

To Dare the Future

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This story takes place in the world of imagination and theory. Any similarity to the world of reality is intended, for history shows that the world of theory is usually the mother of future reality.

To my parents and God Almighty, I dedicate this book.

- W. J. Anthony

~ Chapter One ~

In the Beginning ~

Paul Thompson turned in his bed, stretched a little and slowly opened his eyes. The rising sun was bathing the horizon's long, sweeping clouds. Many birds must have been tired, for only some seemed to be singing.

The young man stretched the rest from his legs and arms. After a deep breath, he was fully awake.

From the window, he could see the east meadow of his neighbor.

As he ate his breakfast, his thoughts were focused on the worn pages of the copy of The Declaration of Independence, which lay on the table near him. A river of memories flowed into his attention, as his consciousness noted the significance of that particular copy. He touched it for a moment, as though it were a person. That brought to mind a need to satisfy his curiosity and go to town.

Since it was Friday, the downtown of White Cloud would be busy, with farmers, shopping in their usual manner. Maybe seeing that would let him see if the nation would survive. He set out on the two-mile walk to town.

In the distance, he could hear locomotives in the railroad yards, where trains were being made up. The heavy sounds of saws from the big stone sheds could be heard as they rhythmically "she-shawed" through huge stones of quarried granite. The insistent rumble of a few thru-city trucks could be heard, as they snorted their cargos over the road.

Behind the young man, a car was approaching. Paul moved to the side of the road, turning to take a look. He wouldn't have had to actually turn around to recognize that it was Charlie Tingle's car. The muffler on the old Model A Ford had broken and Charlie had repaired it with wire to hold it in place, which gave it a special exhaust sound all of its own. When the car pulled up beside the young man and stopped, Charlie raced the motor as usual.

"Hop in. Give you a ride," said Charlie.

"Thanks! You up already?" smiled Paul.

“Yep. I had earphones on this morning and was listening to...”

“Does it still work all right?”

“Yea!” said Charlie, as he moved the car again with a lurch. “But most of that nonsense they have on it I can’t stand, all that jibber jabber. I wonder if people actually pay for it all?”

“You mean that advertising?” asked Paul.

“Yes, I was listening - they had some guy talking like a loony and other people or something making crazy - like yells. I can’t see why anybody would want to listen to that nonsense.”

“The businesses figure it gets the people to come in and buy their stuff, so, they sponsor the program,” said Paul.

“And they pay for that stuff?” surmised Charlie, as he glanced away for a moment from the road ahead.

“Oh, yes, they pay for it.”

“Well, who pays for that? I suppose the people do,” said Charlie, answering himself. “Everything you eat, drink, and wear is taxed to the limit. And then so much of each thing you buy goes for that advertising and all the nonsense!”

“That’s right,” agreed Paul. “Did you hear any news this morning?”

“At six o’clock, I heard a man say something about new plan Nesie is going to put in,” said Charlie, as he pulled the car to a stop at the sign. “He figures on putting in eleven new top men,” continued Charlie, “and something about everybody taking tests and no more elections for the politicians.”

Those words made the young man think, as the car rumbled along the city streets.

“Any place you wan a go in particular?” Charlie asked, as they neared the center of town.

“I hadn’t any place in mind,” replied the young man. “I’ll maybe see if I can get a paper. Wherever you are going is fine”

“I’m going to the bakery for bread and then the super market.”

“I’ll get off then,” replied the young man.

“Oh, I can take you where you want to go,” insisted Charlie, “it won’t be any bother.”

“No, no! Thanks anyhow. The market is - perfect.”

In a few minutes, the old Ford pulled into the parking lot of the market and Charlie gunned its motor as it crawled its way into a spot, stopped it, and took the key. Both men got out.

“Okay, remember,” said Charlie, “if you want a ride back, the car will be here. I’ll be here for about an hour and a half.”

“Okay, Charlie; thanks!”

Paul walked along Sixth Street for two blocks, then, turned toward the post office. As he passed the dime store, he met a friend coming around the corner.

“How’s the ranch?” hailed someone, placing a friendly hand on Paul’s back.

“Oh, hi, Saul. What’s the Desire Party planning nowadays?”

“We’re thinking for the next election.”

“Do you fellows expect to have a chance?” asked Paul.

“We never say die, you know,” smiled Saul. Saul was a few years older than Paul and had been a politician.

“Did you hear the news?” asked the young man. “They’re going to do away with politics.”

“I heard about that this morning on the early news,” replied Saul.

“You got up early?”

“This morning, I did; it was nice, I decided to stay up.”

Then, you know about Nesie and his new plan?”

“I don’t know all about it; it’s so new. The exams for a job and a test for every job in the country, something like civil service,”

“There’ll be fewer jobs if the politicians won’t be doing the appointing,” said Paul.

“I don’t think politicians did too bad a job,” said Saul. “There were abuses, but you’ll have that under any system, I don’t care what kind you get. There are always some people who are looking for the easy dollar; you’ll never get rid of those kind of people.”

“Politicians don’t get rid of the crooks in their party,” added Paul.

“That isn’t easy to do,” replied Saul.

“Do politicians get rid of any?” persisted Paul.

“Well, what we got here?” queried a dark-complected young man with glasses. Saul and Paul recognized the voice.

“What do you know, Bart?” smiled Paul.

“Hi, Bart!” said Saul.

“Are you two politicians debating?”

“We were just discussing the plan Nesie announced. Saul is skeptical.”

“The whole plan hasn’t been revealed yet, has it?” asked Bart. “Nesie is scheduled to explain more tonight.”

“Do you plan to listen?” asked Paul.

“Sure, Nesie’s idea is interesting,” said Bart, “It’s very different, and I think we need something different in this country. We can’t keep going on, in the way things are, with the economy built on wars. It’s artificial, all that killing is evil, and it can’t last. The government is the key to everything now; why not have it do the job right, even if it means starting what Nesie proposed,” said Bart.

Saul and Paul were listening, so Bart continued.

“Like that program for young people from twenty one to twenty five, Each person does a term of four years in some community service work, like production or frontier work. That would be a darn sight better than serving in the army, like they do now with a big standing army at a cost we can’t afford. We’re going into debt to finance militarism, and all we get is waste. What do we gain from it? Nothing!”

“The army certainly isn’t in the long run protecting this country. Why, people in those little countries of the world see us as a terrorist empire, and they don’t regard us as their friend. There never was a big nation with huge armies that was loved by other nations of the world - our armies make their people into enemies.”

“If we want to protect ourselves at home and overseas and not have enemies, we could do a better if we let young people serve four years in some constructive work in production or helping backward countries develop modern abilities.”

After that bundle of thought, Bart rested.

Paul, agreeing with Bart, asked Saul, “Will you watch?”

“Yes.”

“Why not watch it at my house? Then I can argue with you guys about the new problems?”

“If I come, I’ll be there about a quarter to eight.” said Saul.

“You’re invited, Bart.” offered Paul.

“Well, I get hungry, when I watch speeches.”

“I can find some bread and water,” kidded Paul.

