the Indians on the grounds that his presence at Wounded Knee was as a clergy person and pastoral confidence applied to what had been shared with him. He had subsequently been indicted by the Justice Department and had been put on trial. Boe was convicted and sentenced to prison in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It had caused quite a sensation and I remember during that time talking with German friends in Geneva about the American *Kirchenkampf* (church struggle) that might be taking place in my country. At the last minute the government backed off its decision to send a national church leader to prison. Later that year I had invited him and his wife, Carola, to a meeting in Aarhus, Denmark, to join with others from various parts of the world who had been involved in causes of justice and human rights. I had returned to the states and my position with the national church just before the Detroit convention. Now we were together again.

The farmer from North Dakota spoke with a distinct German accent and said, "The day my wife and I left home for this convention government bull dozers moved onto our land to clear it for the Garrison Water Project. I know now what it is like to have my land taken away from me. I want to join my voice with my Indian friends and protest what the government is doing to us!" I turned to Boe in amazement and said, "That's not at all what I had expected." Nor had the leadership of the church that had thought its responsibility had been to protect the rank and file from dealing with so controversial a topic. We had all been deeply moved by what came from Dakota soil.

Monitoring the Base

The rumblings that are disturbing this generation reveal problems far deeper than minor adjustments can alleviate. These are not momentary disturbances that will soon pass if only we can hold the apparatus together for a while. More than maintenance is required. The tremors of which I am speaking are coming from the foundation itself. They come not from encountering the new, as in space flight, but from forgetting the old, from ignoring the essentials, from failing to acknowledge what has been happening to the base.

During my time as a refugee worker I heard about two remarkable textile engineers, both deaf mutes from Latvia, who were Displaced Persons in Germany. Their special skill was to check the condition of textile machines by touching them while the machines were running. Such machinery is very noisy but that did not bother them. Because of their heightened sense of touch and from the vibrations of the machines they were able to detect breakdown long before it happened. Despite their physical handicap they were able to find employment in New Zealand. In complete silence they knew more about the condition of the machinery than those distracted by the noises. What was being drowned out by noise was "heard" by these two Latvians. Because they were in touch with the internal movement of a machine they had a more accurate knowledge of its condition.

The condition of the basic systems is drowned out by noisy activity on the surface that easily captures our attention. Even our friends say: "Why concern yourself with personal matters when it is obvious that the large public and global issues are the ones that must be solved." During the days when the Swedish Church Council was meeting, a Swedish friend said to me, "Why raise the women's issue in the church now? It could jeopardize the really important negotiations of ecumenical cooperation underway amongst church leaders." I once heard of a pastor who said to a woman who came for counseling concerning her struggle with identity as a woman in the church, "Why don't you get involved in something really important like world hunger?"

The point here is that in the competitive race to build up the gigantic enterprises of the industrial society generations have ignored a fundamental crisis in primary relationships. The pattern is familiar: household industries are sacrificed for the factory; the village for the city; the family centered social organizations of farm and craft for the highly specialized and centralized world of manufacture; the unique and particular for the standardized, replaceable part; the settled and rooted for the movable unit; the intimate and participatory cell for the regimented, collective mass. In all these cases what has been consistently sacrificed or ignored (which amounts to the same thing) has been the base: the soil from which everything eventually draws its life. The domestic world has been trivialized.⁶ I call this process "debasement." Debasement occurs whenever, consciously or unconsciously, higher value is given to what is above the soil over what is beneath.

One of the characteristics of the industrial age has been the emergence of a managerial class that seeks to order the system from top to bottom.⁷ The managerial society trains its apprentices not in the primary world but at the middle and upper levels.⁸ As a result the managerial class finds itself least competent in primary relationships. This deficit shows up in the failure to humanize the work place, office and boardroom where human relationships are subordinated to efficiency, cost effectiveness and career advancement.⁹ But this deficit is especially exposed in the failure of the management class in its own primary life settings. The home becomes a place from which to escape rather than a sustaining and nurturing community from which are drawn the psychic and physical strengths of a society. Skill at one level has little or no effect on the other. As a consequence we have the curious situations of the divorced marriage counselor, the clergy with little or no prayer life, the obese advertising agent working on the Weight Watcher account, the communication specialist giving long lectures on the art of listening, the theologian analyzing a religious phenomenon he/she has not personally experienced, etc. It is no wonder that the Great Society designed in Washington, D.C., never worked, or why a society drawn up so exclusively in its head has so much difficulty with the care of the social and material soil.¹⁰

I am arguing in these pages that the primary community represents human society nearest everyday reality. The basic Christian community is the church nearest the commitments and disciplines of personal faith. When the primary has been ignored a society is created that is overdeveloped at the top and underdeveloped at the base. We are capable of dealing with complex technology, but we seem incapable of dealing with primary relationships. Much of the wisdom that had been accumulated through millennia of life together in tribe, family, and village and recalled and celebrated in story, dance, ritual and memory seems to have been forgotten. The human resources available in the folk wisdom have by neglect or outright rejection become causality in the development of larger and larger institutional structures. Head has claimed dominion over the body. Even among the pious, "headship" has come to mean vertical control rather than the radical servant hood of the Gospel where humankind is served from beneath.¹¹

But there are voices being raised about the dangers of such imbalance. The following story is about one such critic who was asked to serve as a consultant on the future.

I suppose that when you hire a consultant, you want to hear them reinforce your own ideas. Political leaders and perhaps administrators in general like to surround themselves with those who agree with them. This consultant, however, said something very unexpected. His name is Robert Theobald an economist, author and popular speaker on the future. He was once asked to speak to leaders from Papua New Guinea about how their country might become a modern nation. Theobald's response was to point out that though they might be considered by other nations of the world as "undeveloped" they were in terms of family and village systems very well developed. Papua New Guinea had, in fact, a stable and healthy base structures while in other "developed" nations these important foundations have been seriously eroded. In terms of community life Papua New Guinea was a "post modern" society already. Theobald's advice: "Skip the Industrial Revolution".

