

L. 27/1/74



Caríssima

Maria de Lourdes Pictasillo:

Levei-me de lla enviar este texto que
recibi ontem de um colega e amigo
americano da Universidade de Wisconsin-
-Madison, onde eu estive. Embora eu não
concordo a 100% com tudo, há muito de
"vitoria" com o que nós aqui queremos
ser, embora com menor carga "política"
do que há no nosso caso. Levei-me
em texto estimulante e reflexivo ...

Saudades amigas

Jáudio Correia

* Serão todos?... Dando...

CLAUDIO
FEIXEIRA

AT THE CROSSROADS

*A Publication of the
Communications Era Task Force*

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

FOR SIGNATURE ONLY: NOT FOR PUBLICATION



THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR YOUR SIGNATURE. Information on how to sign is on page 29.

This document will be available for general distribution in April 1984. The format will be designed to be as compelling as possible. Signers will be asked to distribute it at that time to decision-makers, friends and colleagues, and the media. Translations into French, Hebrew, and Spanish are being prepared as well as a slide-tape show and a study guide to the document.

AT THE CROSSROADS cannot be reprinted until mid-April 1984 and then only with the permission of the Communications Era Task Force. The introduction (on pages 3-4) can be reprinted in part or in whole to provide people with a sense of our direction. If you wish to reprint the introduction, please include the following note:

This is the introduction to **AT THE CROSSROADS** a document created by the Communications Era Task Force, P.O. Box 3623, Spokane, Washington 99220. The task force is collecting signatures for the document which will be distributed nationally and internationally in mid-April 1984. Write to them for a copy, enclosing \$2.00 (U.S.). If you are unable to send \$2.00, but still want a copy please send what you can.

COMMUNICATIONS • ERA • TASK • FORCE
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CONTEXT

AT THE CROSSROADS is published 20 years after the appearance of *The Triple Revolution*. That document called for a fundamental reexamination of existing values and institutions in light of three separate and mutually reinforcing "revolutions." They were the "Cybernetic Revolution," signaling the development of computers and robots and a new era of production; the "Weaponry Revolution," signaling an era of weapons which cannot be used; and the "Human Rights Revolution," a worldwide movement for social and political rights. It was signed by a wide variety of public figures and opinion leaders. Observations made in *The Triple Revolution* were controversial 20 years ago; today they are self-evident to many in the world.

Those who have signed *AT THE CROSSROADS* agree that we can now clearly state the new reality which is emerging and examine the new directions, ideas, and models which we can adopt. The last section of this document suggests ways in which you can become involved with the new directions.

Many people are making personal changes in expectations, attitudes, values and lifestyles. We are, however, changing faster and more smoothly as individuals than as a society. While people are aware of their own shifts in perceptions they believe their friends, neighbors and co-workers have not made these shifts. Few of us have yet found the way to *publicly* acknowledge and act on our new perceptions. We hope to break through this taboo.

In June 1983 a group of some 30 people involved in community renewal efforts in the northwestern United States and southwestern Canada met at Whistlin' Jacks Lodge on the slopes of Mt. Rainier in Washington State. People came because they sensed a need to meet with others who were struggling with the kinds of issues and ideas represented in this document. The document grew from that meeting because many of those present felt that a new set of commonly held hopes, values and visions were emerging and the time had come to articulate those ideas.

In July this group began to share the idea with others. The response has been overwhelming. Within five months, more than 1000 people responded to the belief that we need a short, concise document which speaks to today's needs and to tomorrow's hopes. One indication of their support is that they contributed \$5, \$10 or more to help finance this effort.

It is our hope that you will share this document with your mother, your neighbor, your favorite elected official, and your best friend because it summarizes and responds to many of *your* concerns about the time in which we live. We have written this document because we believe there is a very large number of people who share these ideas and because it is time for us to begin to draw upon the strength of our numbers to solve seemingly overwhelming problems and to act upon seemingly endless opportunities.

Those who gave input to the writing of the document were: Nancy Bell Coe, Spokane, Washington; Cathy Burton, Seattle, Washington; Eric Clough, Winlaw, B.C.; Mary Devlin-Willis, Portland, Oregon; Diane Gilman, Sequim, Washington; Bill Hainer, Cathy Hainer, Bellevue, Washington; Sara Hiemstra, Kirkland, Washington; William Houff, Spokane, Washington; Gerrie Lindaman, Spokane, Washington; David Lee Myers, Rosburg, Washington; Burke Raymond, Portland, Oregon; Betty Schedeem, Gresham, Oregon; Martha Shannon, Spokane, Washington; Carl Townsend, Portland, Oregon; Fritz van Gent, Gresham, Oregon.

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INTRODUCTION

This document is about ourselves, our planet and our future. It traces a journey out of the industrial era and into the communications era.

Those who have signed the document are convinced that each crisis we face brings us to a crossroads, with paths of extraordinary opportunity as well as of great danger. Our culture currently concentrates on the dangers of our situation. Strong, creative leadership is needed at all levels of our society to shift our focus away from the negative and toward the more positive future which is within our grasp.

Our images of reality and our visions of the future determine our priorities. As we see our future, so we act. As we act, so we become. We can bring about desirable changes when we see new directions and act to achieve them.

- Rising unemployment rates proclaim that human beings can be freed from repetitive physical and mental toil. We can develop social systems which provide real opportunities for meaningful work and adequate economic support for all.
- Rapidly growing medical costs, combined with growing knowledge of how to stay healthy, provide the opportunity to enhance personal well-being through changes in life style.
- Environmental stress and limited physical resources, coupled with climatic shifts, provide the opportunity to concentrate on improving the quality of life through cooperation with natural systems.
- Nuclear weaponry, and the revulsion against the possibility of total destruction, provide the opportunity to move beyond war as a means of settling international disputes.