Saul smiled. Bart chuckled,

“I’ll take that for a yes. Good. I’ll see you tonight,” said Paul.

The three fellows departed to pursue their own paths of the day.

The morning continued it’s bright, cheerful setting. People were beginning to embark upon another day of work. The sun did likewise, as if, it, too, had a day’s work ahead.

Paul thought about these two friends - Bart Raines and Saul Turner. The future had often been discussed and argued with each one, often regarding the platform intentions of the Desire Party.

When army veterans had returned from experiencing the horror of war and seemed to be interested in helping their nation become an example of justice and progress, the Desire Party cultivated the support of veterans by promises to recognize their war efforts. Saul was one of

those veterans who believed the party's promises.

The Party pressured Congress to enact meager pensions for disabled vets and some privileges. It also examined the nation's colonial policies, which some veterans had condemned as unjust and wicked. Most veterans followed the peacetime routines of life, and laid no claim to their role in war and its abuses of peoples of other lands, who horribly died before their eyes in the war.

Saul entered law and politics after his combat military experience, and intended to support social justice. Bart was a veteran and was elected to the state senate, treading law with singular integrity.

Paul was a conscientious objector in the follow-up war, involving Korea. Now, it seemed to him, that the conscience of many veterans was now disturbing them as an organization. All the promises, that many had made to themselves about changing the post war world for a better future, just never materialized into actions. Veterans' organizations focused on themselves.

Leaders of veterans, who understood what was required and could change the nation's policies, never emerged. As a group, it was as if veterans had been brainwashed by their military indoctrination to support the policies of government. Wherever their wartime hopes were confronted by the post-war status quo, Congressional grants under the GI Bill for education and a batch of privileges made the quo palatable for vets. Their acceptance of the Bill's privileges confirmed that veterans would firmly support all the subsequent wars and foreign policies during the next sixty years.

"It's still true," sighed Paul, thinking to himself, "They are lukewarm... neither hot or cold, just lukewarm."

As he walked down Main Street, past the bakery, the tire shop, and around the corner by the bowling alley, it seemed to him, that everything had faults this morning, except the beautiful weather.

The words of Abraham Lincoln came to mind. "I will study and prepare, so that if my chance should come, I will be ready."

~ Chapter Two ~

Why this Young Man?

Fate might have allowed him to be any of many things, other than what he was. His interest and education led in several directions.

In his younger years, he wanted to better the life of mankind. He studied chemistry to find a chemical, safe enough to inhale into the lungs and able to dissolve granite dust in the lungs of stonecutters. The gas should gradually convert the dust into a gas that could be exhaled from the lungs, eventually healing the lungs.

He learned that science did not know why trees lose their leaves in the fall. He thought the cork in the abscission layer of leaf cells might be in solution all summer, or brought there in the fall, or became crystallized when some change occurred in temperature, humidity, or sunlight, or a combination of all three.

He proposed that two batches of trees of the same age of one species be selected. One batch would be planted in separate containers placed on separate trailers and left to grow in a northern state.

At the same time, in the second batch, each tree would be individually planted in the same type of container and placed on a separate trailer, at the same time.

Then, prior to the time when changes were known to occur in the cells of the abscission layer of deciduous trees in the climate of the northern state, a succession of these individual tree trailers of the second batch would start to gradually move south, each tree followed by another tree trailer,

The first tree trailer would be moved at a rate of 2.875 mile per hour during the first 24 hours for a distance of 69 miles of latitude and continue at that pace each day thereafter. The second tree trailer and each tree trailer of the second batch would move in succession in the same way on the same road.

During this movement, measurement readings of the humidity, the miles per hour velocity and direction of wind, barometric pressure, temperature, angle of sunlight, hours of sunlight and hours of nighttime for each tree would be constantly monitored and recorded on a strip graph during the entire journey until all trees had reached the gulf coast. At the same time the same

monitoring and recording would be pursued on each tree that remained in the northern state.

He wanted to find a way to make the leaves stay on trees longer, so they might be able to produce more food. The growing season would then, in effect, be lengthened. The leaf that fell later would make more fruit or a larger or better fruit. Such a find, when applied to other plants, could increase food and fiber production for human beings.

At another time, through research, he found no recorded experiments had been conducted to grow sea vegetation in the dark depths of the ocean. Artificial light from floatable tide generators and solar electric generators could produce electricity to submerged lights in the depths of the oceans, to cultivate and grow three-dimensional gardens of kelp for human food.

In an urban geography class, during his graduate study, the professor had lectured on the problem of an expanding human population. The prof said the standing room area was limited and there was a possibility that humans would be shoulder to shoulder if something wasn't done to curb the population growth. Various historic proposals of artificial population control were proposed as necessary to avoid congestion.

Students were required to submit a paper on the subject. Paul submitted a paper presenting "The Multiplier Effect", which noted that humans had already increased the space for human habitation on the Earth by building multi-floor homes and huge skyscraper commercial buildings. In the paper, he cited the work of Dr. Athelstan Spilhouse, who designed a multi-floored city for a future population of 250,000 in central Minnesota. Paul proposed modifications for that concept, including dedicated floors for garden crops, grown under artificial electric light provided from wind and solar power generators. The growing medium would use waste heat and wastewater to generate electricity. Composted vegetable refuse would fertilize the garden and the gravity force of waste water and sewage descending to the ground floor treatment plant would power electric generators to produce additional electricity for the inhabitants of the city.

The vision of Spilhouse stirred many people to think of alternative sources of energy.

~ Chapter Three ~

Inspiration

Paul glanced at the clock. In one half hour, Howard Nesie would speak to the nation. Paul thought of his neighbor and wondered if he would be listening to the speech.

Through that neighbor, Paul had received a formation in understanding that was quite unusual. Although he was an 80-year-old man, Charlie was, by no means, ordinary. For years, he disliked the desircratic system, because of the consequences of its extreme materialism and the people who upheld it. "They want the world with a fence around it and cattle inside!" he often stated.

To some people, the old man was, perhaps, boring, with his talk of yesterdays, but not to Paul. During his friendship, Paul began to understand Charlie's judgment that the materialism of the country was rotting the minds of the people and fostering corruption of many types.

Paul studied to understand the intricacies of the social evils and find solutions. His notes on ideas eventually resulted in a story based on solutions and arranged for five hundred copies to be printed. He sent 100 copies to opinion makers in America and other countries.

Among a handful of replies were a few admiring his courage in writing the story, but disagreed with it entirely; a few said the ideas were good, the plan was new and required much thought to properly evaluate it, and it wouldn't be accepted. Some letters approved the plan wholeheartedly. Two were from persons who said they would include parts of the concept with their own plans.

The most impressive letter, however, was from Howard Nesie, the American President - a war veteran - very popular because he promised to stop the unpopular war and did stop it, by offering to negotiate a peace, which gave America a semblance of peace.

Nesie said he was surprised by what Paul explained in the letter that accompanied the book. Nesie said that caused him to read the book, Paul's stunning, core idea was simple and possible and was there all the time, waiting for the consciousness of Americans to wake up and recognize what the second paragraph of The Declaration of Independence really implied.

