

NewOptions

April 25, 1988

Issue No. Forty-seven

Pat Robertson Was Onto Something Big

Before he torpedoed his campaign with far-right "funny facts," Pat Robertson was on the verge of adding something important to the national political debate. Again and again in his speeches, he called on Americans to come up with a "common ethical standard" and set of "shared values."

Some liberals have also begun to talk about the need for shared values. Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, recently told the NEA that there's been "a moral dearth and hollowness at the core of our society. Its members share no common purpose, mutual goals, joint vision—nothing to believe in except self-aggrandizement."

The trouble is, neither conservatives nor liberals have proposed a convincing set of shared values. Robertson wants to bring us back to "traditional conceptions of morality." Edelman's suggested values are platitudes, pabulum.

We spent the past month interviewing people who've thought long and hard about what our values should be. Our interviewees range all over the political map, from a member of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective to a founder of the Pro-Life Nonviolent Action Project, from a spokesperson for the "New Cosmology" to a columnist for the *Washington Post*. Is it our imagination, or is there a considerable amount of common ground among these diverse thinkers and activists? . . .

Celebration of Earth

Thomas Berry is a Catholic priest and founder of the Riverdale Center for Religious Research in New York City; his writings have inspired a whole generation of spiritually- and bioregionally-oriented activists, including David Haenke (NEW OPTIONS #35), Kirkpatrick Sale (#21) and Charlene Spretnak (#40). "Everything must be judged primarily by the extent to which it fosters a mutually enhancing human-Earth relationship," Berry told NEW OPTIONS.

"Our values have been limited to human con-

cerns. What we need is an expansion of consciousness to an awareness of our integral relationship with the total planetary order, the total order of the geological and biological system of the Earth.

"The human is as much Earth as are rocks or mountains or rivers or whatever. It's one community. [So] to have an increase in the Gross National Product by dissipating the Gross Earth Product is just absurd. To have a human 'progress' without the progress of the other Earth systems is self-destructive. . . .

"I think of the human as a mode of being of the Earth as well as a distinctive being *on* the Earth. We are an expression of the Earth. So of course is every other thing. Our difficulties arise from our efforts to make the Earth subservient to our phenomenal ego rather than discover our true grandeur by fulfilling our role within the larger scheme of things."

In praise of hypocrisy

Time Magazine calls *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry "the most respected black voice on any white U.S. newspaper." For us he's the *Pos*'s most stimulating columnist—the one most willing to make the connections between personal choices and political life.

"The values I'd like to see us share are the ones we pretend to share," Raspberry told NEW OPTIONS. "We fall far short of them. But we still, for the most part, pay them the homage of pretending to hold them.

"I think those values have served us well, as a country, as a society. To be frank, I'm more troubled by those who start to doubt the values than by those who violate them.

"Somebody once said that hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue. I have written columns in praise of hypocrisy—for this reason: People who pretend virtues, who pretend to follow the rules, who pretend decency and all of those things, thereby acknowledge that these are values they think they *ought* to hold. And that's good. That's much better, in my view,

than those who commit the same violations but rationalize them, say that there are no absolutes, that everything is relative. . . ."

We asked Raspberry to name some of the values we pretend to share. "Respect for person and property of others," he replied. "Helping one another—there's still a tremendous instinct to charity. . . . Patriotism [is something] we let the right wing steal. . . .

"Fundamental morality is [another] one of those things we've allowed the conservatives to steal. And the good people—who more often than not will *behave* decently—will pretend to do so on the basis of having 'rationalized' their way to decent behavior. The fact is, I think, that the decency was instilled [in them] so early that it's probably unavoidable.

"I look at the danger of the abandonment of most of the virtues we pretend allegiance to when I see young children in some of the inner cities growing up without ever having been imbued with those virtues. Once they're teenagers, I think it's virtually impossible to instill those virtues—because they *don't* lend themselves to rationalization. You're not always better off in ways that seem to count by doing the 'right' thing. Sometimes there's real sacrifice involved in doing the right thing.

"If you've had [those virtues] drilled into you from infancy, the good feeling is payoff enough. But if you haven't had, then it'll look to many young people as a pointless sacrifice. And they won't make it."

Intrinsic worth

Our Bodies, Ourselves, by the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, has sold over 1.2 million copies since its publication in 1973 and is one of the classic texts of the feminist movement. It has been criticized by the New Right (and not just the New Right) as a notorious purveyor of "moral relativism."

However, when we spoke with Esther Rome, one of the 11 co-authors of the current (1984) edition—now 647 pages long!—it was

clear that she and the Collective are deeply and even passionately committed to an overriding, absolute value: the intrinsic "worth" and "wholeness" and "integrity" (Rome's words) of people.

In our wide-ranging conversation, she came back to that value again and again. For example, one of her objections to incest is that it "has to do with damaging the integrity of the individual." Or, for example, she said this: "Part of [what we advocate] is an allowance of the wholeness of the individuality of the other person. In terms of the medical system, it's still very common for women to come in to a medical situation and be told what to do. [Many] doctors are trained in medical school to be very authoritarian, and this does not ultimately respect the fact that the person they're treating, commonly called the 'patient'—I like to call them 'clients'—are really adult people who are really quite capable of thinking for themselves. . . ."

For the future

Juli Loesch is vice-president of JustLife (p. 6 below) and founder of Pro-Lifers for Survival, which worked to build bridges between anti-nuclear and anti-war activists. Her "primary value-commitment," she told NEW OPTIONS, is to "future generations, including those presently in the womb and our descendents in our more remote future.

"That orientation to future generations would exclude things like atomic and biological-chemical warfare, which would destroy the planet in an irreparable way.