Each crisis we face is both a problem and a hope, a challenge and an opportunity. As we leave today's crossroads, we can rush down the path to breakdown or turn the corner toward breakthrough. A growing worldwide desire for more creative and humane directions can be realized.

- We can enable people to learn throughout their lifetimes in order to keep up with ever-changing realities.



- We can search for alternative "win-win" methods of resolving disputes, rather than merely determining guilt and innocence.
- We can realize that the needs of the nation-state are less vital than those of the planet.
- We can heal the tensions between different nations, different races, different sexes and different classes by recognizing, finally, that we on this planet are all one family, living in the same house, and divorce is not an option.

There is strong evidence that people throughout the world recognize the need for fundamental change. It is now time to move these issues into the mainstream of personal, political, academic and media debate. By beginning this discussion each of us has the opportunity to create a genuinely positive future.

In this document, as in our lives, we embark on a journey. It is a journey toward interconnection and cooperation, toward balance and personal commitment. We travel from schooling to learning to learn, from jobs to creative living. We travel toward new decision-making styles and structures. It is a journey toward personal action.

We journey together between the lightning and the thunder. We journey between the flash of recognition of what is happening to us and the reverberations of what we are willing to do about it. In the first section we look for the lightning, in the magnitude of the changes through which we are living.

THE MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

There is nothing new or unusual about cultural change. This observation, however, can easily blind us to the fact that we do indeed stand at an unprecedented turning point. The depth, pervasiveness, and speed of the changes we are experiencing far exceed any previous time in history. Comparable transitions — the agricultural revolution, begun some 8000 years ago; the move to cities and urban civilization, begun some 5500 years ago; and the industrial revolution, begun some 200 years ago — all took place over centuries. Today we are in the midst of even greater cultural shifts which are taking, at most, a few decades.

The shift through which we are living is unique in two critical ways. First, it is taking place within the lifetimes of those alive today. Our previous patterns of behavior are no longer effective. For the first time, human beings must deliberately search for new ways to understand the world if it, and we, are to survive. Second, since the beginning of history, people have given their loyalty to their own group and feared or distrusted outsiders. Today, our power has become so great that the violence which results from this mutual fear can end in total destruction. We must therefore eliminate the "we-they," "win-lose" patterns which have dominated our thinking and action and replace them with win-win styles.

The magnitude of the changes we will see in our lifetimes is almost overwhelming. The ways in which we live, work and play will be dramatically altered. A number of key forces fuel this change. They are forces which we must learn to understand and use so that we can create the more humane world so many of us desire.

- Electronic communication and rapid travel alter our experience of the world. Development of large-scale communication satellites moves us closer to the "wired sky." Within a few years a cellular telephone unit the size and cost of a large wristwatch will be on the market. This unit will telephone from anywhere to anywhere, interconnect all existing wired and satellite communication systems and, when plugged into a television, transmit and receive video communications. The cordless or mobile telephone represents a step in this direction.

Such developments lead to instantaneous worldwide connections. Royal marriages and wars, the Olympics and news of social breakdowns are available almost immediately around the world. Time compresses. Space shrinks. Until this century few people had meaningful contact beyond their village or district; the average person never traveled more than 50 miles from his or her birthplace. Now, "spacebridges" link us to every other point on the planet.

- The biotechnological revolution is creating new life forms. Genetic engineering, recombinant DNA procedures, cloning, and their companion biotechnologies may represent the most significant human invention since the controlled use of fire. When our ancestors mastered fire, they were able to create new alloys from the inorganic matter of the earth.



With the ability developed in the last 10 years to manipulate and alter living systems, humans have acquired the power to create new life forms. One example is genetically altered food bacteria, developed to lower the freezing temperatures of food crops, scheduled for experimental use in California fields early in 1984. There are hundreds of other examples.

The 1980 U.S. Supreme Court decision that new forms of life could be patented may be seen as its most important decision in the last quarter of the 20th century. Future farmers may joke, "As ye clone, so shall ye reap." Some suggest that biotechnological industries will surpass communications industries in size and investment. Such prospects raise questions of unprecedented magnitude, demanding intensive, intelligent debate.

- Microelectronics continues to open new technological possibilities. Computers are becoming smaller, faster, cheaper, more powerful and accessible to more people. The first massive electronic computer is surpassed in power and speed by today's \$5 computer chip. If the airline industry had miraculously developed at the same rate, today's most modern plane, the Boeing 767, would cost \$500 and circle the globe in 20 minutes on five gallons of fuel. Rapid development continues: we will talk to, rather than type on, computers within a decade.

Computers and robots now promise to do for industry and business what the tractor and other farm machinery did for agriculture early in this century — allow productivity to rise while employment drops. For example, in the U.S. auto industry, the installation of 10 to 20 thousand robots by the end of the decade will create up to 5,000 new jobs for robot technicians, but the robots will replace 50,000 auto workers. Estimates by *Fortune* Magazine project the loss of one-third to one-half of the remaining "smokestack industry" jobs by 1990 — these include iron and steel production, metals fabrication, machine tool making and operating, auto and auto supply production. A significant proportion of this loss is attributable to progress in microelectronics. People are being freed from repetitive physical and mental toil, but there are no major new employers waiting to absorb all the displaced workers.

Capitalism, socialism and communism, which are all based on the out-dated assumptions of the industrial era, are

already unable to adequately use the world's full productive capacities. Six hundred million people (more than one-fourth of the world's potential work force) were unemployed or underemployed during 1983, even though major human needs went unmet around the globe.

- We are reaching the physical and ecological limits of our planet. Until the middle of this century, nature and the world were always securely "bigger" than human activity. Even though past human activity has led to regional ecological catastrophes (as in the desertification of the Middle East), the scope was always limited. There was always fresh territory on which life could be renewed. No longer do we have this luxury. There are no geographic frontiers, no unexplored territories left on the planet.