The issue of overdevelopment/underdevelopment has led me to the persuasion that the primary is of strategic value not only to get at root causes, but also to locate the vulnerable point from which new awareness and change can come. Behind the impressive facade of highly "developed" societies with "tractored land"¹² are more and more people whose primary worlds are unraveling, whose support systems are disappearing and whose quality of life is deteriorating. Like Nicodemus we may play out our roles during the day, but at night we are asking urgent questions about rebirth and the recovery of primary relationships. Because such hidden agendas affect more and more people of the managerial and professional class, it can be said that the private is becoming public.

Seeing What Is Hidden

"Debasement" denies the gifts in the soil. It fails to see embryo growths and indigenous movement. The elite are highly visible, but people in the underside are not. Rich soil lies hidden beneath the surface and its nourishment is crucial for survival and renewal. People become invisible when they are ignored. That happens so regularly and so subtly that most are unaware of this "social blindness". But those who remain invisible know when they are not seen. Such oversight occurs when deference is given automatically by conditioned response to the credentialed, titled and privileged. Such oversight goes on in multiple ways all the time in the naming and the noting, the placing and the positioning, the reporting and recording, in introducing and inviting, in the editing and the enumerating and in countless other ways of ranking. Economists, for example, have for generations overlooked homemaker and childcare work as a dollar factor in the national economy. Such household economy is not figured in the GNP. Someday many of us may plead, "Lord, when did we see you?"

The blatant oversight of a major portion of the national economy is particularly ironic when one remembers that the term "economics" is derived from the Greek word for household. Could there be a more eloquent testimony of the ignoring of the base when home maker/child care work is simply left out of reckoning the productive labor of a nation? Must everything be reduced to cash before it has value? Only when the household sector is replaced by machines, prepared foods, welfare agencies and professional outside services does it become visible in the GNP. The household is one part of society that cannot be replaced. Artificial turf may look nice from a distance and it may require modest maintenance. But nothing grows on it. In contrast to the Roman Law (on which our system of justice is built) that protects the property owner, I would plead for a legal system in the Biblical tradition that protects the fragile roots.¹³

When the head becomes detached from the body, when eyes no longer see, when intellect no longer considers, when ears no longer hear, when what is happening in the rest of the body is ignored, then the whole system begins to malfunction. Why? Because it is by its very nature symbiotic. When one part assumes to carry the functions of the whole (what Horst Richter calls the "God complex"), then everything ceases to function properly. "Did you want to lift yourself up to heaven? You will be thrown down to hell," Jesus said to the proud people of Capernaum (Matt. 11:23). When the blind lead the blind, like the Gulag prisoner who trusts that somebody knows when nobody does, then even the most rationally planned systems become irrational.

What the top does not see applies not only to the problems but also to the possibilities. I have pondered for a long time why external observers are more pessimistic in a crisis situation than those who are directly involved. My wonderment has been stirred by working closely with refugees, by on-site visits in "oppressed" areas of Latin America and East Europe and by years of involvement with lay groups. I remember how much more depressed I was reading reports about the situation in Latin America than I was when I visited there and discovered that though the conditions were worse than I had been told, there was hope. I discovered small beginnings not seen in the sweeping analyses from afar. Was this so because only the surface had been scanned? Or was it because of a preoccupation with concentrated power - economic, military, political, religious - at the top? Richard Cornuelle, in *The Household Economy*, makes this observation:

[The front office] has made the synthetic seem authentic and left the authentic unreported. You can put it down as a kind of law that the most important happenings have no spokesmen, no office of public relations, and hence no voice that is intelligible to the working press. It is no wonder Americans are puzzled. The press can only report what is visible and vocal. The only part of America it knows how to report is failing. The part that is succeeding is unreported.¹⁴

Because the large organization does not see the rich lode of talent languishing beneath its layers of bureaucracy, it fails to tap the resources it already has. Along with the invisibility of the base goes a growing dependency that robs primary life areas of their dignity and self-confidence. At the same time, however, the top is overburdened with the impossible role of "playing God." The degree to which managers deny the skill, resources and wisdom at the base is the degree to which they must assume it from above. When the head is cut off by training, orientation, aspiration and structure from the base, it can no longer be the head. The pressures, the demands, the expectation - internal and external - are too much. We can speak today of a powerlessness of the top. The severing of the cortex nerve has created a "Catch 22" situation. It is no mystery why the Federal government has patently failed to construct community by central planning, and there appears to be little hope that state or regional groups will do much better. I believe this is one of the major reasons why the "First" world fails again and again to "develop" the poorer nations.

Out of debates over development in government circles as well as out of debates over mission strategy in the churches has come the awareness among some that the monitoring of the health of a society is best done from the root system underground and not merely from measuring the visible shoots above ground. This is a shift from evaluation based on production to evaluation based on the quality of life at the base. I first encountered this way of assessment through a Finish theologian now in Canada, who reported on an attempt in France after World War II to rehabilitate survivors of Nazi concentration camps. A center was created just the reverse of Nazi concentration camps that had been organized to de-humanize the inhabitants.¹⁵ The French center was called "The Camp of Living Water." Reversing everything

had a remarkable healing effect. People who had no names were given names and shown respect. They participated in the decisions of the community and a healing process began. The frailest members often provided the most significant feedback as to how the whole group was being affected.

Attentiveness to the weak and the poor provides the more accurate account of what is really happening to the entire social body for the vulnerable people - the sick, aged, poor, the marginalized - have little or no protection from raw realities. They have no guaranteed pension, no health care, no privileges, no protected sanctuary, no economic buffers or few guarantors and, therefore, they feel the vibrations in the machinery before the rest of us. We ignore their experience only at our peril. They are the miner's "canary bird." If the canary cannot live in the environment created by humans neither can anyone else. But the powerless usually remain invisible in the annual reports, in the board meetings and even in the classrooms of the so-called "helping" professions. Not only do "civilized" societies ignore this valuable biofeedback but also they suppress reports from the underside because they threaten the way things are. The removal of the voices of dissent (the "sanitizing out", in Siirala's term,) is accomplished through institutions set apart from public visibility and hearing and by the flight of the "healthy" from the inner cities to suburbia. On a global scale what is in the local soil becomes invisible because of the vast distance from production place to marketplace.