"It would encompass a commitment to not squander non-renewable resources, and to not pollute the ecosphere.

"It would entail a commitment against abortion and other direct assaults against the children who are our future. . . ."

"There are certain survival things that everybody needs and to which they're entitled as a kind of right. I mean, people have a right to the food they need in order to survive. They have a right to decent housing and basic kinds of health maintenance.

"However, that's quite different from saying people have a right to unlimitedly consume whatever they want. Needs are finite, wants are infinite, and a decent society should encourage people to limit their wants on the basis that our primary value-commitment is to the future."

Compassion

Michael Lerner, formerly one of the Seattle Seven (the west coast's version of the Chicago Seven), is co-founder and editor of *Tikkun: A Bimonthly Jewish Critique*, one of the most successful political magazines of the 80s (40,000 subscribers in its third year) and one of the few to devote much attention to ethics and values. "The most important value that could be a

shared value today is the value of compassion," Lerner told NEW OPTIONS.

"Human beings in our society have been reared with a sense that all these marketplaces—the economic marketplace but also the social, psychological [and] affectional marketplaces—are governed by some principle of justice. As a result, people end up blaming themselves for the various ways in which they didn't 'make it,' 'achieve,' 'succeed,' 'get what they needed' in life. And that makes them feel terrible about themselves and [angry toward] others.

"The basis for a new society would be for people to adopt a perspective of compassion—first toward themselves and second toward each other. [Through this perspective we'd come] to understand the various constraints, the various things that hold us back, the various social, psychological, political and economic forces that keep us from being who we could and ought to be.

"If we're talking about building a new society, then the fundamental principle has got to be a sense of connectedness with and love for other human beings. Compassion is the necessary condition for the realization of love and connectedness."

Balance & commitment

Maxine Schnall is the author of *Limits: A Search for New Values* (1981). If she were an academic like Robert Bellah or Christopher Lasch, rather than an unpretentious radio talk-show host, *Limits* would be well known as one of the best books about America in the 1980s.

"Although we hold out this myth of having it all, we don't offer [anything remotely like] it," Schnall told NEW OPTIONS from the offices of WDVT-AM in Philadelphia.

"You are forced [in this society] to an either-or choice: Either you're going to pursue your career full-tilt or, if you decide to have a family, you're going to have to pay a price for that. And what I'm saying is that perhaps the shared value in the future should be making this less of an either-or decision; figuring out how it is possible for people to have a fulfilling and satisfying career and *not* have to deprive their family of their presence.

"I think there has to be some consensus around allowing people to be human beings. I mean, letting them have the regeneration of themselves through enjoyment, relaxation, good times with their family, [and letting them pursue meaningful work as well]. If we could have values that promoted this balance, I think that would be a marvellous thing. . . ."

"Society encouraged commitment-phobia in the 70s by this emphasis on keeping your options open—as if the endlessly open options were the most desirable values! I don't believe that's true. I think it's only through commit-

ment, ultimately, that people get the deepest sense of comfort and the deepest sense of satisfaction—whether the commitment be to their work or to another person.

"The more we encourage people to have a deep commitment to both, [and the more we change our corporations and pass new legislation so people *can* be committed to both], the happier people are going to be. And the better society will be."

Vacuum

We called Daniel Callahan, director of The Hastings Center (which studies the relationship between society and ethics), and asked him if he knew of *any* group, institute, association or foundation that could get the people of this nation to sit down together and discuss their values. His answer was a blunt and wizened no.

But if nature abhors a vacuum, so does politics. And if we really are on the verge of being able to articulate some socially shared values, then it's only a matter of time before some political group steps forward to lead that discussion (hint, hint).

And if that discussion reveals that many of us favor celebration of Earth, old-fashioned virtues, commitment to future generations, integrity of the person, connectedness with others, and balance between doing and being—then the value basis for a new society will be "on the table."

Berry: Rwerdale Center, 5801 Palisade Ave., Bronx NY 10471. Raspberry: Washington Post, 1150-15th St. N.W., DC 20071. Rome: Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown MA 02172. Loesch: Pro-Life Nonviolent Action Project, 3503-10th St. N.E., Washington DC 20017. Lerner: Tikkun, 5100 Leona St., Oakland CA 94619, \$5/sample. Schnall: WDVT-AM, Newmarket, Philadelphia PA 19147. Callahan: Hastings Center, 360 Broadway, Hastings-on-Hudson NY 10706.

NewOptions

NEW OPTIONS (ISSN 0890-1619) is published every month except August by New Options Inc., 2005 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., lower level, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 822-0929.

Please address ALL correspondence to Post Office Box 19324, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Subscriptions: \$25 a year in the U.S., \$32 first-class and Canada, \$39 elsewhere. Back issues \$2 each.

Editor: Mark Satin

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Assistants: Judith Leckrone, Mary-Coleman Ragsdale

Business Consultants: Richard Perl, Roger Pritchard

Designer/Typesetter: Baker Johnson Graphic Design, Inc.

Printer/Mailer: Newsletter Services, Inc.

Mailing List Manager: Montgomery Data Systems, Inc.

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C'mon. A US-USSR citizens' summit?

At the Soviet-American Citizens' Summit, held Feb. 1-5 in one of those anonymous suburban high-rise hotels outside Washington, D.C., 100 high-ranking Soviet editors, film directors, trade experts, scientists, doctors and journalists met with over 400 innovative, beyond-left-and-right type Americans.

They didn't come together to rage about the arms race, write manifestos or put on a show for the media. They came together to develop joint projects that could lead to "mutual learning" and "social innovation." And to many people's surprise (including quite a few of the participants), that's just what they did.