In 1960, when world population reached three billion, expansion in the yields of the forests, seas, and grasslands (three basic natural systems) fell behind population growth. In addition to worldwide population growth, the toxic potency of our chemicals, the impact of widespread environment altering activities (such as the clearing of forests), and the effects of our extensive use of fossil fuels (such as acid rain and changes in carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere) are threatening the carrying capacity of the earth.

Debate continues regarding how close we have come to the planet's carrying capacity. Yet it seems clear that we cannot maintain the growth patterns of the past for much longer. Even if the entire mass of the earth were made of petroleum, we would exhaust the supply in 342 years at the usage rates of the last decade. At current growth rates, the world's population would reach one person per square meter of ice-free land in just 600 years. The major easily used mineral deposits have been tapped, and probably most of the significant mineral deposits have been identified. The first oil well was 69.5 feet deep. Now, new wells go as deep as four to five miles. Rather than costing \$50,000, new wells can cost \$20 million, and ocean-going platforms cost upwards of \$1 billion.

If we are to adequately feed the world's population in the year 2000, food production will have to increase significantly. However, such problems as erosion, desertification, farmland conversion, and water shortage threaten the productivity of even the world's "breadbasket," the United States.

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The U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment reported in October 1983 that one-half of the western United States, representing 43% of U.S. farm income, is experiencing local and seasonal water supply problems. This is in large part due to production techniques which emphasize the use of fertilizers and pesticides, frequent tillage, irrigation, and very few, very specialized crops.

We still have much to learn about natural systems. There is considerable hope that through cooperation with nature we can significantly increase food supplies in ways that have minimal adverse environmental impact. Simply continuing our present course, however, will lead to disaster. No longer can we expect the earth to provide "unlimited" resources and tolerantly absorb whatever we do.

- Nuclear and other weapons enable humanity to engage in collective self-destruction, and raise the real possibility of destroying all higher life forms on the planet. The world's supply of nuclear weapons, which was three in 1945, reached 50,000 in 1983. By the end of this century, planned growth in these stockpiles will lead to the equivalent of seven tons of TNT for each person then on earth.

Studies of the probable outcomes of nuclear war keep turning up "side effects." The use of even a third of the present arsenal would send so much dust and smoke into the atmosphere that temperatures would drop well below freezing over the whole globe for months, killing most life that survived the first blasts. After the dust settled, the planet would be exposed to lethal ultraviolet radiation from the sun for many years, due to destruction of the ozone layer in the atmosphere. In effect, war has become self-defeating and obsolete. We can choose to grow up or blow up.

Mass destruction, however, is only the starkest part of the threat. There are human losses even without war. As the destructiveness of our weapons has increased, so have the complexity and brittleness of our social and economic systems. Today, whole societies are vulnerable to simple acts of sabotage and terrorism by a few people. A handful of people could disrupt three-fourths of the oil and gas supplies to the eastern United States for several months without leaving Louisiana, one of the major transfer points for international gas and oil supplies. Modern society and political violence have become mutually exclusive.

- The gap between rich and poor is widening both within countries and between them. The social safety net constructed in the post-World War II years in the developed countries has broken: hunger and deprivation are increasing even in the rich countries. For the first time in many decades, the richest are becoming richer and the poor are losing their minimal resources.

International banking organizations are demanding that the poor countries cut back on consumption and trade. Standards of living are declining seriously in many areas of the world. Every minute 30 children die for want of food or medicine while the population continues to increase, growing most dramatically in many of the countries which cannot afford to feed more people. In that same minute, the nations of the world spend \$1.3 million on their military forces.

- Changes in the roles of women and the family are both cause and effect of social change. No social shift has been more pervasive than the entry of women into the paid labor force. In 1945 only 20% of married women aged 16-54 in the United States were part of the labor force; by 1982 this leaped to 55%. Seventy percent of all single mothers are employed. During the 1980's, 75% of new workers in the United States will be women; in Canada 70% of new entrants will be women. Women are gaining a greater degree of financial independence, even though their wages run only about 55% of the rate paid to men. Their increasing participation in management and other positions of authority is affecting traditional decision-making patterns. Women are also experiencing increased stress.

The traditional family as we have known it for more than a century is also changing. Today, only 7% of U.S. households fit the image of breadwinner husband, homemaker wife, and two or more children. The most rapidly increasing "household" is the single person living alone. The most common family form is the working husband and working wife with one or more children. The size of families has been shrinking for centuries. Just 100 years ago the average woman in the United States had seven children. Today she has two.

- Our move to outer space is altering our vision of the earth and our place in the universe. The flight of Sputnik in 1957 marked our first halting steps into the universe. Humanity



is extending its sensory organs outward in the solar system and far beyond. A permanent human presence in space has been established in the Salyut station. We have contemplated earthrise from the moon. Data from the Infrared Astronomical Satellite suggests that at least 50 nearby stars have planetary systems.

Perhaps the most important single outcome of the space program so far has been the picture of the whole earth, floating in space. That visual image has etched into human consciousness the concept that we are all one family, living in the same house. The launch of the large space telescope in 1985 may have a comparable impact on our outward view of the universe and of our place in it. This 100-inch telescope will allow us to see seven times further into space and may quickly bring us closer to answering the question of whether we are alone in the universe.

The existence of these and other critically important forces which require fundamental change can no longer be disputed. Biological and microelectronic technologies are radically changing our definition of work. Warfare is no longer an acceptable way to resolve disputes. The economic disparity between the rich and the poor is unacceptable. Our challenge, as one species on this planet, is to use these forces to continually create and recreate a world which recognizes the emergence of a number of new and important realities.

THE NEW REALITIES

People all over the world are becoming conscious of our common predicament and common destiny. This rising self-consciousness of cultures and our ability to see the historical turning point at which we stand means that we can more deliberately and consciously influence our direction.