"The ramifications of the plan were evidently intended in that important second paragraph," said Nesie, "but to propose the ramifications to Congress is also very daunting." He said Amer-

ica needed to understand the full dimensions of ideas that emerge from that paragraph, and requested Paul to answer the list of questions that were included with the letter. Nesie agreed to Paul's view that the unalienable rights described a birthright for each person.

Nesie also praised Paul for identifying the danger that money wove into the fabric of America, and especially enjoyed the book's discovery that the true power of human creativity can only be manifested when work of humans is voluntary. When the opportunity to work must be earned by a single term of voluntary public service, work becomes a life-long satisfaction of human creativity.

Nesie said he finally could understand why the unalienable rights require an appropriate standard of living for each person. That would free the worker from the threat of money. In a money society, unless the worker possesses money or has property that can be exchanged for the goods and services he needs to survive, he would be unable to survive and achieve the normal expectations of a human being.

Paul felt honored by Nesie's interest but thought that the story answered most questions that might arise. For several nights and mornings thereafter, he was deep in thought, how to explain what Nesie wanted to know. By the end of the week, Paul had sent Nesie a reply, listing some of the consequences that should be expected if the plan was proposed and used.

Meanwhile, America was facing serious problems. The post war era brought a reduction in the full blown economic activity of corporations and workers, which existed to serve the war effort.

The war had successfully sown a belief in the minds of Americans that they were a special people who could ingeniously solve problems, by discovering what causes them. The development of war weapons and vehicles happened very quickly during the war, and that achievement embedded a suggestion in the mind of America that the post war world would contain marvelous devices, the full employment of workers, and prosperity.

Commercial success for companies would develop from amazing inventions and technologies. Prosperity was expected to continue by producing the needs of a worldwide market waiting to be satisfied.

Peacetime conversion of industry, however, found a much more humble market than was expected. The promised results of ingenuity and new technology in the manufacturing and transportation industries began to appear in countries that Americans traditionally thought of as third world countries.

Americans were surprised that other countries were now supplying the markets, that Americans thought were their inheritance, This confused Americans.

The advances and change in the production and distribution of goods and services gave the market advantage to the nations that have suffered bombardment of their industrial facilities. Their authority of government renovated damaged industry and infrastructure and arranged for new facilities to be built with dramatic efficiency of processes and a lower cost of production, especially in basic industry.

Countries, that were formerly importers of American products, were supplying finished products to America's market of customers. This enabled quality finished products to be sold at a lower price and yet provide the manufacturer satisfactory income.

Victory left America and its allies with older facilities that were outdated, slower, and less efficient. American industry faced a higher manpower cost of producing products with lower quality.

American industry faced the necessity of completely renovating its industries. Factories in other countries employed fewer workers to work more efficiently for a fraction of the wages that American workers were paid to do the same work.

The world's capitalist economy was being challenged. American organized unions believed that the third world nations should raise their workers' wages to the same level as American workers, rather than expect American workers to enable American companies to survive by reducing their cost of production through reducing the cost of wages. The standard of living for employed Americans was based on good wages. Third world workers wanted the standard of living that was available for many American workers; Corporations controlled the policies of many foreign governments and their economies - resulting in mandated low wages for workers in those countries.

Instead of upgrading the efficiency of American industries, corporate owners closed American facilities and built new state of the art facilities in low wage countries.

Resulting unemployment in America meant reduced tax income for governments and a consequent reduction in government services to citizens and businesses. Agriculture and extractive industries maintained their importance until competition emerged in other countries.

The housing industry expanded after the war but shrunk, when the expected demand for new housing by young people had almost disappeared. Young people were finding few jobs that paid a wage that could afford new housing.

Consequently, every industry in America began to suffer. Colleges and school districts were forced to cut back on their budgets by reducing the number of classes and increasing class sizes.

That meant a lower quality of teaching. Teaching staff was also reduced.

Americans began to realize that their society, its culture and its standard of living had depended on an integrated, indispensable division of labor and services with relationships that enabled them to expect a personal existence. But now the expectation, that the nation would survive the problems, was widely doubted. A change in American consciousness was publicly evident. Anger was widespread in the ranks of organized labor, and Congress was blamed for selling out to the corporations.

Free trade agreements with other countries enabled corporations to escape any responsibility to maintain jobs in communities that had granted tax credits to corporations. Despite the aid those communities provided in appropriate infrastructure services, the corporations moved their facilities to countries where cheap labor was available.

During most of America's history, the elected holders of public offices had controlled government. They made the decisions that created government legislation and policies.

The banking industry and its interests persuaded legislators and the elected executives of government to support legislation that would provide advantages to wealthy corporations.

Since legislators and elected administrators obtained their positions through elections, money or compensations of various kinds were contributed to politicians to support their election campaigns.

The consequences of filling public elective offices by expensive campaigns allowed the contributors of large sums to exercise powerful influence on office holders.

Dependence on large contributions forced politicians to support policies and laws that favored the special interests of large contributors.

Corporations had the most powerful influence on office holders because they could arrange a mass of campaign contributors to support office holders or their opponents. If the actions of office holders opposed the legislation or policies that favored corporate contributors, the opposing candidates would receive the campaign contributions in the next election and win.

Money's influence on politics affected every facet of society. No institution was exempt from the decisions made by politicians and the power of money that influenced the politicians. The effects of this complex caused problems and magnified problems.

Since traditional American government was supposedly based in the U.S. Constitution, and since the Constitution was based on supporting a society that required money and private

property, almost nothing was done in the society that was exempt from the weight of the powerful influence of money. Work of all types was done only if money was paid to do it. No resource was developed, no goods or services were produced or distributed, and no government function was performed that did not involve money.

All of the ills of society resulted from or were linked to the limitations that were imposed by the access to money.

In the colonial era of America, the colonies learned that, sometimes, military power or the threat of its use was able to obtain property or resources when money could not close a transaction among people and nations. That method violated the ethics that were traditionally claimed by the colonies, but by demeaning the humanity of native people or other parties who refused to satisfy proposed transactions, the colonists were able to justify the military theft of the property or resources.

True 20th Century American history tended to continue and expand the ongoing pattern of such acquisitions, but now the duplicity came to be revealed, when their citizen sons were used to serve like Hessians in the worldwide expansion of America's corporate access to the control of the economies of the world.

As there was a price in the past for injustice, there was also now a price to be paid with growing consequences. The respect of the peoples of the world was lost, the self-respect of Americans was lost, and the sheer fear of America was forced on many nations by the arrogant display of American military and industrial power that might threaten to destroy that nation if it failed to abide by the inferred or expressed demands of that complex.

Nesie had warned the American people that the military-industrial-financial complex had the potential to become a dictatorial beast that could destroy America and the peace of the world. But the media changed the impact of Nesie's remarks by claiming they were political exaggerations that politicians typically used to hold office; the media said it wasn't anything to be taken seriously. And Congress ignored the warning.