Principal sponsor was a grassroots citizen diplomacy group, the Seattle-based Center for Soviet-American Dialogue. Un-sponsors included the U.S.I.A., which slammed the Summit's "leftiness," and some U.S. citizen diplomats, who criticized its splashiness and worried about its working hand-in-glove with the Soviet-government-controlled Soviet Peace Committee.

The *Washington Post* simply laughed; one headline read, "New Age Politics: One Size Fits All." Few other major media paid any kind of attention.

Heart of it all

There were plenty of plenary speeches and gala dinners. But the heart of the Summit was the 18 ongoing "task forces" set up to develop the joint projects.

The organizers made sure there was a task force for every interest—and every personality-type. The "New Cosmology" task force ran itself like a therapy group; "U.S.-USSR Business and Trade," like a Kiwanis Club; "Soviet-American Projects in Third World Countries," like a Harvard graduate seminar.

In the end, these projects (among others) were announced from the podium:

- a joint U.S.-Soviet task force to end terrorism;
- a conference bringing together Americans who fought in Vietnam with Soviets who fought in Afghanistan;
- an organization bringing small teams of Soviet and American volunteers to Third World nations where they'd work on grassroots projects;
- a "search for social innovations";
- an animated film on the stereotypes we depict of one another;
- a joint magazine, "a kind of brain trust where new political thinking could evolve";
- a permanent "Forum for Life and Human

Rights" ("... would help us not only talk to each other but also listen to each other").

The Summit's organizers were wise enough in the ways of the "New Age" to know there might be little follow-through. So immediately after the projects were announced the stage was turned over to Bill Galt, California businessman and initiator of the fabulously successful Whole Earth Expos. In a stirring and unusual speech in which Lenin was invoked as a kind of fellow political entrepreneur, Galt announced the formation of a "Council of 100 [who'll] dedicate their lives, fortunes and time" to keeping the money flowing for the projects. Twenty people stood and pledged \$1,000 each. Everybody cheered.

Fairy tale

The Center for Soviet-American Dialogue is the brainchild of Rama Vernon, a tall, striking woman from Seattle who projects self-confidence. "I have five children, including a baby," Vernon told NEW OPTIONS one night over David's cookies. "I was not involved in the peace movement during the 60s or 70s. I had a Yoga background, and [training in] East-West psychology, and I was doing the Unity-in-Yoga conferences bringing together yoga teachers from a wide variety of paths to find their commonalities. So the Russian work was just a beautiful extension of what I had been doing..."

Four years ago Vernon was invited to accompany a U.S. peace group to the Soviet Union. She was appalled by what she found: "peace" people from both countries endlessly haggling over abstractions at the headquarters of the Soviet Peace Committee. According to her, she prevailed upon the heads of the Peace Committee to change their way of relating to Americans—to loosen up, to be more candid, to look for "commonalities" rather than ways in which their system could be shown to be better than ours.

"I've been back to the Soviet Union 22 times" since then, says Vernon, establishing "personal ties" with Soviets at all levels. Last year she brought 30 Americans over to meet with some of her Soviet friends. The "fabulous success" of that meeting gave her the idea for the Citizens' Summit.

Roll call

The Americans who attended the Summit were policy analysts, doctors, economists, "citizen diplomats," religious leaders, teachers, peace activists. Many of them had been written about in NEW OPTIONS; many others could

have been. Among the chairpeople and leaders of the task forces: Craig Comstock (NEW OPTIONS #40), Bill Halal (#32), Willis Harman (#45), Hazel Henderson (#43), Amory Lovins (#24), John Marks (#22), Patricia Mische (#24) Gail Straub (#30) and Gale Warner (#40). Chairperson of the Summit: Barbara Marx Hubbard (#45).

Another key point about the Americans: They were the kinds of people who are comfortable in many worlds. A woman in a purple dress, silk scarf and black high-heels came up to me and said, "I met you at the Green gathering—we looked very different then!"

The Soviets were all chosen by the Soviet Peace Committee. They represented a broad range of people: bureaucrats and innovators, thinkers and activists, old guard and new. Many had never been to the U.S. before.

In the corridors you could hear many conflicting reports about who the Peace Committee refused to invite and who refused the Peace Committee's invitation (some principled Soviets don't want to appear under its auspices). "[Last March] I took [the Peace Committee] a list of people that we asked for," Vernon told NEW OPTIONS. The list consisted primarily of "social innovators" that Vernon and other citizen diplomats had discovered while travelling through the Soviet Union. "I have to tell you, they didn't just quickly agree to some of the names. . . . I would say that a third of the people that were [at the Summit] were on [my original] list."

If Vernon was upset, she didn't show it. "I would have asked for some of the [other] people that came if I had known that they existed. . . . We were very happy with the delegation."

The red and the black

We did not trust Henry Borovik, the suave, dark-jowled president of the Soviet Peace Committee. He had the New Age rhetoric down better than any prominent U.S. politician (all of us Soviets and Americans should be on one side of the tennis court, he told an enthusiastic plenary audience, and all the world's problems should be on the other). And yet less than a year ago, one Ivy League Soviet specialist told NEW OPTIONS, Borovik narrated a Soviet TV special denouncing the U.S. as an unchanging bastion of racism, violence and imperialism.

Still, even the most hardened political observer might have been moved listening to some of the other high-level Soviets. Take Genrikh Trifomenko, department head at the prestigious Institute of U.S. and Canada Studies: "[With peace groups in the past], we'd stay awake all night struggling over where commas should go in resolutions. Now we have all these crazy ideas coming up and we all agree on them!" Or Andrei Melville, section head at the Institute: "Five years ago I knew what the limits

were. Now I don't know. And how *can* I know, unless I explore? . . . In some ways we feel like Columboes."