The poor in the so-called underdeveloped countries of the Southern Hemisphere are the marginalized millions of our global economic system. They are at the bottom of the world social order and everybody's priority list; that is, if they make the list at all. They are the exploited urban workers whose cheap labor makes foreign investment so profitable to Western corporations. They are the rural people who have lost their land to national oligarchies and Western multinationals. They work the mines of South Africa, the sweatshops of South Korea, and the plantations of Central and South America. They have become expendable. The lives of the world's poor move, back and forth, between the two poles of exploitation and abandonment.¹⁶

In the remarkable community of the l'Arche Movement mentally challenged people live and work with so-called "normal" people in small households. These communities have discovered great resources of healing, joy, emotional strength and spiritual insight from the "handicapped" members of the community. One has to wonder how accurate the terms "healthy," "sick," and "learned" are (Matt. 11:25). When the majority is unhealthy then the few who are healthy are often labeled "sick." Thus the prophets, the poets, the dissenters and "those others" have frequently been regarded as "deviant" and put in appropriate cages.

I said earlier that the only thing that you begin from the top down is digging a hole in the ground. Everything else you start from the bottom up. Yet how much history is written from the top down? Someone has said that history is written by the victors. The version that is passed on comes from records kept by those in control. What historians have worked with is the edited version of the rulers who are eager to justify their position. It is history from above. Whether such versions are correct or even helpful guides is at least debatable. Fortunately, there are historians today who are searching for the records of the "silent ones" in personal journals, letters, oral traditions and even archaeological evidence. What is surfacing is quite a different picture of what human history has been about. The soil has always been speaking to us but now more and more people are listening.

Building the Base

This brings me back to the concern for base groups. I believe that the health of the primary community becomes the litmus paper test of the health of all. In a global society, political and economic decisions in one part of the earth affects another. It is just as important, therefore, to be attentive to the base at home as the base elsewhere. The "third" world is everywhere as is the "first" world. We can no longer look at the health of one separate national unit without seeing what effect its local and national priorities have on others far away, as well as on the "others" at its doorstep. By definition the base community begins from beneath though many who claim to be community builders forget that.¹⁷ One of the healthy signs of our otherwise troubled world, is that initiatives from the base are appearing in many areas today. Human community is *sui generis*. It oozes up through the cracks. The rapid proliferation of Basic Ecclesial Communities (or Christian Communities of Common Peoples, CCCP) began, argues Leonardo Boff, when an old Roman Catholic peasant woman observed the Protestant groups in her remote village celebrating Christmas while her church remained empty because there was no priest to serve it.¹⁸ She and others began to take things into their own hands and with the encouragement of some priests discovered that they already had the resources to be the church within their own village. They managed very well without hierarchy or prescribed procedures. They began to interpret the Scriptures in their own social context and found that profound insights came from the people themselves.¹⁹

The capacity to build community exists in the soil not in the centers of power above. Structures above the ground do not create community at the base but they are important for protect the tender seedlings. Primary groups are vulnerable especially when larger structures break down. UN peace keeping forces from the outside may be needed to pull the warring parties off of each other, but that is intervention of the last resort. Intervention of the first resort is the protecting the delicate process of community formation by the people themselves. This "soil care" involves cultivating the earth, planting seeds and waiting for the mystery of germination to bring forth community life. Here is another a different kind of power at work. "I come most of all to respect the resilience of a society that had somehow survived all our misguided efforts to improve it," says a former officer of the American Association of Manufacturers.²⁰ Here is power redistributed in small cells whose strength is not in size but in reproductive capacity. Leonardo Boff calls this process in the church, "ecclesiogenesis".

It is the genesis of a new church, but not one that is different from the church of the Apostles and tradition. And it is taking place among the dominated classes, who had been stripped of both their religious power and their social power. In analytical terms, it is important to get a clear grasp of the novelty involved. These grassroots communities signify a break with the old monopoly of social and religious power, and the inauguration of a new social and religious process involving the restructuring of the church and society. It entails a different social division of labor and a different religious division of ecclesiastical labor.²¹

What the base community movement is saying is that the prevailing perception of power has been wrong. Despite the huge forces marshaled by the economic, political or military establishment, the base has tremendous power. It alone has the capacity to reproduce and replicate. Everything eventually comes from the soil, but when the base forgets this, it loses the power it has.²² A state of dependency in the mind is enough to make that attitude an actual fact. The control of communications and education is crucial in maintaining vertical authority lest the truth gets out about where the power actually lies. The power that the base possesses is its own. It is indigenous. It is not received from the hierarchy, but the hierarchy can thwart it. And this it does by dispersing the base and discouraging lateral net works while concentrating power at the top. What is needed to restore balance and reduce the earth tremors is just the

reverse: disperse the power concentrated at the top and encourage the exercise of shared power in small, human scaled communities at the base.²³

The test of a healthy society is its ability to draw its strength from the soil. In 18th and 19th century England workers found the most freedom not in the gentry, towns or nation, i.e., at the top, but "in chapel, the tavern and the home . . . in the 'unsteeped' places of worship [where] there was room for a free intellectual life and for democratic experiments."²⁴ The forming of small communities on earth will have more to do with determining the future of human society than our ability to land a few scientists on some distant planet.