After his initial correspondence, Nesie sent his closest advisor, Nelson Rader, to visit Paul and flesh out the plan into a proposal for Congress. Rader was a respected economist of the Old Gear Party and author of the book "Satisfaction", a treatise on the desire philosophy of life.

Rader told Paul that Nesie had been fascinated with the plan presented in the book, but especially with Paul's letter. Rader said Nesie told him to explore the content of that letter and how the plan could impact America if it was applied in America. Paul assured Nelson that he would explain that possibility to him.

A few weeks later, the news announced that a new plan for America would be presented as a bill to Congress. If Congress passed the bill into law, a transition period would be developed while the first stage of the plan was achieved. After the positions to administer and manage the infrastructure and government of America would become operational, Nesie would then step down from office and the new Director would lead America's new plan.

~ Chapter Four ~

The Pitch

There was a knock on the door, the door opened, and a head moved into the doorway.
“I’m coming in, okay?”

“Come on in, Bart, I was just getting ready for you fellows by collecting the ash trays,” said Paul, as he moved about the room.

“How come you non-smokers always want to give us smokers a hard time? I think you guys are just itching without smokes and aren’t willing to buy them, so you go on suffering and try to make us contented chaps suffer, too.”

“No, Bart, you got me wrong,” smiled Paul. “I just believe in spreading the faith - you know, salvation?”

“Well, I’m a lost soul,” said Bart, as he lit up a cigarette. “What time is it? My watch stopped.”

“A quarter to eight. Saul should be here soon.”

“There he is now,” said Bart, as a knock was heard at the door.

“Coming in! Its just me.” said Saul, as he entered and began to take off his coat. “I see you beat me,” said Saul, as he noticed Bart.

“Always do, don’t I?” asked Bart, as he winked at Paul.

“Your family has no pride,” smiled Saul, “You got it all.”

“Did you read the paper today?” interrupted Paul.

“Yep!” replied Bart, “I see the paper complained about the new plan wanting to communalize all the means of production and distribution. Boy, if that’s true, there’ll be a revolution.”

“I don’t think so,” said Paul. “People are beginning to wake up and realize that we can’t go on with a modern complex society, when a few rich men control the entire means of livelihood for the millions of people. According to the thinking of industrialists in this country, the owners

know they can quit production, or change it to their fancy. The laws allow them to accumulate vast wealth, which in turn gives them a political influence.”

Saul was sitting in a big chair and was too peaceful to venture any disagreement. He was waiting for Nesie’s speech. Till then, he would avoid argument and use his right to keep silent. He broke out a new pack of cigarettes and lit one.

Bart has always analyzed things in politics. A few years ago, he publicly helped a local politician campaign under the impression of being liberal and progressive. After the politician won, the man brazenly opposed what he previously supported. The politician’s reversal stunned Bart. Since that experience, he has held his support to more restricted bounds.

Saul, campaigned twice for the legislature, almost won, but lost by a handful of votes each time. He always believed it was his duty to make a better world through politics. He hadn’t achieved his ambition yet but was still young enough to hope for his success. Some people thought Saul’s chance came and went because he wasn’t able to fill the boots to win the election. Saul personally doesn’t believe this and thinks that his chance will be coming in the not too distant future. At present he serves as a district judge.

Paul’s father had been a coal miner, steel worker, homesteader, seaman, ghandi dancer, supervisor, and most interesting of all, once was an IWW organizer in the early days of organizing unions for common laborers in the lumber camps of the lumber industry, in the harvest fields of the great plains, and on railroad construction projects.

Many ideals, that Paul believes, developed from the experiences and ideas expressed by his father. Paul learned to organize his thinking into identifying causes and effects, which enabled the finding of solutions. That ability was needed now in America.

Paul turned on the TV set. The three friends settled back in their chairs. The TV screen showed a man at a podium, evidently in Washington, where Nesie was to speak.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I now present to you, the leader of all Americans. I give you President Howard Nesie.”

“Wow! We tuned in just in time,” said Saul.

The audience erupted in cheers, as Nesie approached the podium. With both hands raised, he greeted the audience and accepted the applause. Then he gestured with his hands to urge the people to settle down and listen.

“Friends, my fellow countrymen, greetings from this ancient, beautiful building in our capitol

city of Washington. I wish to describe a suggestion, which, I believe, could solve most of the problems of America for many years to come. You have probably read or heard about some of it since my first announcement, a few days ago, when I discussed the plan with our Congress.”

Nesie said, “They now will have the responsibility of choosing action on it.”

Nesie lifted a glass of water, took a drink, then straightened his speech notes, opened his collar button, and adjusted his necktie.

“We are now living in an age, when we can no longer permit our petty habits to bear us on the road to future destruction. For a long time, it has been the custom and expectation of our society like most societies in the world, for people to obtain their needs according to their ability and effort to earn money.

“All of us have witnessed the increasing inequities of that custom. CEOs receive immense salaries and stock options while line workers in their companies earn a wage just above the poverty line, and they are lucky compared to the thousands of people who are in poverty, unemployed, maybe homeless, without any healthcare. This has caused huge problems in our society and stirred up a huge change upon the face of the world. Peoples have changed governments, and rejected the lifestyle that we advocated for other nations.

“Whole regions have felt the desolation of war. Many people now living have seen the bitter sorrows of three terrible and needless wars, resulting in thousands of horrible deaths, economic desolation for hundreds of thousands of people, their loss of kinfolk, wealth, and the deliberate destruction of their homes.”

Nesie was well liked by many people, but some had misgivings about his manner of addressing his audience. He seemed to cultivate both a confidence in him and distrust at the same time. One critic explained, “The people that watch him are able to see themselves in him. He seems to be as common as them and yet they distrust him, because of his military background.”

“I have presented this plan to you the people,” continued Nesie.

“because it is my hope that it will solve our problems, build a better life for all people, strengthen our relationships with allies, and build deeper friendships with most people of the world. But it is entirely up to you, the people, to decide and tell your Congress what to do.”

Paul whispered to his friends, “Want any of that bread and water?”

“Does it have a head on it and a malt smell to it?” asked Bart.

“Yes!” laughed Paul.

“I’m for that,” said Saul, as he sat back in the large, easy chair.

“When the examinations are set up,” continued Nesie, “anyone can take the test for any position - even a Director. Each position will require qualifications and a willingness to serve for four years.

“The highest qualified applicant for the position of Director of the Community would serve in that position for four years.

“Each position shall be filled by a person who has qualified with a best rank in eligibility for that position. But, no person is required to accept a position, just because they are the most qualified. Under this program, nobody is required to serve in any position, whatsoever! Every position in our society will be voluntary, nobody will be paid for doing work, there will be no money involved in this plan for a new America.”

“Holy smoke! No money!” said Bart. “That replaces the competition for money and favors. Where will that desire to serve all of us, come from? Instead of grabbing for oneself?”

“If any person who obtains a position, does not wish to continue for the remainder of the four year term, that person may resign the position. The next qualified person then becomes eligible.

