

"A World Out of Joint"

A FEW short years ago rockets to the moon, manned satellites, and messages beamed to and from outer space were things children read about in comic books or science fiction. Now yesterday's science fiction is today's accomplished fact, and, barring a nuclear war, long before today's grade school children are in college many of man's wildest dreams will have become realities.

If we are to ensure our children's future we must help them prepare to live in a global neighborhood. To be sure, they must come to terms with a world of radio, television, computers, jet planes, astronauts, telstars, and other realities of the space age. Yet equally, if not more, important, they must understand and be able to live with the human and social realities inherent in a world which they must share with nearly three billion other people. Many of these social realities belong in the never-before-true category and we must therefore find new ways in which to cope with them.

One of the most obvious characteristics of our present age is the speed with which the world is changing. The world has always changed but in recent dec-

ades we have reached a sort of Alice-in-Wonderland stage in which it takes all the running one can do to stay in the same place. The rate of change is perhaps most obvious in transportation and communication. In 1860 the trip from New York to Southampton took nearly 10 days. It was almost 80 years before transatlantic flights reduced the time to hours. The possibilities of the near future are foreshadowed in the 20 minutes it took John Glenn to go from the coast of Florida to the far side of Africa.

As a consequence of the changes in transportation and communication, we live in a world that is shrinking yet at the same time expanding as far as the individual is concerned. There was a time when it did not matter too greatly if the average man knew nothing about the peoples of other lands for his life and theirs were lived in almost completely separate worlds. Today we are all involved with one another. What happens in one part of the world can be known everywhere in a matter of hours, and as world-wide television be-

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comes a reality, events may be watched as they take place.

Today's world is one in which man has at his disposal power that could destroy the globe, and as more and more people have access to such power the threat of global annihilation grows. Wars have always been destructive but in other times there were peoples outside the area of destruction who could carry on. Today there is no hiding place.

Involved in Mankind

Ours is a world in which peoples are completely interdependent. In an earlier day mountains, seas, or great land masses served as barriers, and peoples in favored environments could be relatively self sufficient. Today, whether it is an influenza epidemic, an outbreak of smallpox or plague, an economic depression, a dance craze, or a revolution, we are all caught in the backwash if not in the whirling center of the disturbance. Whether we like it or not, and in a way John Donne may not have dreamed of, we are involved in mankind.

Yet in spite of our growing interdependence the peoples of the world are still enormously diverse. We are of different races, languages, religions and cultures. We have different national loyalties and different value systems. We perceive things differently. Even within our own country, racial, regional, cultural and ideological differences set us apart.

Today's world is in the midst of revolution. Kipling's "silent, sullen peoples" have long since become vocal and rebellious. They are now demanding not only freedom and independence but a chance for the good life. They are no longer willing to accept poverty, ignorance, hunger and disease as their natural

lot. As James Reston put it, "The mice of the world are no longer doing what the cats say."

Today's world is beset with seemingly insoluble problems. The peoples of the world are divided into ideological camps and the threat of nuclear war hangs over us like a cloud. So fearful are the nations of each other that we spend billions of dollars in an arms race when two thirds of the world's people are chronically hungry. We are the richest nation the world has ever known yet millions of Americans are still ill clothed, ill housed, and ill fed. We are still beset with illiteracy, juvenile delinquency, crime, corruption, unemployment, slums, race prejudice, outdated welfare programs, and a thousand and one other problems that we seem unwilling or unable to solve.

All of these things add up to a world that is out of joint. For generations we have given our time, our attention, and our money to those things that make possible the modern miracles of what we call Western civilization. Yet while these changes were taking place we were making relatively little progress in the understanding of human beings and how they might live well together. While we were spending millions of dollars and millions of man hours in unlocking the secrets of the atom we were doing almost nothing to advance our knowledge of human motivation and social control. In the conquest of the physical world we have moved with dizzying speed; in the biological sciences we have made fair progress; in the area of human behavior we have not yet gotten off the ground.

None of us would wish to turn the clock back. We do not wish to go back to kerosene lamps, old fashioned ice boxes, T model Fords, hand fired stoves

in winter or palm leaf fans in summer. We would not willingly go back to the days of the horse and buggy doctor when miracle drugs and modern surgical procedures were unknown. None of us would seriously question the necessity for continued research and effort in man's conquest of the physical world. Our discoveries and inventions have already made forever impossible any return to the isolation of an earlier day.

The Modern Dilemma

What then lies ahead? The first step would seem to be a recognition of the nature of the world's dilemma and a mustering of our resources to meet the problems that are before us. Our basic difficulty lies in the imbalance of our mastery over the physical realities and our ignorance of the social realities. The real problems of the space age are not physical but social, not material but human. The whole of modern man's dilemma can be summed up in the overall question: How can three billion people of diverse races, languages, religions and cultures learn to live together on a globe that must provide for them all?

Perhaps the most hopeful aspect of modern man's dilemma is that while we do not know the answers to many of our problems we do know what the basic questions are and we know how answers can be had. We cannot say that the problems are insoluble because we have never made any really concerted and adequate effort to find solutions. Moreover, many of the never-before-true conditions mentioned earlier have in them fully as much hope as threat.

For the first time in history we have

the accumulated wisdom of the human race at our disposal. Very largely that which men anywhere have thought and recorded is now available in the major languages of the world. Even the experiments in living of hundreds of simple societies have been studied and recorded by anthropologists. The barriers of language have been or can be broken. The great truths and the varied insights of men in all ages are ours for the taking. Furthermore, we actually have a great deal more knowledge about human behavior than we make use of. We have the skill and the resources to enlarge our knowledge if we choose to use these processes to that end.

We have talent searches for the brightest of our youth and more and more of those who demonstrate unusual ability, interest and creativity in the physical and biological sciences are assured of scholarships, jobs and laboratories in which to work. We have shown no such concern for discovering, challenging and preparing children and young people to seek answers to the problems of human behavior. In many schools and colleges the social studies are in effect a namby-pamby hodgepodge that nobody takes seriously, and our research in this area is at present absurdly small.

The greatest unsolved problems of our age are the problems of human relations. If we are to find solutions to these problems, we must open up before children and young people the enormously exciting and challenging world of human beings and of their potentialities. It is a world whose frontiers, whose dangers, and whose opportunities dwarf any of those our forefathers faced when they set out to make the physical conquest of a continent.

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