When the disciples argued about privileged positions at the top, Jesus said to them, "It shall not be so among you." Nor must it be so among us today. If we become like little children (Mark 10:5) who will be closer to the ground than we are as adults and as a child we can tumble frequently without serious damage. However, such shifts in power are automatically perceived in terms of a threat to established authority and therefore are resisted. My argument is that a shift is necessary for the health of all, including the well being of the over strained institutions. What is needed is a different understanding of power and authority.²⁵ Simon Weil would say that what is needed is humility. She claims that "the essential fact about the Christian virtues, what lends them a special savor of their own, is humility, the *freely accepted movement toward the bottom*."²⁶

Power and Authority

What is the relationship between the threatened citadels of power and these alternatives? Must we await some catastrophic clash, or is there a wiser direction to pursue by which we can discover the mutual liberation that comes in shared power? Perhaps a win/win approach might be found by reinterpreting authority. There is little hope for change if we simply lament the injustices. In our effort to look unflinchingly at the realities in which we live we need as well to look objectively at what changes are taking place already. Power is being re-distributed and alternatives are already emerging. Leonardo Boff sees these changes happening in the base Christian communities.

In the grass roots ecclesial community, we see widespread diffusion of the role of coordination, organization, and leadership. Power and authority is a function of the community, not of one person. Power in itself is not rejected. What is rejected is the monopolistic expropriation of power and authority for the benefit of an elite.²⁷

In the hierarchical order one of the terrible burdens is to be "in authority." It is especially frustrating to have authority without power, a condition increasingly true of many complex systems. It is much more comfortable to hide some place in the middle where you can always defer to the next level of authority. But to be placed in authority without the ability to do what is expected is destructive both of the person and the system itself. Denying or blaming authority, demanding action from authorities that really are not able to act, is not productive. Many people are in positions of authority only in the hierarchical sense and not the sapiential sense. This is the result of placing too much emphasis on institutional and managerial priorities rather than on personal ability. If authority, however, is defined not by position, rank, degree or title (i.e. in hierarchical terms) but in terms of gift, demonstrated ability, and personal qualities (i.e. in sapiential terms), then quite different dynamics come into play.

The authority needed to build community lies with those in base groups who have demonstrated the capacity to give birth to and nurture primary life forms. In most cases they are not the

credentialed "authorities." A sapiential approach begins by inquiring who is already doing a task or is able to accomplish it. We need to affirm the authority that exists in the natural gifts of people. Re-affirming the authority of the base cannot be merely a romantic "back to nature" reaction. As Heilbrunner warns, "What we do not know, but can only hope, is that future man (sic) can rediscover the self-renewing vitality of primitive culture without reverting to its levels of ignorance and cruel anxiety."²⁸ My point here is not a romanticizing of the primitive but an unleashing of the resources at the base. The denial of the gifts of women, for example, is a significant case in point. Kathleen Bliss offers this revealing comment:

To say that women's powers to educate and to succour have found an outlet in an immense variety of ways is not the same thing as saying that the church has made use of even a tithe of the vast reserve of talent and devotion which lay in the persons of its women members. Often a woman's zeal has dampened down and been discouraged by the church, her gifts of mind and spirit refused, her devotion and labour frittered away in trifles.

In 1852 Florence Nightingale wrote to Dean Stanley, an intimate friend, her own inner thoughts about the Church of England. "I would have given her my head, my hand, my heart. She would not have them. She told me to go back and do crochet in my mother's drawing room . . . She gave me neither work to do for her, nor education for it."²⁹

The point at which the issue of power and authority is being most profoundly challenged and most dramatically redefined in the Western World today is in the relation of men and women.³⁰ The most universal human relationship, the male/female, is also the most primary one. This is far more than just a relationship between the sexes. Both male and female characteristics exist in every human being and within the culture as a whole. The degree that we internalize the understandings and values of society profoundly affects the way we are able to view our own maleness and femaleness. This relationship is a foundational one for the exercising of power and authority and it represents the pivotal point for determining the future of human society. It is, however, the relationship most neglected, least understood, consistently denied and most greatly feared.

Life is created and nourished by the interaction of the male and female experiences of human existence. How these two perspectives interact radically affects the whole. While male values dominate most human societies, especially those based on rational processes, the act of birthing is identified with the feminine. God's first act of creation including the creation of Adam is clearly a birthing event and therefore in the values of our society clearly a feminine act. God then placed Adam in the garden to take care of it. Management is, therefore, a secondary act. The primary one is birthing and creating. Womb-less males do not usually identify themselves with the act of birthing. They ascribe lesser value to the organic than to the rational. Yet theories based on masculine experience are often birthed through intuition, insight and "aha" moments. The managing or ordering of ideas like the management of what has been created has been identified in culture as a masculine function. But it is a secondary function dependent on the primary function of the "birthing" of ideas. Without the primary, the secondary is literally "none sense."³¹ When the feminine is devalued creativity diminishes and the regenerative power of society declines. Human systems become weak and unhealthy. Gotthard Booth, a cancer specialist, speculates on the disease that plagued Job and then cites William Blake's visionary poetry regarding the effects of the Industrial Revolution.

Job's salvation comes as God reveals to him His creativity in nature. He begets . . . commencing with God through music, the least material of the arts. The biblical text contains only one cue from which Blake developed his concept that Job was connected to art, the statement that his second lot of daughters was "most beautiful" and that the patriarch gave them equal inheritance with his sons. The parallel between the afflictions of Job and the perils of modern man appears striking as his salvation through a new understanding of nature and art. Anticipating the developments of the 20th Century, the conversion of Job even included recognition of the equality of the sexes, departing from the old social order.³²

The regeneration of community at the base has to do with creating and nourishing organic processes rather than institutional management. Management is important but secondary. The principal actors in this drama remain largely unknown to the larger society. Their activities are rarely recorded; their value seldom acknowledged. This is why so much research on community development has not been helpful. Such investigation usually approaches society from the wrong side and with an inappropriate set of tools. In fact, it has often been destructive. Recorded history is of limited help since it is almost exclusively about the structures of management on the overside. Elise Boulding in her pioneer work, *The Underside of History*, says: "The elimination of most of the human race from the historical record shrinks our human identity. We don't know fully who we are. We know even less what we might become."³³ Both scientific materialism and capitalism have been harsh on human society. Marx, for example, was concerned about humanizing the world of the working class but ignored the domestic side of economics. He made a deliberate choice for a centralism dominated by male values.