“Any person, practicing their privilege of management, or Management Privilege, as it is called, may retire at any time. At that time, the next qualified person becomes eligible. All terms of tenure shall consist of four years,” explained President Nesie.

“It may seem like musical chairs, but its purpose is to place people who want to serve in a position, for which they are qualified. This plan respects the right of people to change their mind.

“In this plan, the process of managing our nation would be shared by people in ten community departments. This division of labor would enable efficient community development. Each department Leader would be a member of the eleven person Primary Council that would govern Immigrant Land. The Director of the Community would chair this council.

“The ten departments will include the Departments of Preparation, Economy, Welfare, Production, Research, Utility, Maintenance, Basic Industry, Supply, and Procurement. Each of these departments would be divided into subdivisions. For example, the tasks of the Economy Department would be to maintain order in the economy and provide for the research into improvement of management. The three divisions of this department would be the Order, Innovation, and Experiment Divisions.

“Now, I assume that many of you people may think that I am proposing ideas that smack of Marx or Hegel. I agree with them on one point. The inappropriate distribution of wealth is the cause of most of the troubles of society. If we insist that it is evil to learn lessons from foreign people, even our enemies - then we are to be pitied. Our enemies often react in shock, because of our behavior.”

“What do you think, Saul?” said Bart.

Bart didn't get a response. Saul was still thinking. Paul entered the room with a tray of food and set the tray down, with its mugs of beer and sandwiches, Nesie then lost the attention of these men.

“Beer and bread!” exclaimed Bart, as he took some food and a mug of beer.

Saul was watching the beer, but still listening attentively.

“Here you are!” said Paul, as he offered the tray to Saul.

“Thanks!” said Saul, as he reached for a mug of beer.

The three friends felt fulfilled; they had beer, good bread and politics. When Paul glanced at Bart, Bart raised his mug in salute. Saul raised his beer in reply.

“Boy, this is good bread,” said Saul, “Did your mother make it?”

“Yep,” replied Paul.

“A wife would be hard to find, who bakes bread like this,” added Bart.

“There's a saying,” remembered Saul, “that says something like ‘a man's bread should be kneaded by the woman he loves.’ I guess you eat your bread in that way.”

Paul smiled.

“Persons, who are able, will be invited to contribute four years of service to the Community, in duties where they are needed,” continued Nesie; “They will be able to begin at the age of 21 and finish at 25. Their assigned task shall be determined according to the needs of the Community, and if possible, related to the interests of each person who serves.

“The Preparation Department will anticipate what skills are needed, by conferring with other government departments. The future need for more carpenters, bricklayers, or plumbers, for

example, will be satisfied by training young people to have those skills to do what the Community needs, when they are needed.”

“Gee! This is quite a detailed plan; more than what I expected.” said Bart, “Is it too complicated for people to understand?”

“Maybe in one gulp,” replied Saul. “But, people aren’t as stupid as some leaders claim. They need a chance to think, like everyone.”

“I agree,” added Paul, “they understand most of what Nesie says.”

It was a peculiar position to be in for Paul. Here he was, listening to President Nesie expound on part of the plan that he had sent to Nesie only a few weeks ago.

“No person shall be forced to serve the four years of contribution; it is truly a contribution,” said Nesie. “Every person will receive their necessities as a birthright whether they serve or not. However, the person who serves will be permitted to participate actively in the management of the Community. A person who declined to serve, can later in life choose to serve a four years contribution, if able to do so, but must begin that service before turning thirty years old.

“A person who wishes to withdraw from the four years service, must do so at the end of that year. Unless there was a valid reason for not completing a four-year term, a person will not be eligible to serve any other four-year management term in the Community during the remaining years of that person’s life.

“As we see,” said Nesie, “this plan will require more time to describe it to you. Tonight, I have tried to point out some highlights. In the near future, I hope to present the complete plan in other broadcasts and other media. Television and radio seem to be the most convenient means of doing this.”

Apparently, it was a warm, summer evening for Nesie, who kept a handkerchief in one hand to wipe his forehead while he spoke.

“As I leave you tonight with this new plan, remember the proverb which says: ‘One picture is worth a thousand words.’ If the picture of the plan in your mind and heart tonight isn’t clear, or if it’s difficult to focus on the value and structure, remember that the words alone can’t show the reality of the idea.

“Within two years, when the results of the plan becomes a visible reality, we can expect to see the wounds of war and poverty healed, and a healthy, less troubled world will emerge for all of us. I think it should be given a try. Till next time, I thank all of you. Goodnight.”

As Nesie ended the speech, an ovation of clapping hands and whistles erupted again. His face broke into his well-known, wide smiles, as he repeatedly greeted the entire audience with waves of his outstretched arms and the small repeated tipping of his head in to the audience in recognition of their applause.

~ Chapter Five ~

Aftertaste

“Good!” said Bart, as he clapped his hands together and looked at Saul. For Saul, no answer was an answer, too. He took another drink of beer. Bart watched the screen. Paul watched with a slight smile on his face, then, asked, “Want another?”

“No, I had enough,” said Bart. “Thanks.”

“Me neither,” replied Saul, as he stretched his legs and leaned back. “It’ll be interesting to see the outcome, of all this. I don’t understand why the big boys in the party, who control him from behind the scenes, allow him to present something like this. They’re cutting their necks if they adopt that plan. Nesie’s party is the big boys’ party.”

“Maybe, he doesn’t let the party run him,” said Bart. “Don’t forget they only won the election because he accepted their nomination.”

“The party bosses tell him what to do,” said Saul, “only they don’t tell him in so many words. They give him suggestions in a way, which he should understand, but apparently in this matter, he doesn’t. Maybe he’s too dense.”

“He isn’t dumb, he’s smart!” said Bart, leaning forward in the chair. “If the party asks him, then he probably does it because their money put him in office. He isn’t an idiot; he knows they could get rid of him if they wanted to.”

“I hope he sticks to his guns and follows through with the new program,” added Paul. “We surely need it”

“Did you hear that guy, right after Nesie finished? On Monday night, Nesie will broadcast the next part,” Saul reminded Paul.

“Oh, that’s right. What’s today? Thursday?” asked Bart. He counted on his fingers, “Three days from now. Boy! We may see the most controversial three days this country ever saw. I wouldn’t be surprised if some riot started in protest.”

“You won’t see that,” said Saul, “The people in this country don’t have the national mind that other countries have. People here are willing to assume an obscure, unnoticed place, hiding in

the mass. This country has produced few mass leaders - the kind that can stir up hundreds or thousands of ordinary citizens into one reaction.

“Sure, the people act in groups, but very few people would be willing to be identified as part of a mob or mass. Their boss might fire them, then their college children would lose their funding, and the bank might call in their mortgage. Until leaders come along that can make the people be willing to be identified as a part of a mass movement and set aside their personal issues, you won’t see this country going revolutionary,” predicted Saul.

“If something really hits their individual way of life, I think they can get revolutionary before you know it,” contended Bart.

“You guys should be agitators,” said Paul. “You seem to know how to do it.”

