**New Social Vehicle Proposal 2 Common Wisdom: Final Meanings**

First draft of a transposition written for 2020 from the 1971 New Social Vehicle document - by KSTroxel

Summary: Today people are estranged, internally and externally, from a world of both wonder and horror of ever-increasing change and complexity. It is difficulty to have a sense of history or personal destiny when there is a dread churning at the center of our being. Now is the time to recover once again the meaning of ‘being covenanted’ to all life.

**The Context**

The dynamic of ‘Final Meanings’ is located on the rational pole of the foundational pole of Cultural Commonality. This dynamic is the *human encounter with life’s mystery*, without which one has no way *to interpret one’s cultural experience. This is a raw encounter with life and reaching out to fill that encounter with meaning.*

In the 19th century our universe appeared rational, static, and controlled by a benevolent power. A new era was birthed in the 20th century, with no rational pattern. Instead there was an exponential increase in technological change creating a deep interior dread when seeing no end to the increase in this rate of change. This created a collapse of an image of the eternal and no way to relate to final reality.

Throughout history points of crisis have arisen in which people were unable to bridge the gap between their understandings of life and their real experience, internal and external. One such point in the 20th century was our realization of the horrifying realities and potential in the form of gas chambers and the atomic bomb during World War II. This was in the midst of being at the ‘peak’ of civilization with the planet almost literally within technological control. The attempt to name the mystery in the struggle of this time resulted in an inadequate articulation. Instead the deeply rooted 19th century image of the benevolent Father, a search for the creative force, the Good and the denial of the brokenness of encounters continued to deny the totality of life. What is needed goes beyond the creation of social structures to the creation of life within those structures. It goes beyond creating a symbolic life that reminds one of encounters with life’s mystery to the sense of life experienced in the encounter itself.

Throughout history people have identified the purpose of their lives in their life’s **work, family, society and cultural traditions**. The 20th century has occasioned a collapse in these understandings that gave meaning to personal hopes and ambitions. Although experiencing bitter disillusionment and failure of life aspirations, people “try to do the best they can.” Although they may doubt their creative worth in society, they retain a deep desire for creative action. The more doubts they have often result in stronger desires to express their creativity; or on the flip side the futility they experience drive them to destroy the creation of others.

**Work:** People have sought and sometimes realized in their 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 “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. The life question that gets raised in the gap between experience and inadequate stories is, **“Why am I not satisfied doing this job?”**

**Family:** In the past men and women had expectations that marriage 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 lifestyles between generations, and struggles with the question, **“What can I get out of having a family anymore?”**

**Society:** In the past society has realized a sense of necessary order, protection of individual rights, and participation in genuine community. Today there is an experience of hypocrisy: that society is either unresponsive to personal needs and limits human rights, raising the question, **“Why be a loyal citizen in a society that one cannot depend on?”**

**Cultural traditions:** Everyone wants to live in a culture they are proud of. They long to have the traditions that their parents and ancestors had. But more than this they want to have a world in which their children and their children can have peace and happiness, transmitting a richness and opportunity for full and rewarding lives. Yet in the face of these dreams for the future, the 20th century shows little hope for these dreams to be realized. The United States once held the dream of saving the world and making it safe for democracy, the great civilizer for all. But these hopes were shattered beyond repair in numerous world events such as the demoralizing Vietnamese War. The question this raises is, **“What difference does it make whether this culture continues or not?”**

Only a few times in the 10,000 year historical trek of humankind have people had a possibility living the wonder and passion in the midst of ordinary life. Today people find themselves unable to express the meaning of life. They are estranged from a world of ever increasing change and complexity. Now is the time to recover the meaning of being “covenanted” to life as it is given and the Mysterious Power that has been given.

**Final Meaning Proposals**

**INTERIOR LIFE:** First the movemental church will provide extensive re-education that will illuminate the churning interior life of its people to the final realities of life and appropriate the understanding of marriage covenants:

Before there is a sustained movement to recover the meaning or covenant, people must awaken 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 consume their passions and leave them burned out. Youth resort to drugs or escape to communes where they can be at peace with the world. Elders are coddled into old age and find themselves sent away. Only established adults (employed) appear to have power and resources to do anything about the world. But they too are caught up in the rat race and are tyrannized when they begin to rock the boat.

**FAMILY**: Second the church will intensify its role as sustainer and educator for calling its congregational families to be in covenant with the Unanswerable Power in their lives as their Father and the Mover of History;

In our time the family is seen as the primary means to a meaningful, fulfilled life. In the historical church the family covenant has always been a primary symbol for a man and woman’s total commitment to the Mysterious Power that give 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 is mission the globe.

The movemental church will see that the local church assumes responsibility for the family’s covenant by enabling:

* The creation and implementation of a comprehensive curriculum of the symbolic significance of a person’s power to be in covenant to all history – past, present and future;
* Self-conscious understanding for those in preparation and in the midst of creating a family, of the ultimate significance of the marriage covenant.

**COMMUNITY:** Third the church will call into being from the congregation a family services guild of vocations that focus on family needs:

The local community care structures will be mobilized to re-engage people in the life struggle of meaning as particularized in the crisis of the family. Within every congregation, counselors, 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 one’s state of separation and to the family as common task. The guild will provide methods to use in encountering the experience of each family member. Models can be passed on to their professional colleagues. Stress will be placed on preventive, long-range, pre-crisis intervention.

**VOCATION:** Finally the church will call into being from the parish a series of vocational guilds that will symbolize one’s marriage to society through a particular occupation. The guild will nurture its participants in order to send them out to be a sign of hope and genuine care on the job.

The missional thrust that everyone requires will be intensified through their decision to be a vocational being. It is the missional family that holds accountability to be covenanted to society. Every family member will become aware of their vocation, even the very youngest will sense their participation in this way. The child’s vocation has to do with becoming a creative member of the global society. Play will intentionally hold images of what they must become. Children are like a fluid to be poured into any container. A child must be able to choose a container and the kind of fluid to be. Most importantly , a child must see their life is to be poured out and to fill the container in all dimensions. The vocation thrust of each congregational member will allow those in society touched by the occupation to know and experience the depths of meaningful life.

Vocational guilds will be formed to hold members in a covenant with society and to see that all know life below its surface. They will be trained in methods for this and held accountable to them.

When the meaning of covenantal relationships is recovered, people receive the power to say “Yes” to all dimensions of life. They know what lies beyond the deep burning and unanswerable questions of the times. They know the agony and ecstasy of struggle all face. They know the purpose of life and share in its wonder. They know the peace that passes understanding and stands awe-filled. They know that every other person has the passion and possibility to be their freedom. They know that each person has a claim on history to appropriate their own uniqueness and that each can assume a role in corporate responsibility.

\*\*\*\*\*

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 hid from others when desired.

Each person in the global village of the 21st century will require intensive training in articulating their encounter with the final reality. They must stand in a covenantal relationship with life and concretize that decision through their family. The family will perform the primary foundational unit of society. It is imperative that a vison of the missional family be given to every societal member. It is here that local people will recover their sense of engagement in society, their link with their descendants and ancestors, and the historical thrust and destiny of their life and culture. Every person will need courses in religious and cultural studies. Everyone must become related to the local church. Everyone will have to use their life’s work on behalf of all. This will occur as each person chooses their occupation for basic sustenance and thrust their being into it for others. Vocation will mean choosing one’s arena of work in society to keep it alive and healthy, rooting their lives in the future .