The women who appeared to have stood out in terms of articulateness and leadership all supported the decentralized, democratic, mass education, non-elite approach to revolution. They also represented internationalism, and opposed war. In short, they represented all the features of socialism which lost out in the European communist revolutions of the next century. Had their leadership been more acceptable to the men of the movements, the story of European socialism might have been different³⁴

That difference would have resulted from a balanced approach between feminine and male values. These two faces of human community are revealed most fully in primary life settings. Cooperation in all other human enterprises begins here. Human intelligence and cleverness have been marshaled largely for combat between competitive systems, but skills in the cooperative tasks of building community remain largely undeveloped. "What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face" (I Cor. 13:12). The closest the human race comes to meeting "face to face" occurs in the encounter of male and female within a person and between persons. There is no point at which present society is being shaken more profoundly than in what might be called "domestic earth quakes".

Tremors at Home

Let me share one personal experience of an earth tremor involving the male and female issue. "Pillow talk" might be considered in some circles as a time of innocent, domestic chatter. After an experience I had in 1972 I consider it down right dangerous. My wife, Ruth, had just returned from a three day retreat at Grandchamp, an ecumenical women's community near Neufchatel in Western Switzerland. She had been invited by a small international group of women from Geneva shortly after we moved there. Much of the retreat was in silence and proved to be a powerful experience for Ruth. During those days in that place of contemplation and prayer things that had been stirring deeply within her came to the surface. Her experience was akin to

what the American Indians call a "vision quest". She could hardly wait to get home and share her discoveries with me.

I don't remember what I had been doing that day, but I'll never forget that night. No doubt that day I had sat in on some "important" meetings, talked to some "prominent" people, written some "perceptive" memos and planned some "significant" events. That was the daily routine of the mostly male professional staff in the international church agency I was working for in Geneva. I certainly don't recall having had any visions that day. Institutional offices are not the places where that happens with any frequency. In any case, I suppose I was weary from such weighty affairs and was not as alert an audience as Ruth had hoped for.

As soon as the family had settled in for the night Ruth began to pour out her experiences at Grandchamp. She went through the entire retreat step by step. Somewhere in the first part of what eventually became a nightlong discussion I made some comment that I had heard much of this before and indeed was aware of Grandchamp having read about it years ago in a book by Lydia Präger. The moment I said those words I realized I had stepped on a land mine. What academicians have read about was not, in her opinion, at all what she had experienced. She was impressively eloquent about that. I didn't think my life was actually in danger, but certainly my life style was. Ruth was only spurred on the more by the apparent dismissal of my "Oh, I already know about that". She knew she had experienced something beyond my level of understanding of retreat and she was not to be deterred. We talked until breakfast and I remained very alert as one is when pushed to the edge of a precipice.

That night long conversation in Geneva was the beginning of a process that would mean the selling of our house, moving into a small residential community with others, years of very hard physical and psychological work, times of financial uncertainty, confounded colleagues and much excitement. Don't tell me that "pillow talk" is innocent. More than we realize or historians have noted, the bedroom is where the world is birthed and re-birthed.

The so-called "women's" issue is neither a passing nor a peripheral matter. It will not go away like a momentary fad. The issue is not limited to one class or race. It poses the central issue of survival and regeneration of society and does so at the most intimate and basic level. Feminism raises questions for both men and women, rich and poor, professional and lay, young and old, white and black.

"Kinder, Kirche und Küche" (children, church and kitchen) has been the pejorative way the male society has devalued and dismissed the feminine world and even left it out completely from economic planning. Yet these very terms - children, church and kitchen - meant to demean, point to society's greatest strengths. We need to "become like children" in the wonderment of life using the receptivity and creativity that is our natural endowment. We need to break bread together sacramentally. We need to make bread together and share it equitably. The three "k's" are the basics of what Scott Burns calls the "household economy" and Kenneth Boulding calls the "grants economy."³⁵

On the one hand women's contributions have been said to be indispensable. Yet the world and work of women have been given second-class status. Their productivity in the home and neighborhood, as we noted earlier, does not even appear in the Gross National Product. Women's work is seen primarily as belonging to the voluntary sector. Voluntarism is the point at which our values are most clearly exposed, for what we do voluntarily is what we truly believe. This is also the secret of its power, for growth in this sector defies mathematical

extrapolation. Increasing the sensitivity and skills of our citizens for voluntarism radically changes the future prospects of planning processes locked into purely financial considerations.

The unleashing of the gifts hidden in the primary life areas through voluntary, indigenous efforts represents a vast potential of energy and economy barely tapped by a system preoccupied with secondary categories. This is the economy of the base community where family, church and bread converge. The most precious resources for survival lie not in precarious explorations in off sea deposits or in harsh Arctic regions, but in the soil right under our feet. Given the neglected state of the household economy, it presents a crucial task for the future.

One of the cruel twists of history has been to blame the breakdown of the household on women at the same time that they are being denied a public role. Society continues to lay on women the burden of rebuilding the base as their "proper" task. Having abandoned the home long ago males, however, are hardly in a position to make this judgment much less to understand what it will take to rebuild from the base up. This is a strange "Catch 22" here. As the significant role of women in community building is recognized they can easily find themselves constrained by guilt to remain "at home" prevented from entering into secondary systems where the feminine in both men and women is desperately needed. Rather than blaming women again, what is needed is full participation by both men and women at all levels especially the primary one.

The male/female issue leads inevitably to an even deeper one, to the foundation of the base itself: the faith commitments that generate the voluntary contributions of men and women. The most fundamental issue at the core of community is one's understanding of God. The god or gods we worship represent the enshrined values of a society. When these values and their resultant behavior patterns, are embodied in a deity then ultimate sanction is guaranteed to these values. This is why revolutionary movements inevitably begin by toppling local deities.