“It wouldn’t be as hard as Saul thinks,” Bart insisted, “You might see that happen before Nesie’s idea ever becomes a reality.”

“It won’t happen in your or my lifetime,” disagreed Saul, with a finger pointed to his abdomen. “It takes their belly button to hit the backbone before people are willing to revolt. You must understand that this country has access to many natural resources. The big money men don’t have to let the people go hungry.

“Sure they have to give them a few extra crumbs to calm them down, but they don’t care. There’s plenty of crumbs, and they won’t lose control of the bakery by throwing those crumbs to the people.”

“When those foreign resources are gone, like the rubber, tin, copper, oil and so on; when the native populations of those foreign countries begin to wake up like they are doing lately, then they’ll tell this country and her business men to go home, and they’ll take care of themselves in other ways. Then we’ll see that we won’t be able to buy tires for twenty five bucks or have this way of life so cheaply,” warned Bart, “if at all.”

“This country will start a war with such countries and invade them to control their resources, The rulers of America have done that since its foundation.” added Saul.

“We laugh at the foreign people who eat a bowl of rice or work the ground with hand implements,” continued Bart. “The only reason we can have our big machinery now is because we have a batch of economic colonies and economic slaves, working for poverty wages, each day going into the mines to dig out the minerals or getting that rubber or getting that tin out of the ground. Once we lose those economic slaves, we won’t be able to strut so big and smart,

thinking we're little gods, that have been selected to dominate the people of the world as sheep or cattle."

"The way I see it," interjected Paul, "it'll be good that the people of this country aren't so easily led into a mass or mob. When a real test comes to this way of life; we might find the people picking out a better way of life in a slower but more peaceful way, due to the fact that they aren't a mob or mass type of people. If they were inclined to become a mob, we might not be able to survive as a nation, when, someday the time comes to really face the ideals of our way of life and change."

"Well, that dispute isn't far off, I can tell you," said Bart, as he reached for the last sandwich that still remained on the plate.

Paul continued thinking and talking and arguing about the speech with Bart and Paul, about what will be involved as a result of Nesie's ideas. If the rest of the country was affected by Nesie's speech as much as these young men, then, Bart Raines' statement might become a reality: "The next three days would be the most controversial three days this country ever saw."

~ Chapter Six ~

The Roots

Paul turned in his bed, stretched, and began to open his eyes. He was locating himself for a moment to again enter the world of the wake. The sun was bathing the morning sheep-like clouds in the fresh dye of sunshine. All the birds seemed to be awake this morning, and well they might be. It was no ordinary morning.

It was early, but people were up and stirring this morning. Not everyone was up, but automobiles were moving along the highway, and tractors could be heard a puttin' in the fields and a train was sending its echoes through the countryside.

Paul listened to his tired self advise him to sleep. Looking at the sunrise, he thought, "The sun shines on the good and bad. Thank God for water." He rose and walked to the wash sink, poured water into a dish, and bathed his face. He noticed how flexible the water was, how quickly it's surface formed new shapes, how it flowed from his face and hands and dropped in a flow or drops to the basin again. "How quickly things change," thought the young man.

Most things that he did, and most of the ideas that he believed were well talked over with his quiet friend, God. He would explain sometimes what he had as a concern about his weaknesses or problems, which was fairly often. It wasn't difficult to do in this way, as he used to say, "God is everywhere and doesn't argue."

This morning, he couldn't find the chance to say much because thoughts were entering his mind like a river, and to keep his mind above the flow of thoughts, he had to keep swimming at their surface to not lose any idea.

He wondered what type of comments the news reporters would have for Nesie's ideas. Would there be positive or negative opinions dominating the news? He turned the radio on to find out.

"Now, here's Doc Dinkeray with news from home and abroad."

"Thank you, Allen, and good morning, friends. News at home seems to be the chief interest this morning. Controversy is heavy over the proposed new plan, which President Nesie reported to the nation last night on TV and radio. The President spoke to a packed gathering of members of his own party, as they assembled in the Banker's Building in downtown Washington. Nesie

explained that he would report on only the first part of the plan, which, he hopes the legislature will adopt next week. In the next few weeks, he will give a series of talks to explain more of the plan.

“I thought he was speaking from the Capitol Building,” thought Paul. “Hmm. Why the Bankers Building? Is he intending to persuade them to support a moneyless system to money-serving bankers?”

“According to some observers, the plan would cause a crash in the economic life of the nation. To get first hand information about how the President devised the plan, we take you to our reporter in the Capital Building - Noose Nodding.”

“Thank you, Doc. A few moments ago, we were speaking with Mr. Floorburn, the leader of the Desire Party representatives here in Congress. He thought it was almost as though the President was having complications of his previous kidney illness. Floorburn ascribed this new plan to be an attempt by Nesie to steal the limelight away from Desirecrats, who, Floorburn claims, were responsible for the nation’s achievements in the past forty years.

“We asked Mr. Floorburn if his party was planning any action to regain the limelight, and he told us that his party was right now planning to offer an alternative plan which would form a new era for America. What that alternative is, he would not say, but he did say that his party would present it on TV and radio tonight. That’s the news from the Capital Building, Doc, now back to you.”

“Thank you, Noose. We have a report that the Industrial Workers’ Party has just announced that they also have a plan for America and have demanded equal time to present it to the people, as provided by law. All but two major broadcasting networks have already agreed to give them time, and these two are expected to agree shortly. As yet, we have no information as to what time they will make their broadcast, but it is expected to take place some time this weekend.”

Paul turned down the volume. He never expected to see what was happening. Could it be, that Desirecrats also read the book, and maybe the Workers’ Party, too? Was it not to be expected of politics, that one party would not let itself be outdone by another? He began to wonder how many people would be offering alternatives. He shut the radio off and went outside to his garden, where he began to stroll through the vegetable patch, picking tomatoes that were ripe. As he walked, he kept thinking about the events of the past few days, although he was also trying to forget them.

In the low part of the garden, were young plants of melons and summer squash. They had been thinned and mulched and were making every sign of promising a bountiful harvest.

Gardening was a sobering pastime for Paul. He always felt that city folks got tied up too closely with abstract ideas of their imagination, thinking of a secure lifestyle that doesn't exist, a worldly success that never arrives. Many try to believe they can settle down peacefully amidst noise, bad air, and neighbors who are too close. Then he remembered reading the words of someone who said that when an early-days frontiersman was able to see the smoke from the next neighbor's cabin, he would decide to move on, for he believed his neighbor was too close and that fellow's business would soon try to become his business.

In the world where Paul lives, cabin locations are not found by accident. He remembered reading a book some years ago, about how four acres would give a person independence and a little part of a peaceful world. He bought a plot with twice that acreage to ensure that he would twice as likely have such a peace, reasoning that a crowded world doesn't encourage a man to have a garden and see the plants bud forth and flower and ask for the sunshine they need. So, he decided to encourage a tranquil destiny for himself with those eight acres.

