

PROPOSAL 2: COMMUNAL WISDOM : FINAL MEANINGS

DIGEST

Man today stands estranged, internally and externally, from a world of ever-increasing change and horrifying complexity. He has no sense of history or personal destiny in the dreadfilled churning at the center of his being. Now is the time that man will once again recover the meaning of "being covenanted" to all of life as that is particularized in the marriage vows that symbolize his marriage to God and the Church and in his covenant to his vocation which symbolizes his marriage to society and the globe.

Volume II: Cultural Wisdom  
Book II: Cultural Wisdom

1. The dynamic of Final Meanings is located on the rational pole of the foundational pole of Cultural Commonality. This dynamic is the human existential encountering of the mystery without which man has no way to interpret his experience in his culture. This is his raw encounter with life and his reaching out to fill that encounter with meaning.

PROPOSAL 2: CULTURAL WISDOM: FINAL MEANINGS

2. In the 19th Century, man's universe was rational, static, and controlled by a benevolent power. A new era for mankind birthed with the 20th Century, in which he found no rational pattern. He found an exponential increase in technological change rate and experienced a deep dread at seeing no end to the increase in the rate of change. With the collapse of his image of the eternal, he had no way to relate to final reality.

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3. Throughout history points of crisis have arisen at which man has been unable to bridge the gap between his understandings of life and his real experience, internal and external. One such point in the 20th Century was man's realization of the most horrifying realities of his potential in the form of the gas chambers and atomic bomb during World War II. This was in the midst of his being at the "peak" of his civilization, when he had the whole planet almost literally within his technological control. Man's attempt to name the mystery in the struggle in his time has eventuated in an incomplete articulation. He denies the totality of life by being deeply rooted in the 19th Century image of the benevolent Father, manifested in his search for the creative force, the Good, and his denial of the brokenness he encounters. Our concern is not with the creation of social structures, but with man's relationship to life within those structures. It is not with the creation of the symbolic life which reminds him of his encounter with the mystery of life, but with the sense after life which he experiences in the encounter itself.

4. Man has always sought after the purpose of his life in his life work, family, society, and his cultural tradition. In the midst of his real everyday experience, 20th Century man has seen the collapse of all the understandings that gave meaning to his life hopes and ambitions. In the midst of bitter disillusionments and painful failures of his life aspirations, he "tries to do the best he can." While man doubts his own creative worth in society he retains a deep desire for creative action. The more doubts he has the stronger are his desires to express his creativity. The futility he experiences drives him to destroy the creations of others.

5. Man has sought and sometimes realized in his life work a rewarding, secure engagement in society, and a chance to be of service to others. Yet in the 20th Century even some of the most highly trained professionals find that they are a "dime a dozen" or obsolete. Those who had hoped to be of help to others find that for every one person they assist, ten more people in need of help are suffering. Man's life question in the midst of the gap between his experience and his inadequate stories is "Why am I not satisfied doing this job?"

6. Men's and women's expectations and experience of marriage have been that it would provide them with love and happiness, proper role fulfillment, security for the future, and historical continuity through their children. Today the family experiences the fragmentation of its daily activities, a shift to liberal sexual mores, and a wrenching alienation of life styles between generations, and struggles with the question, "What can I get out of having a family any more?"

7. Man has sought and sometimes realized in his society a sense of necessary order, protection of individual rights, participation in genuine community. Yet he experiences hypocrisy in the social process, and that it either is unresponsive to his desperate needs and/or that it limits his human rights. He experiences the question of "Why be a loyal citizen in a society that you can't depend on?"

8. Every man wants to live in a culture that he is proud of. He longs to have the traditions that his parents and ancestors had. But more than this he wants to have a world in which his children and their children can have peace and happiness. He wants to transmit to them all the richness and opportunity for full and rewarding lives. Yet in the face of all the dreams for the future, the 20th Century shows no sign of hope that even the most meager dream will be realized. The United States once held the dream of saving the world and making it safe for democracy. It saw itself as the great civilizer of mankind. But the hopes Western man had were shattered beyond repair in numerous major world events. A key event has been the bloody, demoralizing war in Viet Nam. The question he raises is "What difference does it make whether this culture continues or not?"

9. Only a few times in the 10,000 years of man's historical trek, has the common man ever had a possibility of living the wonder and passion in the midst of ordinariness of every day life. The common man today is unable to express the meaning of the dread-filled churning in the center of his life. He stands estranged from a world of ever increasing change and horrifying complexity. Now is the time that man will once again recover the meaning of being "covenanted" to life as it is given and the Mysterious Power that has given him these times as his own: First, the movemental church will provide intensive re-education for the common man in the local church that (a) will illumine his churning interior life to the final human realities and (b) that will reappropriate the covenantal understanding in the marriage relationship that symbolizes for him the Final Reality of his life and his marriage to the church; second, the movemental church will release the local church dynamic to intensify its role as sustainer, educator, and accounter of its congregational families and to call them to be in covenant to the Unanswerable Power in their lives as their Father, the Mover of History; third, the movemental church will call into being from the congregation a family services guild of vocations that focus on family needs; fourth, the movemental church will call into being from the parish a series of vocational guilds that will symbolize common man's marriage to his society through a particular occupation. The guild will educate and nurture its participants in order to send them out to be a sign of hope and genuine care on the job.