From what has been said above about the dominating values of the technologically developed world that have permeated our inner consciousness, it is clear that male values have been given greater credence than feminine ones. It is, therefore, no accident that the male image of God has been consistently protected in the three major religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. "As long as God is male, male is God," says Mary Daly. As long as we image God primarily in male terms we will be unable to generate or regenerate community from the base. The issue is ultimately a theological one. The nature of the God we worship is expressed in the language we use to describe God. This is hardly a peripheral issue. On the contrary, this question of how God is portrayed and described gets to the roots of primary relationships. "Primary" here means the God/human and the human/human relationships. We are now talking of radical change in the original meaning of that word, "radical". To be truly "radical" means to get down to the roots. What is involved here is radical change not from some alien roots but from one's own tap root: God. The most significant social revolution of our time has its source in the way we image God.³⁶ The intriguing and revolutionary question is not "Does God exist?" or "Is God dead?", but "What is the nature of God?" The answer to that has been given to us in the Incarnation. That is an answer not from the heights but from the soil.

The attributes that have been perceived, named and identified with God in human history have had less to do with careful exegesis and theological reflection than with the conscious or subconscious need of the dominant class to protect its privileged position. This is a "form critical" issue that interpreters have ignored for obvious reasons. We fashion God in our own images. What threatened the religious leaders of Jesus' time more than anything else was the different understanding of God that Jesus revealed. The God Jesus portrayed did not conform to the images convenient to the prevailing system then or now. Humans are created in God's

image - male and female - and both these attributes were embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus. This has profound ramifications for our primary relationships.³⁷

The task of creating basic community and reversing the destructive trends of today's society requires a change in how God is understood. We must do this in faithfulness to the revealed God of Scripture even though there will be charges of blasphemy that follow especially from the religious and political establishments. If the old paradigm was masculine - to be in charge, know everything, be irreplaceable, be "ahead," be God - then the new one is the good news that you don't have to be in charge, omniscient, irreplaceable, ahead or God. The God of the Bible is a God of covenant (partnership) and not of dominance. In Christ God comes as servant to give life fully to the whole creation. Here is a God of relationships who births and regenerates.³⁸

Regeneration

The renewal of society is perhaps best described with the term, regeneration. The key to regeneration is that it happens in the soil, the organic base from which new life comes. The argument for organic farming and small-scale agriculture, for example, is not just nostalgia, but fundamental wisdom about how life is sustained and renewed.³⁹ In one of his table talks Luther sees an analogy between the amaranth, which thrives in late summer after other flowers have decayed, and the Christian Church.

At last, the body and stalk remain whole and sound, and cannot be rooted out, although raging and swelling be made against some of the members, and these be torn away. For like as the amaranth never withers or decays even so the church can never be destroyed or rotted out. But what is more wonderful, the amaranth has this quality, that when it is sprinkled with water, and dipped therein, it becomes fresh and wakened out of the grave, and become living again⁴⁰

God is already ahead of us on this issue as well. God has chosen to disperse the gifts of the Kingdom in the lives and hearts of quite ordinary people' i.e. in the soil. Such dispersion confuses the edifice builders as it did with the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). No one has been commissioned to know it all. Others already know. Knowledge and, more important, wisdom, is already well dispersed wisely and strategically by God not to confuse, for this dispersion is not a matter of punishment, but as a sign of a richer and healthier way, namely the way of the gifted community. Humans were never created to live in isolation but in community. For regeneration humans do not need all the data first. The process itself reveals what one needs to know. Furthermore, there is room for mystery in rebirthing.

"But," some will protest, "If man (sic) is not in charge then who is? And if man is not in charge then what does he do? And if man does not know what to do then what identity can he have? And if man doesn't know then who does?" Well, the answer to all these questions is twofold. First, "God is in charge and God knows." Second, God did not only create man but woman as well. A partnership was intended. This is not a simplistic, pious answer to dodge responsibility. This response is responsible because it is doable and durable for when the above questions are answered by human beings alone or by only half of the human race alone, the tasks quickly become overwhelming and lead to frenzied activity or the reverse, apathy. Both end in paralysis.

The paradigm used in the New Testament that spells out most dramatically for me our responsibility before God and neighbor is the Last Supper or Eucharist. This sacrament invites us to act. "Do this," says Christ. People do have something to do in the Sacrament of the

Altar, but it is as servants. "Table waiter" is the original meaning of the term "deacon." People are needed to facilitate and "host" a meal. But the event involves a process over which the "deacons" do not have control. There is something very specific to do in providing the setting where God promises to be creatively present nurturing the participants. So Jesus can say, "My yoke is light." We don't have to be God. To construct hierarchies around those who are the servants at the Sacramental event is obviously to misrepresent what is actually happening.

The question of church order is usually the last tribunal to which people appeal when theological argument fails. "We do it this way because things have to be done in proper order." Not really, life is not like that at all. It is an organic process. And so is the church as the organic, growing, dying, living "body" which the Scriptures describe. The church is a living body led by the Spirit. The biblical imagery is clearly organic and feminine: the "bride of Christ." The skills needed for church leadership in such an organic process are just the opposite of those required for institutional management. The paradigm for God's people is a radically different one. This shift from one form to its very opposite was illustrated, for example, in the French resistance movement during World War II when it was discovered that completely different types of leaders emerged under the conditions of occupation than in freedom.

In the beginning as well as in the end the regeneration of life has to do with the root system in the soil. It is there that we have our deepest encounter and on going relationship with God. This is the source and foundation of community. And it is from these foundations that the tremors in the earth originate. An alarm has gone off that can be heard by touching the earth. When we do we will discover that it is not only a warning of destruction but also a promise of regeneration. For the earth also trembles with awesome potential of regeneration and it has much to say to us.