He pulled a few carrots, wiped the soil from them, and bit into one with a crushing crunch. "That's a carrot," he thought, "When you take a garden fresh bite it doesn't leave any doubt about what you're doing." As he listened to his chewing, he thought, "In the manners of the city, many people would almost feel embarrassed to eat a carrot in public with the crunch noise and all. Should try it once in a theater during an intense scene..." he thought and smiled at the mischievous thought. "Thank God, I'm not in the city."

He walked onto the unpaved, sandy road that led away from the little, yellow house, where he lived, snipped a bit of the lacy, green carrot tops with his teeth and chewed it, noticing the difference in taste. He crossed the stone culvert that he had built in the road, through which the rainwater that would run from the surrounding highlands would find its course during heavy rains. A thought suggested that he walk to town; he paused for a moment, agreed, and started toward town.

The road to town began to rise as he approached a high hill with blue spruce trees, spread along the sunlit side, from which the road now turned to the east and gradually circled to the left as it drifted down around the hill. This stretch of road was very beautiful and often filled with the compelling aromas of blossoms of various trees and plants.

The hill was a part of a terminal moraine of rocks and soil that had been scooped up thousands of years ago, when an age of immense glacier ice moved into the region from the north, like a huge snowplow. The glacier stopped at this terminal location, where the edge of the ice sheet melted. It left rocks embedded in soil, piled up in the forms of these high hills.

Some times, on clear days from the crest of this hill, Paul could see other hills in the distant countryside and would scan the horizons and occasionally discover a new hill that he had not

noticed before. From this height, it seemed to him, one could almost see the curvature of the Earth. Perhaps, this is not true, but so awesome was the scene, that what was lacking to the view of the eye, was readily supplied by the sight of Paul's imagination.

The downgrade on the road, as it turned east and around the hill, was a gradual one, too gradual for a user of skis in winter, okay for a sled to enjoy, but ideal for bicycles, as the young man occasionally tried out. Coasting on his bike for half a mile, meeting a scented breeze, as though he were a bird, about to lift off on a wave of wind past blue spruces and red pine trees, abundant on the right and left sides of the road until the bike coasted near the foot of the hill and quietly slowed itself and him to the need to pedal again on the level plain.

Along the hill slopes, he noticed the red oak, birch, and basswood trees.

Ten minutes later, Paul was nearing town. As he approached the railroad crossing, he glanced at the ties and gravel bed and then had a glimpse of the track to the south. The long stretch of the rails caught his passing attention. The two steel rails seemed to suggest that they would come together in the distance. This seemed to exemplify how apparent truths are not always really the same, like the two rails that never do join together.

As he walked along the street, he saw that people were awake, cars were coming and going, and people were dutifully waiting for city buses. At Main Street, he turned east toward the center of town. Upon arriving uptown, he went to the post office and mailed a letter, which he had written to his brother a few days ago. He noticed that, on some corners, older men were standing in groups of three, four, and five, and talking. As he walked toward one group, he overheard parts of a conversation.

"I'd be willing to bet my bottom dollar that you won't see the plan go through; those big money changers will not give up their power to poor, common stiffs, like you and me, and let themselves lose their money and position?"

"Well, I think they made a mistake already," said a second man. "They let Nesie give the people that idea and, now that they know it, the big, money guys and their system aren't safe anymore. The people are going to get it in their heads that the sky's the limit."

"Yep, they're going to shoot for that idea of Nesie's," said a tall, young man, dressed in overalls. "And they will get it, too, someday. I'm not saying they'll get it tomorrow or the day after, or that they'll get it easy. It'll take maybe a lot of struggling by the ordinary people, and dying, too, but they'll get it, eventually."

"Maybe in a hundred years, but not in our lifetime," said the first man again. "Why, heck, John, those big guys control everything. Most people live from hand to mouth, depending on their

paycheck each week to bring the food and rent for that week. And many of the people have most of their paychecks spent for the next twenty years or more, already contracted to pay debts on their home, car, furniture, or something. With such an arrangement, they can't rise up and bite the...."

Paul could hear no more, for he was out of understandable earshot, but he could have completed that last sentence. He would have liked to stop and listen to the development of the conversation, but he saw another group of men and women at the middle of the block in front of Schmidty's Tavern. As he neared that conversation, his ears were perked for listening.

"It's a darn sight better than us taxpayers sending our boys into the army and dressing and feeding them and giving them all kinds of money and expensive war things to play with. At least this way we can get some return for our money. And I think it would be a good thing for our boys, too," said a stocky, middle-aged farmer. "They'd have sensible ideas in their heads instead of thinking about killing foreigners and chasing girls when they get to town."

"Yes, I think so, too," agreed a man who was about sixty and bald with a few hairs combed across to the side of his head. "It'd do a lot for the young fellows. They need a chance to develop into men and not fall for that hero baloney of so-called sacrifice for their country. Why, heck," continued the man, "we the people are supposed to be the government, you and I. We never asked for any blasted war or the so-called chance to defend the country. The big money men, they're the ones who want the boys in arms. Those rich jokers want to keep those big contracts for making guns, bullets, tanks, trucks, and all those planes, bombs, and ships."

"All those things cost money," said a woman, who was holding a young boy in her arms. "The manufacturers get premium prices for war products, and with weapons, it's like the market never gets full. Pffft!" gestured the woman with one hand, "and all the bullets and things are blown up. Bombs are blown up. They always need more of them and bullets. They aren't like refrigerators. People buy refrigerators; if they have one, they don't buy another, one will do, the market gets filled on refrigerators, but not on...."

Out of earshot again. This time, Paul began to slow his pace, as he walked on. He would have enjoyed that conversation also, but ahead of him, were other groups of people waiting by the bus stop. He could hear parts of several conversations going on there at the same time. The stoplight was yellow and turning red as he walked to the corner, so he waited and listened.

"What do you think he meant by the privilege of participating in the man-aging of the community?" pronounced a tall girl to a girl friend, both of high school age, "Privilege, what does that mean?"

"I think that happens after those exams. Anybody can try to become a leader, just by passing

those tests. I suppose for that, somebody will have to be very smart to be the top person in a test," said her friend. Both youngsters thought on that subject for a moment.

"Boy, that would be something; some of the boys in school have a heck of a time passing their six-weeks test. What would they do on an exam for leader?" said the first girl.

"Can you imagine Ernie being someone like Nesie?"

A few feet away a woman asked her husband, as they waited for the stoplight. "I wonder if Jimmy will have to do that four year duty that Nesie talked about?"

"He'll probably have to do it, like the rest of the boys," replied the husband.

"Do you think that'll be better than the army?" asked the wife again, who had a thoughtful, somewhat worried look on her face.

"It'll be better for the country and the boys, too," answered the husband. "Our taxes will do some good then, learning them something instead of just misleading them."

When Paul saw that the light had turned green he began to cross the street. He wondered what the outcome would be of all those conversations, but he realized there was no shortage of such conversations this morning. Across the street, there were more people talking, and as he looked about, he saw that every corner had a sidewalk discussion going. Up and down the streets, even in the middle of the block, people were talking. That was unusual, even for Saturday.

"Hmnm," he thought, "wonder what the supermarket would look like this morning?" He decided to find out.