Some of the younger Soviets were "exploring" pretty hard. Gennadi Alferenko, founder of something called the Foundation for Social Inventions (and one of the two Soviets whom we *know* refused to travel to Washington under the auspices of the Peace Committee—ultimately Vernon flew to Moscow to make special arrangements to bring him over), was one of the only Soviets to wear casual clothes to the opening plenary, or to sit on the floor. At a fascinating round-table discussion a few days later, he urged people to *not* go to the Soviet Peace Committee if they wanted to start an exchange of some kind with the Soviet Union. "My advice would be to look for creatively-minded people in the other organizations."

At that same roundtable, Aleksei Pankin, looking every inch the semi-bohemian American professor in his black sweater and beard, complained about the timidity of the Soviet press. And Igor Malashenko, immaculately dressed, devastatingly bright, the very epitome of "working-from-within," sort of casually mentioned that he was looking forward to seeing whether or not his latest magazine article would be censored.

The New Age speaks

The Alferenko-Malashenko roundtable may have been the most revealing event at the Summit. But the one with the most fireworks was the debate between Soviet and American conservatives. (Among the Soviets: the ubiquitous Borovik. Among the Americans: John Wallach, foreign editor for Hearst newspapers, and Helmut Sonnenfeldt, former senior advisor to Henry Kissinger.)

Throughout the debate, the Americans were hard on the Soviets. And they seemed to hold out no real hope for change. The Soviets were equally hard on the Americans, though their presentations were substantially less gloomy.

When it was time for questions, the entire audience seemed dispirited. For all our good will and good works, the world appeared to be headed toward the abyss.

Suddenly some maverick-among-mavericks stood up and asked, too loudly, Why are we—a nation under God—not nearly as visionary and positive as the Soviets? Like a dam suddenly bursting, many in the audience applauded wildly.

Wallach looked world-weary. It doesn't do any good, he replied, to tell ourselves that our differences aren't important. He began to move on to another subject.

Suddenly an elderly man in a bright red sweater was on his feet. How is it possible, he cried, in the name of all that's holy, if we focus on what divides us, to come up with what

unites us?!

Cheers from the audience.

Wallach (bemusedly): Does anyone else want to take a crack at this?

Sonnenfeldt: We've tended to believe in religions that believe in paradise *after* this life. The Soviets believe in a philosophy preaching paradise on Earth.

Moans from the audience.

Barbara Marx Hubbard spoke up, trying to play the peacemaker. This is so symbolic! she declared. Some of us are focusing on differences, others on unity. But the issue is: How can we give as much attention to our unity as to our differences? Until we do we'll never be able to cope with the real divisions that exist between us.

Everything is possible

If the Citizens' Summit was two parts inspiring, it was also one part troubling. For example:

- Could it have been organized without the Soviet Peace Committee? *Should* it have been?

- Were the Soviets just playing to the Americans?

- The Soviets clearly see New Age/transformational/Aquarian Conspiracy type ideas as an "open segment" of the culture—as an area in which they can have a considerable impact. Are we just "useful idiots" (Lenin's phrase), promoting pro-Soviet propaganda without even knowing it?

- Would the Summit's projects inspire Soviet and American citizens *in ways that could improve Soviet-American relations*?

By the end of the Summit, many more questions had been raised than answered. But if nothing was certain, anything—and everything—was still possible. *Vernon: Center for Soviet-American Dialogue, 14426 N.E. 16th Pl., Bellevue WA 98007.*

An association of our own?

No established U.S. professional association projects a Greenish, decentralist/globally responsible point of view. (Two caucuses *within* professional associations do so: the Society for Human Economy within the American Economic Association, NEW OPTIONS #22, and the Conference Group on Transformational Politics within the American Political Science Association, #31.) But now, a new professional association has begun to embody Greenish perspectives and processes.

Last month in Washington, D.C., 705 scientists, teachers, activists and religious professionals launched the National Association of Science, Technology and Society (NASTS; say "Nasties"), then celebrated their achievement

by eating "home made" ice cream made in a new kind of small scale ice cream machine—"the best kind of appropriate technology" joked Rustum Roy, the sharp-as-nails India-born Penn State professor who put three years of hard work into getting NASTS off the ground and now serves as its first president.

Purpose of NASTS, according to Roy, is to "create [a] larger human community" among those of us seeking to "reflect upon—and not merely reflect—our technological society." Among NASTS's 11 "guiding principles":

- to be "broad-based," "globally aware" and "inter-disciplinary" — in short, to be "a model for a new kind of professional society";

- to *not* be "organized around the formats and needs of the university";

- to "think globally, act locally."

NASTS practices what it preaches. Its "larger community" consists of seven clearly defined "sub-communities": university teachers, but also K-12 teachers; scientists and engineers; religious professionals; science policy personnel; public interest groups; and writers and journalists. According to Roy, "The 'federal structure' [of NASTS] means that different groups will have a great deal of autonomy to organize their own activities." Each sub-community has a seat on NASTS's board, and each had at least one "track" of ongoing events at NASTS's conference.

Love at first sight

We fell in love with NASTS at the opening plenary. Grey-suited Margaret MacVicar of MIT, representing the university community, urged that NASTS be for "all those falling through the disciplinary cracks." Full-bearded Paul Durbin, representing the research community, called upon NASTS to spearhead a "new and different kind of scholarship" in the "anti-technicization tradition" of Jacques Ellul, Herbert Marcuse and Lewis Mumford. Kind-eyed Robert Rodale (NEW OPTIONS #15), representing the public interest community, encouraged NASTS to emphasize human-scale, positive ("regenerative") trends in technology and economics. White-haired Cecily Selby, representing K-12 educators, said NASTS could help "make it clear to our students that society is *not* dependent on science or technology, but rather on how that technology is *used*."