In 1885 before being forced to sign away the land Young Chief of the Cayuses gave this speech:

I wonder if the ground has anything to say? I wonder if the ground is listening to what is said? I wonder if the ground would come alive and what is on it? Though I hear what the ground says - The ground says, it is the Great Spirit that placed me here. The Great Spirit tells me to take care of the Indians, to feed them aright. The Great Spirit appointed the roots to feed the Indians on. The water says the same thing. The Great Spirit directs me, feed the Indians well. The grass says the same thing, feed the Indians well. The ground, water and grass say the Great Spirit has given us our names. We have these names and hold these names. The ground says, the Great Spirit has placed me here to produce all that grows on me, trees and fruit. The same way the ground says, it is from me people were made. The Great Spirit in placing people on the earth, desired them to take good care of the ground and to do each other no harm.⁴¹

To discover what the earth is saying to us we need to examine the roots that reveal the new shoots of life not visible above the surface. Among these new signs of life are small communities that are forming at the base of modern society. In the next chapter I will explore these frail but vital beginnings of the regeneration of the larger community.

¹Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, New York: William Morrow and Co., 1980, pp. 426-427

²Johann Metz, *The Emergent Church*, New York: Crossroad Publishers, 1981, pp. 68-69. Other examples are readily available:

Theodore Roszak, *The Wasteland Within and About Us*, New York: pp 174-175:

Objective knowing is alienated knowing; and alienated knowing is, sooner or later, ecologically disastrous knowing. Before the earth could become an industrial garbage can it had first to become a research laboratory. .

. . . Our proud, presumptuous head speaks one language, our body another - a silent, arcane language. Our head experiences in the mode of number, logic, mechanical connection, our body the mode of fluid processes, intuitive adaption: it sways to an inner purposive rhythm.

Parker Palmer, "Truth Is Personal: A Deeply Christian Education", *Christian Century*, October 21, 1981, pp. 215-2116:

[Formed] by the assumptions of objectivism the educated person tends to be a spectator of reality (rather than a participant in it), an expert manipulator of the object world (rather than a reverent beholder of the mystery of creation), a person who knows much about the world but little of self (since the self is negated as a source of bias), one who views the world in individualistic terms (since a world of autonomous objects does not admit of the connections of community). When we add these elements together, a familiar pattern emerges: the pathology of modern professionalism. How ironic that today a "professional" is one whose knowledge and techniques objectify people and their world, contributing to the fragmentation which wisdom wants to heal. How can we reclaim the original meaning of professional: a person whose life and learning are a profession of faith?

Gotthard Booth, *The Cancer Epidemic: Shadow of the Conquest of Nature* New York: The Edwin Mellin Press, 1974, pp. 215-216:

The cancer epidemic demonstrates that the physico-chemical manipulation of human life is apt to frustrate vital symbiotic needs. The neoplastic process marks the point at which the old way of thinking does not provide a viable existence. The new way recognizes that life is based on mutual transactions between two or more living organisms, on field phenomena, rather than on complex physico-chemical reactions.

Kirkpatrick Sale, *Human Scale* New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1980, p. 532:

We can go on as we are, trying to muddle through (rather more muddle than through), patching up disintegrating and propping up decaying states, squabbling and warring incessantly are depleting resources and the last few tolerable environments, and coping and grasping with increasingly anxious and uncertain lives. Or we can hope for rescue in ever-larger and ever-more-complex systems - 757's and 797's after 747's, Models 1199 and 2199 after Model 499 - and even stronger and more grandiose governments, giving up our liberty for an anticipated security, our initiative for an anticipated welfare system, and all the while moving closer to nuclear and environmental disaster. Or we can work to achieve systems and organizations of a size where we may regulate them, to shape our landscapes to permit ecologically sound and locally rooted settlements, our economics, our politics are in fact in the hands of those free individuals, those diverse communities and cities, that will be affected by them - a world, of course, at the human scale.

Richard Sennett, *Families Against the City* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970, 217: There was a failure in the first generation of middle class urbanites to establish a condition for pluralism that would be meaningful and productive for themselves and their children. Out of this failure in pluralism, the family lost its inner balance and condition of intergenerational respect. . . . The intensive, private family may at this historical moment have worked to destroy the emotional power and the dignity of the people whom it sheltered.³ Scott Burns, *The Household Economy*, p. 76.

⁴Roszak, *The Wasteland Within Us*, p. 208.

⁵Michael Cowan and Bernard Lee, *Dangerous Memories: House Churches and the Social Reconstruction of the American Story* (Pre published MS 1986) p. 1:1.

⁶On the deliberate trivializing of daily life in authoritarian society see José Joaquín Brunner, *El orden del cotidiano, la sociedad disciplinaria y los recursos del poder*, FLACSO, Santiago: November, 1977.

⁷Helmut Schelsky, in *Die Arbeit tun die Andern*, Oplanden: 1975, argues:

The more authority is exercised at a higher level the more it gets out of touch with those below, and the more it tends to become external and to substitute the impersonal bond of law for the ties of community. A community begins with persons or with elementary communities already living as such.

⁸Yves M. J. Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, London: Bloomsbury Pub. Co, 1957, pp. 325-6

⁹Walter Brueggemann makes an interesting point in this connection about "landed people" creating a sabbathless society. "Landed people" could well mean "industrialized people". In his book, *The Land*, Brueggemann says (65):

Landed people are tempted to create a sabbathless society in which land is never rested, debts are never canceled, slaves are never released, nothing is changed from the way it now is and has always been. The give and take of historicity can be eliminated, and all of life can be reduced to a smoothly functioning machine. That is the meaning of the producer-consumer consciousness which tempts Israel to betray the meaning of the land.

¹⁰Roszak, *The Wasteland Within Us*, p. 90 describes this condition in these terms:

Degradation of the body which results from the head's intolerance for the organic . . . (and) sealed off from the body determines fundamentally the way in which we feel the reality around us. Intolerance for the organic

begins with the body, but it spreads from there to the environment at large. The body is nature nearest home, it is us as we take part in the self-regulating processes of form and growth that sustain the universe

¹¹*Ibid*, p. 86.

¹²cf Walter Brueggeman, *The Land*, 195. The plight of the Amazon rain forests bulldozed for quick profit is creating catastrophic long-term results because we are in effect destroying earth's lungs.

