

The Changing World

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COOPERATIVE WORLD UNITY COMES SLOWLY

A VARIETY OF BELIEFS and attitudes appear to be preventing our people from seeing how difficult it will be to build a genuinely cooperative world order. There is the belief that wishing for one world is tantamount to having it. There is the notion that progress toward a unified world is inevitable. There is the attitude that because of the trend toward economic interdependence there is a corresponding movement toward world cooperation. There is also the popular notion that equates technological progress with social progress.

The task of developing a truly cooperative world order is both enormous and infinitely complex. This fact should be apparent to school administrators and teachers who are endeavoring to inaugurate the cooperative way of learning in their schools and classrooms.

Some of the more obvious obstacles that stand in the way of a cooperative world unity are: (1) the fact that at least half of the people of the world are illiterate; (2) the fact that the deepest sentiments of people are associated with tribal or nationalistic loyalties; and (3) the fact that in this period of our world's history we note a deepening trend toward the division of people into two hostile camps.

However, if we are to create the kind of mind—attitudes, understandings, and dispositions—that is needed in managing a genuinely cooperative world, it appears

that we must go even more deeply into the matter of human personality and human relations. Let us ask ourselves: what are the habits—the beliefs, attitudes, practices—that interfere with the development of cooperative habits within our own country, in schools, in communities, in industry? Analysis of the situation brings such obstacles as these to light: (1) there is the habit of thinking in terms of *we* and *they*; (2) there is the almost universal use of an *either-or* logic—the use of black or white, all or none, good or bad *absolutes*—in discussion; (3) there is the tendency to seek *security* and *success* in terms of what is good for me or my group; and (4) there is an almost universal lack of skill in carrying on genuinely cooperative undertakings. These obstacles, of course, are intimately interrelated.

The question may be asked: Has there been progress toward the establishment of a cooperative world order? The world situation in the past fifty years has been so confused and complex that it is difficult to formulate a judgment that is based upon adequate objective evidence. Furthermore, we now know that genuine progress toward this end will require a veritable revolution in our fundamental ways of thinking and acting. We may expect accelerating progress in the field of technological change. We must expect infinitely slow progress in the area of human relations.



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