We had a field day workshop-hopping. Jeremy Rifkin, foe of genetic engineering (#4), held over 100 people spellbound in one room, while three rooms away The Other Economic Summit/North America made its first public presentation—innovative economic thinkers like Herman Daly (#44), Mark Lutz (#43) and Christina Rawley (formerly of New Alchemy Institute, now of Harvard) holding forth to a perhaps too courteous or credulous audience.

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Letters . . .

The people, yes/no

I am truly disturbed by the lead article in NEW OPTIONS #45, "When 'The People' Is No Longer Enough." It reflects an arrogance and elitism which I hoped we had begun to discard.

Even more seriously, it leads to mistaken directions. I have learned through my work across the country that people are quite aware that the system is not working. I have also learned that people are hungry for a message of hopeful realism. It is our failure to deliver this message in words and a style that people can hear that is the major problem.

—**Bob Theobald**

*Author, The Rapids of Change (1986)
Wickenburg, Ariz.*

We at *Growing Without Schooling* "cope with the fact that the majority of 'The People' is not with us (and may, in fact, be deeply opposed to the values and visions we represent)" by continuing our work and watching it grow.

When John Holt realized his many years of arguing with schools and teachers to allow children more autonomy in school was futile, he didn't continue exhorting them. Instead, he founded *Growing Without Schooling* to find and aid like-minded people, as he said, "To keep myself from going crazy."

Fortunately, our subscriber base keeps growing, our speaking engagements are getting more plentiful, and we see more and more about home schooling in the media. This gradual public awareness about children's ability to learn and mature without the mandatory 12 years of traditional schooling sustains our spirits, and since we are not a non-profit organization it also sustains our lives.

—**Pat Farenga**

Boston, Mass.

Thank you for your honest and delightful review of my audio cassette/workbook course, *Transforming Your Relationship With Money and Achieving Financial Independence* ("Breaking the Hold," NEW OPTIONS #45). And thanks for your lead article! My mind boggles at what might happen if "The People" were financially independent—i.e., free of misconceptions about money and free to spend all their time nurturing and demonstrating their visions and values.

Get even *some* of us/"The People" out of the rut of consumption, of spending and earning ever more money, and into service to the

planet—and watch the acceleration of the changes we are all working toward.

Might you add "our addiction to work/money/possessions/prestige" to your list of reasons why "The People" are not with us?

—**Joseph Dominguez**

Seattle, Wash.

Truth and media

The problem is not with "The People" in thrall to a mass media [that only reports bad news], as Barbara Marx Hubbard states. In spite of the staggering catastrophe of the human condition for more than two-thirds of the world's billions, there is reported daily the "good" news of births and weddings, sports events and acts of heroism.

The media reports what happens. Granted it is not unbiased or truly objective, but it weaves a multi-textured tapestry revealing the condition of modern life as it is. And the overwhelmingly predominant quality of that life is "bad news" — because materialism, technology and militarism do not a healthy contented people make.

—**Lucille Salitan Sadwith**

*Peace Resource Center
Canaan, N.Y.*

Barbara Marx Hubbard is no doubt on the mark to note a prevalence in mass-media news of "dissonance, violence and breakdown" over "resonance, breakthrough and creativity." But her implicit call for something like "balance" is mild and elusive.

Here's one proposal: Every three minutes of advertising on trans-regional networks must be matched by a three-minute, absolutely personal statement from one of us. We can call it the "Democracy in Television Act."

The names of all willing registered voters in a locality are placed in a tumbler and drawn at random. If your name is picked, you have the spotlight, no matter who you are or what your passion is.

—**Rhys Roth**

Olympia, Wash.

Varieties of us-ness

Thank you for your article "Building Us-ness" (NEW OPTIONS #45). I work with corporations to achieve pluralism and was *delighted* to learn about The Equity Institute and its work.

—**Kathryn North**

Scotts Valley, Calif.

I disagree—we *should* foster a bilingual society!! Most Europeans speak two or three languages. English should be required in school for Hispanics, *and* Spanish for Anglos. Wouldn't mind seeing some basic American Sign Lan-

guage in there, too.

—**Annie Gottlieb**

New York, N.Y.

Apparently you do not realize what is happening to America. America is being divided. It is becoming both a Spanish colony and an African colony at the same time.

I believe in America for Americans—not all these damn aliens here. They should all be shipped back to where they come from. These aliens are destroying all of the great things us Americans have built since WE founded the United States of America.

—**Robert L. Jones**

*Deberry Correctional Institute
Nashville, Tenn.*

Don't follow leaders

I am disturbed that the first proposal from your panel on the stock market crash was to find good new leaders (NEW OPTIONS #43). Isn't this exactly the opposite of what we should expect from people promoting decentralist, grassroots, community-based solutions?

Even more disturbing is the fact that your panel seems to be looking for leadership in the wrong country.

One of the major trends at the moment is something observed by Buckminster Fuller: The economic power center of the planet is continuing its millennia-long travel from east to west. When it jumps national borders (as it did at the beginning of the century, jumping from Britain to the U.S.), there is a discontinuity that causes economic disruption. This discontinuity comes about because true economic power resides in the new country (now Japan), while cultural and symbolic power resides in the old country (the U.S.).

Therefore, if we must have "leadership," we should look to Japan for someone to take over the symbolic reins of power.

—**Chris Sturgess**

Toronto, Canada

Thanks so much

Thank you very much for the review you did of Willis Harman's book *Global Mind Change*, which our company published (NEW OPTIONS #45).

We only have one question/request. If you know of anyone who is writing the unified field theory linking social change and changing consciousness, which you faulted Willis for not providing, we want to publish that book!