10. Before there is a sustained movement to recover the meaning or covenant, men must be awakened to see what the conditions of their lives are. Many have already been aroused but all too quickly they become involved in projects and fads. The time they spend in well-intentioned but wholly inadequate activities consumes their passions and leaves them burned out. Our youth resort to drugs or escape to communes where they can be at peace with the world. Our elders are coddled into old age and find themselves sent away. Only the established adults appear to have the power and resources to do anything about the world. But they are caught in the economic rat race, and are tyrannized at any point where they begin to rock the boat. The movemental church will provide the awakened and unawakened people with courses of short term religious studies. Through a series of courses, each person will acquire the ability to articulate his interior depths and will form intentional relationships to his final reality. In the midst of the studies each person will see the spirit crisis of the family in our time. He will then be given the possibility to recover the meaning of covenant as particularized in the marriage vows.

11. In our times the family, in and of itself, is seen as the primary means to a meaningful, fulfilled life. Yet in the common memory of the historical church, the family covenant has always been a primary symbol for a man's and a woman's total commitment to the Mysterious Power that gives and takes all of life. The marriage covenant also symbolizes the couple's marriage to the church as the community in which the family acts out its mission to the globe. The movemental church will see that the local church assumes responsibility for the family's covenant in the following ways: by enabling the creation and implementation of a comprehensive curricula of the symbolic significance of a man's power to decide to be in covenant to all history--past, present, and future; and by enabling self-conscious understanding, for those in preparation and in the midst of creating a family, of the ultimate significance of the marriage covenant.

12. The local community care structures will be mobilized to re-engage man in the life struggle which is his meaning as it is particularized in the crisis of the family. Within every local congregation, counsellors, teachers, educators, social workers, and others will receive training and grounding in depth insights into the family crisis today. A guild will be formed to focus on bringing clarity to man's state of separatedness and to the family as common task. The guild will provide methods to use in encountering the experience of each member of local families. Models can be passed on to their professional colleagues. Stress will be placed on preventive, long-range, pre-crisis intervention.

13. The missional thrust that every man requires will be intensified through his decision to be a vocational being. It is the missional family that holds him accountable to his decision to be covenanted with society. Every member of the family will become aware of his vocation. Even the very youngest will sense his participation in this way. The child's vocation has to do with becoming a creative member of the global society. His play will intentionally hold images of what he must become. The child is like a fluid to be poured into any container. He must be able to choose a container and the kind of fluid he will be. Most importantly, he must see that his life is to be poured out and to fill the container and all dimensions. The vocational thrust of every member of the congregation will be directed toward allowing every man in society whom he touches through his occupation to know and experience the depths of the meaningful life. Vocational guilds will be formed to hold him in a covenant with society and to see that all men know life below its surface. They will train men in methodologies for this and hold them accountable to it.

14. When man recovers the meaning of covenantal relationships, he receives the power to say "Yes" to all dimensions of life. He knows what lies beyond the deep burning and unanswerable questions of his time. He knows the agony and ecstasy of struggle that every human being faces. He knows the purpose of life and shares in its wonder. He knows the peace that passes all understanding and stands awe-filled. He knows that within every other man is the passion and possibility to be his freedom. He knows that all men have a claim on history to appropriate their own uniquenesses and that each one can assume a role in corporate responsibility.

15. There are several life orientations and groups which will be working in opposition to such proposals. The expanded vision of the world and its possibilities which individuals will achieve, will act against death engagement in life as individuals float from possibility to possibility without anchoring themselves. Many people will resent the church "meddling" in their affairs as steps are taken to enable them to encounter their lives. Established community agencies will cry out that their role is being taken over by the church. Families that believe that they don't have any problems will set up a wall to any attempts to give them clarity on their struggles. Groups and individuals that believe that they are not responsible for another's personal matters become corporate concerns. They will find that they will be unable to isolate themselves or hide from others when desired, throughout their lives.

16. Each person in the global village of the 21st Century will require intensive training in articulating his encounter with the final reality. He must stand in a covenantal relationship with life and concretize that decision through the family. The family will form the primary foundational unit of society. It is imperative that a vision of the missional family be given to every societal member. It is here that the common man will recover his sense of engagement in society, his link with all of his descendants and ancestors and the historical thrust and destiny of his life and culture. Every man will need courses in religious and cultural studies. Every man must become related to the local church. Every man will have to use his life's work on behalf of all men. This is particularized by choosing his occupation for basic sustenance and thrust his whole being into it for his fellow man. Vocation will mean choosing one's arena of work in society, to keep himself and all of society alive and healthy, rooting his life in the future and putting society into the future.