The choices we will make hang in the balance, as we struggle against the urge to go back, to recover past glories, to postpone the future. If we can constantly proceed as though in a spiral, circling back to gather up what is good and deep and rich, and then moving ahead toward the next age, we can build on our collective wisdom.

The shifts from the industrial era to the communications era involve a return to past values as well as the recognition of new values. We shall learn that:

- The values of honesty, responsibility, humility, and love are necessary to survive in a world with today's productive and

destructive power.

- We are interdependent and connected. We now know that every action we take will affect both our environment and our attitudes toward the world, in complex and unpredictable ways.
- All actions have mixed consequences. Few, if any, have only good or bad results. We need to balance our behavior, considering both the immediate and the long-run effects of what we do.
- We need cooperation. The industrial era's emphasis on competition seemed effective when we had "unlimited" resources and strove for maximum growth. In the communications era we will need to cooperate to conserve resources and develop human potential.
- Diversity is a virtue. The metaphor of the melting pot is no longer useful. The new image can be a rich, varied tapestry, in which we weave together the strength and wisdom of the young and old, men and women, all races and all classes. We can also recognize and offer support to the wide range of family styles that now exist.
- Authority should be based on competence, knowledge, and wisdom, rather than on position and force, as in the industrial era. We can look to Native American and other cultures which we have often dismissed as "primitive," for models of this "new" authority.
- The main human activity will become learning and growing. The essential human contribution to life will be creative, integrative, and focused on relationships.
- We must develop a common loyalty as citizens of the world, without losing our local and national commitments.

We can summarize the implications of these new realities in the following four statements:

1. We need to live by conscious choice and design, within the ecological and resource limits of the planet.
2. We need to develop effective alternatives to our current patterns of violence, particularly war.
3. We need to develop new economic institutions that will allow us to use our new technologies in ways that are truly humane and freeing.
4. We need to develop social and political institutions that use the full richness of our human capacities and provide for broader self-reliance and the participation of all.



PATHS IN THE JOURNEY

Fortunately, people are already moving toward the new realities. At the heart of the journey is a growing realization of the importance of human skills. We can develop the full potential of people, both individually and in groups. Good communication, including building relationships and gathering information, is essential to developing and maintaining the skills we need. Because communication plays such a central role in this new era, we call it the communications era.

Toward Interconnection and Cooperation

Our major social systems grew out of industrial era assumptions. These assumptions are changing fundamentally. We can expect our major systems to change as well. In the following sections, we will discuss the kinds of changes we need to make as we travel to a healthier society in the communications era. Many of these new cultural patterns have already begun to take form. Much remains to be done.

The industrial era drew its basic ideas about the world from the physical sciences. In the 19th century, physics viewed the universe as an empty space containing well-defined isolated objects. In the same way, people were treated as completely separate individuals - separate from each other and from nature.

During the 20th century physics has completely reversed its view of the universe. The deeper we probe into inner and outer space, the more we come to realize that everything is interconnected. Space is filled with all kinds of energies and fields. The isolation and distinctness of objects is an illusion. Ecology also illustrates how all life on the planet is interdependent. At a more directly human level, our new electronic communication technologies are "shrinking" and connecting the world. Taken together, these influences are producing a major shift in perceptions, understanding, and values.

- We are finding that attempts to "conquer" and "exploit" nature make us victims of our own actions rather than victors. For example, since the damming of the Nile River the rat population in Egypt has exploded, its growth no longer held in check by the annual Nile floods. These rats currently consume one-quarter of the grain in Egypt.

Natural systems are complex and wonderfully productive. We will be more effective if we take the time to learn how to work cooperatively with these systems than to try to force them into some humanly imposed form. We need sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry, sustainable fisheries. These will be based on cooperation with natural systems rather than dependence on massive inputs of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.

- We can shift to renewable sources of energy and recycling of minerals wherever possible. We can recognize that our energy and mineral "capital" must be used to enable a transfer to a sustainable economy.
- We can reconnect with our neighborhoods and communities. As jobs and careers become less central to our lives, we will become true inhabitants of the place where we live, knowing both the people and the land. We will widen our experience with communications and travel, but we will move from community to community less frequently. This trend is already developing.
- We will realize that it does not make sense to make ourselves, our families, our communities or our nation secure by acting in ways that make others less secure. Instead, we can focus on actions which make others more secure, thereby increasing our own security and enhancing our freedom.

To promote our mutual security, we must learn to understand why we disagree. We will have to come to grips with the reality that each of us sees the world differently, depending on our experience and our heritage. We will listen to each other more closely and more creatively than ever before, in order to learn about our agreements and disagreements.

Toward Balance and Personal Commitment

Specialization developed during the industrial era. Until recently, the demand for highly trained professionals always ran ahead of the ability of the education system to produce them. The division of labor was encouraged in every possible way and citizens increasingly became passively dependent on specialists in medicine, law, banking, and many other areas.

The communications era will continue to need many specialists; indeed, we all act as specialists at some time during our lives.



But the relationship between specialists and citizens will change dramatically. Specialists will no longer be the decision-makers, but will be the creators and communicators of tools, techniques, and knowledge. They will teach others how to be more self-reliant.

There are several reasons for this shift:

- We are coming to understand that specialization has costs as well as benefits and that major economic and social potentials emerge from widespread general knowledge and skills.
- It is becoming increasingly easy to organize and communicate all kinds of information.
- We will be able to continue learning new subjects and skills throughout our life-times.
- People are better educated than ever before. In particular, we are becoming more skilled at finding and using information.