—**David Speicher**

*Knowledge Systems, Inc.
Indianapolis, Ind.*

Your comments on spiritual people [" . . .

no kinder, or more perceptive, or more tolerant, etc., than the rest of us"] are refreshing!!

—Dean Nims

Des Moines, Iowa

Thank you for the "pep talk"/review of my book.

You are quite right, that one can believe in the "perennial wisdom" of the world's spiritual traditions and still behave abominably toward fellow humans, the planet and its creatures. On the other hand, I doubt that one can *know* the reality of universal consciousness and behave that way. Talking with people in "the movement" from all over the world, I strongly sense that that kind of knowing is spreading.

You are also quite right in pointing out that there is nothing inevitable about a benign transformation. When the force for historic transformation is present, the task is not only to keep it alive, but also to ensure that the transformation is as smooth and peaceable as we can make it, creating as little as possible of social disruption and human misery. Both my attitudes and my activities may make more sense to you if you think of me as focused on this latter task.

Look at it this way. Some of us contribute to the fuel in the tank; some to the steering of the vehicle. I view myself as being more concerned with lubricating the process of transformation.

—Willis W. Harman

Sausalito, Calif.

The level of Spirit

Your comments on Willis Harman's new book started some rabbits in my briar patch. Specifically, it seems to me that *both* you and Willis can be right.

When Willis affirms that there is a growing awareness of M-3 (consciousness, Spirit, etc.) and a diminution of M-1, I think he is probably right. Not that this is a massive shift, but it is moving that way. But then it seems to me that you have a very valid point, that the shift to M-3 by no means guarantees a safer, juster world. Fascists remain fascists regardless of the ambient "spirituality." Indeed, I have met what I can only call "spiritual fascists" who beat me over the head with their own "correct" brand of spirituality.

But none of that invalidates Willis's thesis about the growing centrality of M-3.

My way of putting this is that Spirit is no longer just "nice," it is now necessary. Not because we are all "more spiritual," but because the world is moving at such a pace that it can no longer be fully "grokked" (understood) at the level of structure and mass, but only at the level of Spirit.

—Harrison Owen

Potomac, Md.

Continued from page four:

At the closing plenary, sparks flew as Marcus Raskin (leftish), Hazel Henderson (Greenish) and Ivan Illich (simon pure-ish) had an hour's go-round on the future of global development. Then Rustum Roy gets up and recalls the Middle Ages, when "little communities gathered" to preserve civilization. "This community—mistrusting all kinds of specialization, hoping to put it all together—is [as necessary as those were], and I encourage you to work with us. . . ." Roy: NASTS, Penn State Univ., 128 Willard Bldg, University Park PA 16802.

Update. . .

World watching

When Worldwatch Institute announced it was having a press conference to celebrate the inaugural issue of its magazine, *World Watch*, we thought only about 10-15 reporters would attend. Imagine our surprise when we walked up to Worldwatch's attractive-but-not-ostentatious offices and waded into a nearly overflow crowd of 60 reporters—including ones from *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Newsweek*, Reuters, *Die Zeit* (West Germany), Tass, *Asahi Shimbun* (Japan) and Xinhua (China).

The magazine merits all that attention. It's an attempt to make Worldwatch's unique ecological/economic perspective accessible to a broader audience than that which reads its long, detailed papers and annual reports (NEW OPTIONS #27 & 35).

The first issue—44 handsomely designed pages with a glossy color cover—features articles on nuclear power, AIDS in the Third World, and the future of the automobile. The most cheerful regular feature, "Promising Initiatives," has short pieces on Indonesia's break with chemical pesticides, the World Bank's new environmental policies, and the new waste recycling laws in four U.S. states. As James Gorman, 28-year-old editor of the magazine, told NEW OPTIONS over quiche and salad, *World Watch* magazine "has no competitors"; no other U.S. magazine covers remotely the same ground in remotely the same way.

Let's hope that doesn't lead to complacency. The stories in the first issue are shorter than Worldwatch's other efforts, but the style is not noticeably simpler or more sprightly. Despite the "Promising Initiatives" feature, the emphasis is still far more on what's wrong with the world than on what's right, or what can be done to make things right. And there's an underemphasis on political struggle. For example, the new waste recycling laws in the four U.S.

states are described as if they simply fell from the sky. Nothing is said about the struggles of the various environmental and political groups to shape and pass those laws. So we don't know *why* the laws are as they are—and we're not encouraged to struggle ourselves.

Worldwatch has big plans for its new magazine. 45,000 copies of the first issue are in print. A direct-mail campaign has been launched. Gorman told NEW OPTIONS of his dream of reaching tens of thousands of Americans "who are really interdisciplinary in the way they approach things." *World Watch Magazine: Worldwatch Institute, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., #701, Washington DC 20036, \$5/sample.*

"Consistently pro-life"

At a news conference earlier this month at the National Press Club, JustLife presented its election year document, "JustLife/88: An Election Study Guide for Justice, Life and Peace." Not only does the 32-page, handsomely-but-not-expensively-printed document effectively convey JustLife's message, it can and *should* serve as a model for all those innovative groups—Green, New Age, decentralist, world order, etc.—seeking to convey their own political messages to a national audience.

JustLife is a political action committee founded in 1986 to support political candidates with a consistently pro-life agenda. At the press conference, smart, stocky JustLife executive director Ronald Sider—who doubles as executive director of Evangelicals for Social Action—defined a "consistent life ethic" as one that's "committed to reversing the nuclear arms race and ending abortion and empowering the poor for self-sufficiency."