¹³Cf. Ulrich Duchrow, *Lasst uns auch den Westen demokratisieren*. Special issue of the *Junge Kirche*, Bremen, Vol. 2, February, 1990, p. 27.

¹⁴Richard Cornuelle, *Op. Cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁵Aarne Siirala, *The Voice of Illness*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1964, pp. 27-29.

¹⁶Jim Wallis, *The Call to Conversion*, New York: Harper & Row, 1982, p.44.

¹⁷Cf Eph. 4:9 "What does 'he went up' mean? It means that first he came down to the lowest parts of the earth"

¹⁸Leonardo Boff, "Ecclesiogenesis", *Midstream*, Vol. XX, No. 4, Oct. 1981, p. 433.

¹⁹When the direct movement from sacrament to life is denied, vital ministries to the poor decline. "When Constantinian conformism turned Christian parishes into groups of indifferent, the possibilities of expressing love (*agape*) and living fellowship decreased . . . one of the disastrous schisms in the history of Christianity: the schism between the sacrament of the altar and the sacrament of the poor". *In Search of the New (III)*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981, pp. 36-37.

²⁰Cornuelle, *Op. Cit.*, p. 5.

²¹Boff, *Op. Cit.* p. 134.

²²Roszak reminds us that alchemy united the "above and below". "The alienative psychology of Christian orthodoxy had made the sacred *super*-natural . . . everything that lives is holy - why alchemists worked with most vile materials". *Wasteland*, pp. 359-360.

²³Cf. concept of "base line" and "holy ground" in the writings of Charles Peguy.

²⁴Harry C. Boyte, *The Backyard Revolution*, p. 37.

²⁵Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1977, pp. 4, 392 makes this point:

Two processes of change reinforce each other. One aspect of the change in values, we believe, is a decline in the legitimacy of hierarchical authority, patriotism, religion, and so on, which leads to declining confidence in institutions. At the same time, the political expression of new values is facilitated by a shift in the balance of political skills between elites and masses . . . it seems to me that the process represents a redressment of the balance rather than a breakdown of society. The Industrial era was a time for the development of great means.

Post-Industrial society may provide a time for the application of these means to great ends.

²⁶Simon Weil, *The Need For Roots*, cited by John L. Ruth, *A Quiet and Peaceable Life*, Intercourse, PA, Good Books, 1985, pp. 4-5. [Italics mine]

²⁷Leonardo Boff, "Theological Characteristics of a Grassroots Church", *The Challenge Of Basic Christian Communities*, p. 136.

²⁸Robert Heilbroner, *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc. 1974, p. 141.

²⁹Kathleen Bliss, *The Service and Status of Women in the Churches*, London: SCM Press, 1952, pp. 13-14.

³⁰*Ibid*, p. 552. Bliss argues further:

Perhaps most sweeping of all, the woman's movement in all its many guises effected a change still going on, of quite unprecedented proportions in attitudes, styles, feelings, lives, of people of all races, all ages, all sexes. . . .

It suggests itself as being within the brief breadth of a decade or so, one of the most profound and extensive examples of people undergoing non-violent alteration of beliefs that I can think of in contemporary history.

³¹The intuitive approach is not the rejection of reason but represents the secret processes underlying reason at the level of the subconscious mind.

³²Gotthard Booth, *The Cancer Epidemic*, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1974, pp. 231-2.

³³Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1976, p. 4. The author makes this statement after noting that a popular textbook on world history has only two references to women in 1,000 pages.

³⁴*Ibid*, p. 628.

³⁵For a further treatment of this cf. Tuchman, Daniels and Benet, *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*, New York: Oxford.

³⁶Roderick Nash makes this point in relation to the radical activity of environmental groups in the USA. *In The Rights of Nature*, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, pp.11-12:

Conceived of as promoting the liberation of exploited and oppressed members of the American ecological community, even the most radical fringe of the contemporary environmental movement can be understood not so much as a revolt against traditional American ideals as an extension and new application of them. The alleged subversiveness of environmental ethics should be tempered with the recognition that its goal is the implementation of liberal values as old as the republic.

³⁷William Johnston, *The Mirror Mind*, London: Collins Sons & Co., 1981, p. 142.

“Our relationship with father and mother is based on an archetypal life that has also been injured by original sin and the wounds of life. Yes, it is the father image and the mother image that must be healed. And I myself believe that in the Christian life this healing is effected by a filial devotion to God as Father and a tender love for Mary as Mother. When, through the experience of love for God and for the mother of God, one's archetypes are healed, it becomes possible to relate in an authentic and beautiful way to one's earthly father and mother.”

As a Roman Catholic Johnston identifies the mother image with Mary. Today biblical and theological research makes the case for both feminine and masculine attributes in God. Cf. Joan Chamberlain Engelsman, *The Feminine Dimension of the Divine*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979 and Metz, Johannes-Baptist and Schillebeeckx, Edward (eds.), *God as Father?*, New York: Seabury Press, 1981. I am grateful to Hans-Ruedi Weber for an endnote with the striking Biblical material:

God obviously transcends all such masculine and feminine metaphors. A good text to observe this is Hosea 11. There God is shown as loving parent, a teacher, a healer, a farmer, a nurse, and a judge who repents from rightful anger, leading up to the self-affirmation in verse 9: "For I am God and not man [here the Hebrew term *isch* is used which does not designate generally the human being, but indeed the man], the Holy One in your midst."

³⁸Cf. a most interesting observation by Walter Harrelson on fertility, *From Fertility Cult To Worship*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969, 12-18.

³⁹Cf. Daly and Cobb, *For the Common Good*, p. 274 and Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness*, Montclair, N. J.: Allenheld, Osmun, 1978.

⁴⁰Cited by Frederick K. Wentz, "What Does Lay Ministry Look Like?", *Lutheran Partners*, July/August 1991, p. 26.

⁴¹T. C. McLuhan (ed.) *Touch the Earth - A Self-Portrait of Indian Existence*,