These shifts are already underway:

••• From Medicine to Health

During the last decade, more and more people have committed themselves to lifestyles which promote their own health. Exercise, diet, biofeedback, stress management, visualization, and mental and spiritual disciplines are being combined to prevent and treat illness and disease. New tools for home diagnosis and increasing awareness of our body/mind system are becoming readily available; computers will increase these possibilities further.

In the eighties, the cost of medical care has risen so high that we are unable to continue our open-ended commitment to health care for all who require it. In this age of dramatic medical breakthroughs, many people may be excluded from healthy lives solely on the basis of money. A commitment to promoting health can alleviate some of this suffering.

••• From Courts to Mediation

More and more, people are realizing that there are other ways to resolve conflicts than by turning them over to lawyers and judges. In most common disputes, including divorce, mediation is possible. It is generally cheaper and faster, and the solu-

tions are more creative, more healing, and more meaningful for the parties involved. Volunteer and private mediation programs already exist in many places throughout the United States, and their number is growing.

••• From More Police Patrols to Block Watch

People are discovering that "block watch" programs, in which neighbors help one another in cooperation with local police, are effective in reducing neighborhood crime. These neighborhood-based programs are more effective than increasing the visibility and presence, and thus the costs, of professional police. In some cities and communities across the United States the crime rate has dropped significantly in recent years. From New York city to Winterpark, Florida, to Spokane, Washington, the drop in the crime rate has been attributed to neighborhood block watch programs.

••• From Hierarchy to Participative Management

The industrial era demanded much repetitive physical and mental activity. Only a small percentage of the workforce was encouraged to be imaginative or to participate in significant decision-making. Now, as we move into the communications era, the demand for repetitive work is decreasing rapidly and many more jobs are requiring creativity and self-direction. Our work structures need to be redesigned to encourage these qualities in a much larger percentage of the work force.

Many of the more vigorous new companies have a high degree of both employee participation in work-place decisions and employee ownership. W.L. Gore & Associates and Intel are examples of major companies in the U.S. successfully built on these principles. The Mondragon Cooperative Group in Spain, based entirely on employee ownership and workplace democracy, has become one of that country's largest industries with a productivity 30% higher than comparable industries.

••• From Commercial Banking to Lender-Directed Banking

Banking may be the next major area where people realize they have sold themselves short by "letting the experts do it." People used to turn over their capital — in the form of savings, pensions and insurance — to bankers and other money managers and asked only that they get a high interest rate and reasonable security. The question of which activities their capital would support was left to the "experts."



Today, people are starting to realize that their capital often supports activities which they deeply oppose; they want to regain their power over "what" as well as "how much." In San Francisco, the Continental Savings Bank created a special type of account through which funds were to be invested only in solar homes. The bank expected to get about \$1 million in savings capital but they soon had over \$20 million, which was much more than they could invest. A number of new investment funds now make decisions on the basis of social responsibility as well as traditional financial considerations.

This journey toward interconnection and cooperation and toward balance and personal commitment will be characterized by large numbers of people making small changes in how they choose to live their lives. These changes will not be seen as dramatic, except in retrospect. The real challenge is to encourage an awareness and acceptability of these changes and to look quietly for other ways in which individuals, communities and the planet can gain control of their own destinies.

INTERLUDE

Recent research on the human mind and learning suggests that the brain can only absorb a certain amount of information before it takes an interlude, a short break. During this time it integrates and organizes what has come in.

Assuming that you are ready for an interlude, here are a few possibilities.

White horse clip-clopping
Over the moonlit field
Oh oh
I'm part of the picture

Haiku by Basho

Once a photograph of the Earth, taken from the outside, is available ... a new idea as powerful as any in history will let loose.

Sir Fred Hoyle, 1948

Time is nature's way of preventing everything from happening at once.

Subway graffiti

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE JOURNEY

We now know that if any part of our society changes fundamentally, that change will affect everything else. No complete picture can therefore be given of what needs to be done. Much of what we can do will emerge as we start to act.

We have chosen to concentrate in this section on three subjects: education, work and decision-making. We provide in each case brief examples of the directions of change and the models which can make a difference.

From Schooling to Learning to Learn

History suggests that the fundamental style of a culture is reflected in the way it raises and trains its children. The process of learning was almost entirely integrated with rural life until the 19th century. Most people were farmers. Young people learned by doing and by observing those around them. By their teens, people were integrated into the society. "Education" was reserved for the elite.

The idea of general public schooling emerged with the industrial era. The recruiting of workers into factories and offices deprived children of the opportunity to learn by observing. Likewise, the specialized skills that led to advancement in the new system were not readily available outside of schools. Gradually, education became a specialized function, required for all. Its goal became "employability."

The needs and opportunities of the communications era are very different and require a significantly different approach to learning. The goal of this new approach will be to help each person become a skillful independent learner, capable of lifelong learning.

Education will be centered around the learner. The teacher will enable the process of discovery and choice. This approach will capitalize on recent brain/mind research, and recognize that each individual has his or her own perceptual and learning styles. It will value the development of individual creativity. It will recognize that learning takes place in all aspects of life. Formal education will be seen as a support to a larger lifelong process rather than the main arena of learning. Because of this, education will focus on developing skills of learning such as:



- Communication, including speaking and listening, nonverbal, written, electronic, and artistic skills
- Creative thinking, including willingness to risk and embrace error in learning
- The ability to find, critically evaluate, and use information
- Problem-solving through diverse methods
- The ability to work independently
- The ability to work in groups, recognizing the value of individual differences.

While many of these goals may not sound fundamentally new, the way we reach them will be. We imagine a combination of community center, library, and telecommunications center which would replace the industrial era's schools. These learning centers would be open to all ages, from cradle to cane, and would be used year-round. They would involve the old teaching the young and the young teaching the old, with a fundamental value of "each one teach one."