The document is carefully crafted to drive home JustLife's basic message. A couple of simple introductory essays set the tone. Then, major essays focus on JustLife's three key issues, the arms race, abortion and economic injustice. (According to Sider, the authors were tempted to touch on many other issues as well, genetic engineering, pornography, etc. But in the end they decided to keep the message *simple and clear.*) Finally, a voting index shows how each Congressperson voted on 15 issues—five each on the arms race, abortion and economic justice.

Like the U.S. Greens and other groups, JustLife is convinced it's speaking to—and for—an unacknowledged constituency. "In a national survey conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*," Sider told the news conference, "4 1/2 times as many evangelicals endorsed the positions taken by those who adopt the consistent life ethic than the stand of the Moral Majority." *"JustLife/88": JustLife Education Fund, 5107 Newhall St., Philadelphia PA 19144, \$3.*

Peck: make community, not converts

I've just finished one of the most radical books I've ever read—and one of the sweetest.

The book is Scott Peck's latest, *The Different Drum* (Simon and Schuster, \$17). Its thesis is that only by "community-making" can we save the world. (Or become truly individuated—truly ourselves.)

What's "radical" about this thesis is that by community-making, Peck does *not* mean trying to convert people to some uniform point of view. Instead, he means getting us to understand and celebrate our differences. He means getting us to "love" each other even if we don't particularly like each other.

Peck is, of course, the author of *The Road Less Travelled* (1978), the book about psychology and spiritual growth that's been on the paperback best-seller lists for three years now. *The Different Drum* won't be on any best-seller lists. It asks too much of us, and its political recommendations put it completely off the familiar left-right spectrum.

"Age of integration"

We need community for all kinds of reasons, says Peck. We need community because it brings us joy. We need community because it's only through community that we can "grow up" and be "completely whole." Most of all, we need community because communities teach us to listen to and not reject each other—and without that there can be no evolution.

Understandably, then, the bulk of *The Different Drum* is devoted to telling us how to create and maintain communities—first of all, communities close to home: families and discussion groups. In building *any* community we're said to go through four distinct stages: "pseudocommunity" (everybody's nice), "chaos," "emptiness" (emptying ourselves of prejudices, feelings, assumptions and ideas that get in the way of our *seeing* and *enjoying* others), and genuine community. Peck's description of these stages is as gripping as a good novel.

And as satisfying. For the end-point—genuine community—is said to be a wonderful place. Community "examines itself." Community members feel safe, physically and metaphorically. Community is a "laboratory for personal disarmament" ("as [our] masks drop and we see the suffering and courage and brokenness and deeper dignity underneath, we truly start to respect each other"). Community is "an amphitheater where the gladiators have laid down their weapons and their armor."

Peck would develop effective organizations by teaching them to become "communities."

He'd have had the Green gathering (#40) spend its first days simply forming itself into a community, and only then discuss issues.

The key to developing *world* community, Peck says again and again, is teaching nations to learn to empty themselves. To empty themselves of their semantics, their traditional images, their resentments, their guilt, their need-ings to be "right."

How can this be done? Why should we want to do this? "The only reason to give up something is to gain something better," says Peck. "Peace is undeniably better than war." A "soft individualism" ("a kind of softness that allows those necessary barriers to be like permeable membranes") is undeniably better than the "hard individualism" we've been taught. An "age of integration" — characterized by a continuous cross-fertilization of the world's diverse economic, political and cultural systems—would be undeniably better than today's age of specialization and antagonism.

Imagine

If our nation became a community, there would be "a virtual revolution," Peck proclaims. The CIA would substitute cultural anthropologists for spies. Christians would become Christians again. Government officials would spend a quarter of their time "community building" with other government officials. The president would select a cabinet "not so much for their particular expertise as for their capacity to operate in community," and "all major decisions would be made in community and consensually by it."

There's no denying the power of Peck's broad vision. If *The Different Drum* has a flaw, it's that the mechanisms that might pull us together into community are not made altogether clear. Is vision enough? Is raw need enough? We wish Peck had spent more time describing some other mechanisms that could pull us together: the emerging sustainable economics, the emerging holistic worldview, and the emerging concern with living a more balanced lifestyle. Three recent books—reviewed below—describe each of these in turn.

Meeker-Lowry: the new economy

The "citizen bankers" we reported on in last month's NEW OPTIONS are the tip of an iceberg. All over North America, thousands of

businesspeople are building up new community-oriented, ecologically sustainable enterprises. And now, at last, there's a book that takes a comprehensive look at them: Susan Meeker-Lowry, *Economics as If the Earth Really Mattered* (New Society Publr, 4527 Springfield Ave., Philadelphia PA 19143, \$11 pbk).

The book is written from the point of view of the "socially conscious investor," so there are plenty of addresses and cold hard facts. But it's also written out of the value context these new businesses are said to represent. So there's a lot of personal sharing; before the book is five pages old Meeker-Lowry has told us about her childhood visions, grandmother, and social-investing newsletter. And there's an extensive discussion of values. Here are the values that Meeker-Lowry says an Earth-centered economy would require: respect, relationship, diversity and harmony. There are also helpful hints on how to get your values and investments in synch.

Like a circle

The bulk of the book describes dozens of innovative businesses and business initiatives. First, there are all those helping to improve our current economy: consumer boycotts, "socially responsible" corporations, small-scale socially responsible companies, etc. Then there are all those said to be "creating the economy we want": community-based housing co-ops, land trusts, loan funds, etc.

Meeker-Lowry's descriptions are unfailingly careful and clear. In addition, she *knows* the South Shore Bank, Ben & Jerry's Homemade Ice Cream, Institute for Community Economics, etc., as an insider, and provides us with a wealth of details. Our only regret is that her descriptions never, but never, mention the "dark side" of the businesses and groups she writes about. We've spent enough time around these kinds of businesses and groups to know they have their strengths *and* weaknesses, and her failure to discuss the weaknesses detracts from the credibility of the book.

Often Meeker-Lowry refers to rhythms or cycles of nature, and when we finished her book we realized it's structured like a circle. It starts with her sitting in a forest, takes us through the corporate world, small scale businesses, and reinvesting in communities, looks briefly at small-scale development projects in the Third and Fourth (indigenous people's) worlds, and ends with a paean to bioregionalism. It starts with a personal vision, takes us through the exceedingly "pragmatic" and ends with a political vision. Perhaps that is the larger message of her book—that we can't achieve our vision *without* learning to be competent and businesslike, that we can't create a bioregional society without first learning to calculate a "socially responsible" stock average.

Capra: the new world view

Fritjof Capra has spent his entire professional life arguing that a new "paradigm" is arising in science and society; that the old mechanistic/competitive world view is giving way to something much more organic, cooperative, ecological, feminist and spiritual. His previous books, *The Tao of Physics* (1975) and—especially—*The Turning Point* (1981), had expressed this clearly, if a bit abstractly and formally. Now comes a book from Capra that's not at all abstract: *Uncommon Wisdom, Conversations with Remarkable People* (Simon and Schuster, \$20.)

Uncommon Wisdom is about the people Capra encountered while writing his books—the real giants, people like Werner Heisenberg, J. Krishnamurti, Gregory Bateson, R.D. Laing, Carl Simonton, E.F. Schumacher, and Hazel Henderson. It's got dialogue like a novel and a thousand significant and not-so-significant real-life details. It's just an excellent anecdotal introduction to (some of) the ideas and people behind the paradigm shift.

Happy ending

Toward the beginning of the book Capra is sitting in a tiny room in London, lonely, separated from his wife, torn between being an academic physicist and living the life of a "hippie" (his word). He swears he'll write "the" book on the parallels between Eastern spirituality and the new physics—and, by God, he does. His next book is even more ambitious, and to prepare he seeks out the best help he can find. The stories of his encounters with Bateson, Laing and Henderson are especially vivid. His critique of Schumacher (a "traditional Christian humanist," alas) is unflinchingly kind.

Capra is Austria-born, in his late 40s, and he writes in a "proper" style that reflects his personality. But he is willing to share some of his vulnerabilities. He once feared the commitment to science and spirituality would tear him apart. He once felt deep discomfort around academic physicists. He says, somewhat huffily, "The University of California has never found it appropriate to support my part-time research. . . . But I don't mind." Sure, sure.

We wish he'd have revealed even more. We never learn what it was about *him* that drew him to new paradigm-type ideas, and caused him to persist with them long after the "hippies" faded away. He tells us much about his intellectual development but almost nothing about his social or emotional development—surprising in someone who advocates a "holistic" approach to all things. His beloved "bootstrap" philosophy would integrate all points of view, but some-

times he sounds awfully partisan. Doesn't he sense a contradiction there, and how does he deal with it?

About two-thirds of the way through we realized the book was only partially about the paradigm shift. What it was also about, we felt, was Capra's own quest for authenticity—in science and in politics/economics and in people. By the end of the book, he's convinced that he's found it in all three areas. In that sense, the book has a "happy ending," and the writing style, which radiates at-easeness with the world, serves as a kind of invitation: Come on in, the paradigm's fine.

Shi: the ever-present world view

Thinkers like Willis Harman (NEW OPTIONS #45, and see p. 6 above) and Fritjof Capra believe that a paradigm shift is happening; that we're moving from a materialistic/patriarchal to a spiritual/ecological worldview. They should read David Shi.

Shi is a young American historian whose first book, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture*, received a rave review on these pages (#15). His new book, *In Search of the Simple Life* (Gibbs M. Smith Inc., P.O. Box 667, Layton UT 84041, \$12 pbk), is an anthology covering much of the same ground.

Both books argue that concepts of spirituality, ecology, simple living, etc., have *always* been with us, but they've been like an underground stream—constantly nourishing the dominant culture but never really capable of supplanting it. Read Shi and you'll strongly suspect that the so-called "paradigm shift" is an illusion brought about partly by new communications technologies and partly by our own over-

heated imaginations.

You might want to start with Shi's new book, the anthology. It's simpler and less academic and the selections are eye-opening, to say the least. *Every* era in American history had its feminists and mystics, its appropriate-technologists and advocates of simple living, and it is at once moving and depressing to read the words of the dozens of (mostly) dead and forgotten ones collected here—many of them brimming with hope that the turning point, the paradigm shift, the global mind change, was just around the corner. . . . John Woolman, the 18th century preacher; Caroline Kirkland, author of *Forest Life* (1842); David Grayson, author of *Adventures in Contentment* (1906); and so on, seemingly *ad infinitum*—each of them had a significant following, none of them had a lasting effect on the dominant culture.

The moral

The last thing Shi wants is for us to despair. Throughout the anthology he tells us how his thinkers and activists messed up, blew their best chances, failed to connect. Some constant themes: their extremism, especially their extreme anti-urban bias; their self-righteousness; and their cantankerous individualism, which made it almost impossible for them to work with other people for their beliefs. Too often, Shi seems to be saying, those of us who've wanted to create humane sustainable value-coherent communities have been those least capable of doing so!

If we want to change our culture and society, then, the moral seems to be this: We're going to have to *organize*, politically, to do it. No "paradigm shift" is going to make things easier for us.

And if we want to organize successfully, we're going to have to start by changing our *own* "paradigms"; by emptying ourselves, as Scott Peck would say.

NewOptions

New Options, Inc.
Post Office Box 19324
Washington, D.C. 20036

Issue No. Forty-seven

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