Learning centers would increasingly include lifelong training and retraining, as people shift careers several times over a lifetime, developing "in and out" work and education life cycles. Such centers would become an integral part of our lives. They would coordinate learning activities dispersed throughout the community — in the learning center itself, in homes, museums, galleries, science centers, places of work, and elsewhere. All forms of media would be used to enhance this learning process.

Educators in this setting would find their jobs evolving away from a primary role of "information provider" whose task was to fill students with information. Instead they will help learners assess their present skills and abilities, help design appropriate individual and group learning activities, and assist in finding appropriate learning aids, including books and computers, laboratories and museums. Some of the learning activities will resemble what we today call school, but many will not.

It is fair to say that learning will be to the communications age as farming was to the agricultural age and the job has been to the industrial age — that is, the most fundamental task. To

make the transition, we need to be willing to work with a variety of approaches:

- Learning centers could be developed out of existing schools and/or libraries. Community colleges and public libraries already fulfill some of these functions for adults, and some innovative public and private schools have been moving in that direction for young people.
- In already existing "autonomous" schools, the whole school community — teachers, parents, students, administration and staff — are told: "Here is the total amount of money you have for your school, and here are some very broad curricular goals and equal opportunity standards. Create the very best school you can." If this freedom were applied to the development of community learning centers, exciting models could result.
- New partnerships between business and schools are also helping to reconnect learning to community life. Employees are providing volunteer help in schools and their businesses are providing internships and some in-kind support.
- Parents are again teaching their children at home, in new ways that draw on the information richness of our society. The Stillaguamish Learning Exchange in Washington State — a true school without walls — combines the best aspects of independent learning with the professional assistance of trained teachers.
- Successful experiments have already taken place with entrepreneurship in schools, where students write computer programs and provide day-care. Other possibilities, such as labor-intensive hydroponic farming, are limited only by our imagination. Students once again learn by doing and observing. In addition, these models provide new funding sources for schools.

The core of the new curriculum will be learning to communicate in many ways and using many "languages," ranging from science to dance, from English to Hopi, from computers to painting. The most important knowledge will be knowledge of thinking skills, creativity, and how to learn.

The new educational style will be cooperative. Whether we work in business or government, as a volunteer or in the



military, we must all work together. Our new basic test will question how well people cooperate rather than compete.

Most of the options discussed here are no more expensive than present school programs. Some are significantly less expensive. What is needed now is not the development of massive new institutions or new universally applied curriculums and testing procedures. Instead, we need a new understanding of learning so that we can apply our present educational resources in ways appropriate to the diversity of the communications era.

From Jobs to Creative Living

In the mid-19th century, people divided the total hours in their lives somewhat equally between work, sleep, and all other activities. Since then our total life hours on the job have steadily decreased to average less than 15%.

This decrease has come about because of growing periods of schooling, longer lifespans with more time spent in retirement, longer vacations and more holidays, more part-time jobs, and growing unemployment. The industrial era assumed that life was divided into three stages — education, job, and retirement, with the central part of one's life being the job. The decrease in the amount of time we spend on the job means that the job no longer plays such a central part in our lives.

This does not mean, however, that we are running out of work. There are urgent world problems which can absorb huge amounts of human energy. We continue to need a great deal of socially valuable, productive activity — parenting, teaching, and various community activities, as well as all kinds of creative and innovative endeavors in the arts and in societal entrepreneurship. We shall describe these activities as the "committed economy" because their common characteristic is that people do them out of a sense of personal commitment and commitment to society.

Committed activities are vital to the health of a society. Yet we systematically undervalue and undersupport them because they don't fit into either our market economy or the public sector. They are not supported by the market because benefits from these activities are often long-term, diffuse and difficult to define. They are not supported by government because they are not easily regulated by the bureaucracy.

The ways we measure "productive" activity also make it difficult for us to see the value of committed activities. We usually consider "productive" only those activities done for money. For example, if parents raise their children themselves, this does not add to calculated economic activity; if children are taken to a day-care center it does. If a family paints its own house, the work is not counted; if a painter does it, it is. Church potlucks add nothing to economic wealth as we measure it; catered dinners do.

In the communications era, committed activities will account for a higher percentage of our time than traditional "jobs." A healthy communications era society will include the committed economy on an equal footing with the market economy. But it is unrealistic to expect large numbers of people to move in this direction without economic support, social legitimacy and new ways of measuring productivity. We can:

- Spread available jobs as much as possible through various forms of part-time work, job-sharing, and "in and out" life cycles. Surveys consistently show that large numbers of people would gladly reduce both income and time spent working, if they could maintain their job security. We can remove institutional barriers to "voluntary worktime reduction," and actively encourage it.
- Establish some form of basic economic security, available to all members of the society. From the perspective of the communications era, this is not welfare but a legitimate recognition of the debt that the market economy owes to the committed economy.
- Support institutions that assist the committed economy, such as learning centers, community health clinics and cooperatives. We need to consciously affirm their social value and systematically develop them.
- Replace existing stereotypes which cause us to value paid activity far more than self-supported and voluntary work, so that people can more freely choose a life pattern which includes committed activities.

We do not need to increase taxes to make these changes. Instead, we need to redirect the way we use resources. By supporting the committed economy socially and economically, we will vastly improve the quality of life throughout the society.



The coming of the industrial era did not diminish the importance of agriculture. It permitted foods and fibers to be produced with fewer people than before. The coming of the communications era will not eliminate the need for industrial production, but it will enable us to minimize the use of nonrenewable resources and to free people for new roles.

When industry replaced agriculture as the central sector of the economy we devalued the importance of the farmer. We must not repeat that mistake. In the communications era all workers will be critical to the functioning of our society, including workers in the traditional economy and in the committed economy.

NEW DECISION-MAKING STYLES

Underlying all the issues we have discussed so far is the issue of authority. How do decisions get made in an increasingly complex and interdependent world? Major changes are taking place in theories of decision-making. For example, organizations and firms which formerly relied on making decisions from the top down now challenge their staffs at all levels to be creative and involved.

One of the critical questions for our culture is how we can make urgently needed changes. The political concepts we need in the communications era resemble those which developed in the 18th century — decisions need to be placed close to the people affected by them, and effective government depends on the consent of the governed.

When we lost sight of these underlying concepts, power drifted to the national level. Indeed, people came to assume that this was the only appropriate place for dealing with complex issues. We are now discovering that many questions cannot be effectively handled at the national level. Issues such as education, new socio-economic patterns, and reduction of crime require local involvement, while issues such as peace and protection of the natural environment require action at the global level.

••• Global Decision-Making

We often believe that other people have a fixed view of their self-interest and that communication with them will have little if any impact on world affairs. The events of the last 40 years, however, show us how quickly views can change. At-

titudes about war and the natural environment, full employment and economic growth, energy and resources are profoundly different now than they were at the end of the Second World War. For example, the idea of preserving the environment had little support 15 years ago. Today, a healthy natural environment is becoming critically important to most wealthy industrial nations and is commanding increasing attention in poorer nations.

Our image of "world government" is usually that of a super-state bureaucracy which can impose its will on nation-states and individuals alike. As we move into the communications era, we will not create world government, but we will make decisions based on our interconnectedness. Our systems of networks, coalitions, professional societies and international agencies are bringing us together. Through the use of satellites, computers and television we are sharing new patterns of thinking at all levels. We are developing a sense of planetary community. A web of "listeners", mediators, arbitrators and conciliators is developing as they help resolve conflict and crisis in creative, non-threatening ways.

We can best support the healthy, necessary development of global cooperation by becoming part of global networks. As we create millions of non-governmental channels through which information, understanding and trust can flow, we will build the foundation on which valid global decision-making can occur.

••• National Decision-Making

The nation-state will continue to be a useful level of government far into the future. But effective power is already moving away from this style of government. For example, the nation-state still has the power to declare war but the existence of nuclear weapons means that it cannot afford to do so.

Power is moving to regions within countries as well as to local authorities. One of our most urgent tasks is to develop governmental boundaries which are relevant to today's issues. In developing them, we should look at natural environmental patterns (bio-regions) as well as current and projected human patterns.

••• Neighborhood/Community Decision-Making

Power moved to the national level in part because citizens and their local governments lacked, or seemed to lack, the will-



ingness and capability to tackle tough issues. The communications era requires that people be creative and develop self-reliance and self-direction. As they do so, they will demand greater involvement in government than our present system provides. This greater involvement will begin at the community level.

Effective community action requires a return to community autonomy. This move will place decision-making as close to those affected as possible. The price of this greater autonomy, however, is greater responsibility.

Good decision-making requires knowledge, so we can reasonably anticipate the consequences of our actions. It requires wisdom so we can balance the needs of individuals and groups with different values and patterns of behavior. It requires courage to face difficult issues. In the communications era we will be able to dramatically improve both the availability of knowledge to local communities and their ability to use it. We will also be able to provide local decision-making bodies with models which balance needs and allow all parties to benefit. Citizens working together at the local level will find that the courage to resolve difficult issues will come from a sense of community and a sense of moving forward together.

Local autonomy will provide greater opportunities for much-needed innovation and experimentation. New ideas and models have already sprung up all over the country. They can be shared with others and can serve as inspirations for different thinking and action.

WHAT WE CAN DO

Fundamental change has always begun at the personal level. We face a problem, have a need, glimpse a future and we act — if we believe that change is possible.

It is.

We are its vehicle.

The first thing you and I, and everyone of us, can do is to realize that we *can* act. This is a critical departure from the feelings of powerlessness that pervade our society.

We can begin talking with those people around us — spouses, children, parents, neighbors, co-workers — about what is hap-

pening in our world. This confirms that we are not alone in our hopes and concerns, and it frees us to begin thinking about what we can do together.

We can take a fresh look at the patterns of our own lives. Each of us plays many roles as parent and child; spouse and churchgoer; club member and consumer; sportsperson and worker; pragmatist and dreamer. We can make significant *small* changes in each of these areas. We can begin a blockwatch program in our neighborhood. We can initiate conflict resolution practices in our workplace. We can teach our children one new skill important for the future. These are only a few of hundreds of possibilities that exist in our daily lives.

We can get together with others who share our concern. A small group, working together, can be amazingly powerful in bringing about a better school, a better library, or better communication with the police department. Such a group can create a cooperative, save an historical building, begin a community theater group or chorale.

We can use the many "tools" available to us. At the end of this document is a short list of books, periodicals and groups. Read one book, give one article to a friend, contact one group which is working for positive change.

We can use this document to provide a picture of the new world. We can share it with others and discuss it at a local club, church group, school organization or at home. We can give it to family, friends and co-workers, to local and national political and business leaders, to neighborhood clergy and teachers, to the branch banker and to the checkout clerk at the local grocery store, to the barber or beautician, to our doctor and dentist, and to local radio and television stations and newspapers.

We can strengthen our networks of friends and colleagues. These are the people who are most interested in our views. We will be most effective in bringing about change when we work with them.

In doing these things — all of which we *can* do — we will begin to discover that the visible, apparent breakdown in our society hides an extraordinary range of exciting activities and new directions. We are ready for fundamental change; all we must do is to make this reality obvious.



Finally, in taking this journey, it is important that we proceed with humor and tolerance — both of ourselves and of others. We are moving into a future that is only partially glimpsed and we need to listen well to each other as we speak from the richness of our diverse viewpoints.

Remember that you are at an exceptional hour
in a unique epoch,
that you have this great happiness,
this invaluable privilege, of being present at
the birth of a new world.

The Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram

RESOURCES

The following very brief list of resources provides opportunities for your involvement. We concentrate here on those groups, books and magazines which examine the overall picture, rather than those which work with more specific problems and possibilities.

Organizations which will support, and often help organize, local events.

Action Linkage, Box 2240, Wickenburg, AZ 85358, U.S.A. Works to link local groups concerned to bring about fundamental change, provides models and consulting services. \$30.00 annually.

Future Tense, Inc.: The Lindaman Group, 15822 Pineview Circle, Spokane, WA 99208, U.S.A. Concerned with changing perceptions of the future, education for creating preferred futures. Presentation and consulting services. \$12.00 annually, includes quarterly newsletter, *Future Tense*.

Institute of Noetic Sciences, 2658 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA 94965, U.S.A. Committed to exploring the nature of human consciousness. Associate membership \$35.00 annually, includes quarterly *Newsletter*.

Networking Institute, Inc., P.O. Box 66, West Newton, MA 02165, U.S.A. Links those concerned with developing and supporting networking. General membership \$25.00 annually.

Planet Drum Foundation, Box 31251, San Francisco, CA 94131, U.S.A. Promotes bioregional thinking, publishes magazine irregularly. \$15.00 annually.

World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814, U.S.A. Promotes investigation of future social and technological developments and their implications. \$20.00 annually, includes monthly journal, *The Futurist*.

Newsletters and Periodicals which may be particularly useful.

Coevolution Quarterly, Point Foundation, 27 Gate 5 Road, Sausalito, CA 94965, U.S.A. Quarterly. \$15.00 annually.

Future Survey, 4916 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814, U.S.A. Monthly review of future oriented writing. \$45.00 annually for individuals.

In Context, P.O. Box 30782, Seattle, WA 98103, U.S.A. On sustainable culture. Quarterly. \$14.00 annually.

Leading Edge Bulletin, Interface Press, Box 42247, Los Angeles, CA 90042, U.S.A. Frontiers of social transformation. Published every three weeks. \$24.00 annually.

New Options, Mark Satin, P.O. Box 19324, Washington, D.C. 20036, U.S.A. Published every three weeks. \$20.00 annually.

Tranet, P.O. Box 567, Rangeley, ME 04970. Published quarterly. \$15.00 annually.

What's Next. Monthly publication of the Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future. Free, request through your Congressperson.

Introductory and Short Books

Beyond Despair. Robert Theobald. 1981. Seven Locks Press. A policy guide to the communications era. \$8.95.

An Incomplete Guide to the Future. Willis Harmon. 1979. W.W. Norton. Examination of industrial society in the process of metamorphosis. \$4.95.

Sane Alternative: A Choice of Futures. James Robertson. 1980. River Basin Publishing Company. Examination of the directions of societal change. \$4.95.

Seven Parables. Action Linkage, 537 Jones Street, -9175, San Francisco, CA 94102. Parables to support change. \$4.95.

Seven Tomorrows. Paul Hawken, James Ogilvy, Peter Schwartz. 1982. Bantam Books. Explores seven alternative futures and the choices which lead to them. \$7.95.



Thinking in the Future Tense. Edward Lindaman. 1978. Broadman Press. Explores the ways in which thinking needs to be changed. \$7.95.

Best-selling, Longer Books

The Aquarian Conspiracy. Marilyn Ferguson. 1980. Tarcher/St. Martin's Press. Many people are involved in fundamental change. \$7.95.

Megatrends. John Naisbitt. 1982. Warner Books. Certain dominant trends are working which will change the world. \$15.50.

The Third Wave. Alvin Toffler. 1981. Bantam. Examination of the shift from the industrial era to a fundamentally changed world. \$3.95.

More Difficult, but Important Books

Brittle Power. Amory Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins. 1982. Brick House Publishing. Examination of the need for renewable energy. \$17.95.

Evil and World Order. William Irwin Thompson. 1977. Harper and Row. World order will be changed, but not by rationalist planners. \$4.95.

Earth to Omega. Donald Keys. 1982. Branden. A study of the extraordinary potentials which exist at the present time. \$9.95.

The Global Brain. Peter Russell. 1983. J.P. Tarcher. Prospects of a leap to planetary consciousness. Worldwide transformation is not only possible, but probable. \$8.95.

The Next Economy. Paul Hawken. 1983. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. The world economy is being restructured from the bottom up, because of shifts in the relationship of capital, labor, energy, and new technologies. \$14.50.

Servant Leadership. Robert K. Greenleaf. 1977. Paulist Press. How people can lead effectively in today's conditions. \$12.95.

The Turning Point. Fritjof Capra. 1982. Bantam. A theoretical physicist explores transformations going on in several fields including physics, and their convergence toward a new vision of reality. \$8.95.

Introduction for Children

Creating Your Future. Action Linkage. Available for grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-9. Specify grade level when ordering. Each volume \$7.95.

To Order Books

All books can be ordered through Food for Thought Books, Box CETF, North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002. Add 10% (minimum \$1.00) for postage and handling.

SIGNATURE & ORDER INFORMATION

PLEASE COPY THIS FORM IF POSSIBLE.

You are invited to sign this document. By signing, you are expressing agreement with the following statement:

"I am signing AT THE CROSSROADS because I believe that we need to make fundamental changes in the way we see the world, to move in new directions, and to adopt new strategies and models. While I may not agree with every point in the document, I am convinced that fundamental change is required in the ways we think and act, and that we must move beyond the current stale debate into a profoundly new context."

Please sign here: _____

Print or type Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number(s): (hm) _____ (wk) _____

There is no grant support for this effort, nor are we requiring money from those who sign. To meet our costs however, we hope to average \$10.00 per signature.

Amount Enclosed _____

You can send out copies of the document for signature with a covering letter and feedback sheet so more people can be involved. If you can send \$1.00 minimum for each set, this would be helpful.

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