From a block away, he could see that customers were gathering about the food market entrance, visiting with each other. Perhaps, this would be a good measure of people's attitudes; farmers would be shopping, and they are conservative in changing things. Some farmers were standing along the sidewalk, with their hands in their coverall pockets. One big man, about fifty years old, with a strong build was speaking.

"I don't think they'll take over the small farmer. My neighbor, Willard Schwinzel, said he heard that the plan might allow a one hundred sixty acre family farm and permit the farmer to keep that much land."

"I heard where they are going to take over all the farms and let a person have only four acres," said a blond-haired young man; his small son stood next to him.

“Will they do like those collective farms overseas where farms belong to a cooperative, and farmers use the machinery together and store grain in common granaries and elevators?” asked a ruddy-faced young farmer, standing with his arms folded behind his back.

“I suspect it’ll be something like that,” said another fellow.

Around the corner of the building, two other men, who appeared to be farmers, had just left their pickup trucks and were walking toward the store and talking. The parking lot was filled with trucks and cars all parked diagonally in parallel rows.

Paul took a look into the store and decided it was more crowded than he expected it to be. Ordinarily when such stores are crowded, people don’t talk much; they just busy themselves with their shopping and getting through the checkouts. He thought about the crowd, and that he didn’t like crowds, but decided it would be worth it to find out if people are discussing Nesie’s plan, while they’re shopping. He opened the door and walked past the sign lettered “Enter Only”. He walked past a lady, who was holding her small boy by the hand, and then past the long, fresh bread counter, sidestepping an avid shopper who was rushing past the produce section, pushing a shopping cart.

People were busy shopping and talking. Paul found the topic of discussion in many conversations was the new plan. He picked up a bag of turbinado sugar and walked to the checkout. The shortest line at the checkouts had only four customers waiting in line. He joined that line and listened.

The woman cashier was about twenty-two years old. A young man, dressed with an apron was putting a customer’s groceries in paper bags for the lady, who was being served at the moment. The woman spoke to the cashier, “Do you have any brothers that might be going into that new program, that everybody’s talking about?”

“Yes,” replied the cashier, “I have a couple of brothers, who would probably go, if it becomes a law.”

As the bag boy was packing the woman’s groceries, she asked him, “Will you be going, too, if that new plan goes through?”

“I guess so,” he answered with a shrug of his right shoulder and a slight smile. As he continued packaging, he added, “I don’t think it will be so bad. I won’t mind it as much as if I were going to the army. All you learn there is how to take orders, kill, and wait.”

The bag boy took a quick glance to see if other people might have heard his remark, then reached for a pound of butter, and put it in the box on top of other groceries. “I think you get

very little value out of going to the army. This should be a lot better," he continued.

"Put this in, too," said the cashier, as she handed him a bunch of celery, which he had overlooked.

The lad picked up the box, "I'll carry it for you," he offered the woman.

The lady smiled in appreciation and walked away, with the bag boy following her, carrying the box of groceries, while both continued talking about the plan.

At the counter, a middle-aged man moved forward to be served next, and put his groceries by the cash register. The cashier smiled and immediately began scanning the prices of his items into the register.

"Will they be taking girls?" asked the man to the cashier.

"I hope not," she smiled, as she continued to scan one item after another. "Twenty three forty seven," she said, as she finished.

The man gave her a fifty-dollar bill. "Might it change your job here, too?" asked the man curiously.

"That's what our boss said this morning," she answered, as she counted the change for the man. "Thank you," said the cashier. "I guess we'll have to wait and see," she added. The man smiled and left with his groceries.

After he left, a tall, plainly dressed man, who had been listening, moved his shopping cart forward in the line and started to unload his selection of groceries and produce from the cart and onto the counter. "How will that affect your job?" he asked, "They'll still be needing places like this."

"I don't know exactly, answered the girl as she began to scan his groceries, item after item. "My boy friend thinks the store will be taken over by the government, and maybe, they'll keep the same workers. I don't know what they'll do."

"The way I understand it," said the man, as he removed his glasses, blew his breath on them, and then wiped each lens with a handkerchief. "They will have young men and women do all the work. Probably, they'll run this place, if they take over."

The girl shrugged her shoulders, to mean she didn't know, as she continued to scan the groceries. "Seventeen eighty-nine," she announced, as the register finished totaling the cost.

The man paid her with cash, and she quickly made change. The bag boy, who carried the groceries for the woman, had now returned. "Do you want me to carry these for you?" he asked the man.

"No, I can manage," said the customer, "Thanks."

Paul was now waiting second in line. A woman with a small daughter was ahead of him.

"Sure is a lot of talk going on about the new plan," said the woman to the cashier.

"Sure is," answered the cashier, as she scanned each item.

"I don't understand much about it," continued the woman, "but I know my husband was talking about it last night. He was saying something about taking over all the factories and shutting down lots of them."

"Sixteen forty-three," said the cashier.

"I can't understand why they would want to change things so much," said the customer. "Things are pretty nice. My husband has a good job and earns good money." The lady fished out the correct money from a purse and paid the cashier. "He's a supervisor at Inclin Manufacturing Company; they make refrigerators and deep freezers."

"Oh, I see," said the cashier, with a courteous smile. "Thank you," she added, as she accepted the money from the woman.

The lady left, carrying her own groceries. The carry out boy waited. Now, it was Paul's turn. He put down the bag of sugar. The cashier looked to see if that was all there was, decided there was nothing else, and scanned the bag.

"Two forty three," said the girl. "Do you want it in a paper bag?"

"Would you, please?"

She put it in a bag quickly.

"Thanks," he said and walked toward the door, passing a sign lettered "Exit Only."

Outside, Paul walked toward the Main Street again. He passed another trio of men, standing and discussing... what else - the new plan. "Bart was right," thought Paul. "Controversy is plen-

tiful.” He crossed the street and walked on.

“Hope no trouble will come from it,” he thought. “Course, there’s bound to be some trouble. When anything is started among people it takes time for people to get accustomed to the changes.”

At Main Street, he turned west and aimed toward home.

Thoughts came to mind for Paul; One thing that seems to be enough for everyone, so far is air, Course, the cities foul that up, too. Like that report that showed the great difference between the lungs of city folks and farm folks; little wonder, with all the carbon monoxide threat cars give off and people breathing it; it’s a wonder we don’t all die off with some kind of air poisoning.

More ideas came to Paul, as he walked the next ten blocks home. His eyes were clearly open, and the light that entered them described the things he saw, and they provoked new thoughts.

The sun was hitting its high midday position in the sky. At the next corner, he turned south, facing into the sun. He enjoyed sunlight. He thought of it as a free food, providing vitamin D to the body, and to realize that parts of the sun become part of his body.

After fifteen minutes of walking, Paul was out of town, following the curve around the hill. A light breeze was sending pine and spruce scent mixed together, clearing his mind, making him feel taller than before.

Farther along the side of the hill, he passed June grass that wafted its aroma along the road, reminding him of one summer, when he had collected hay at this spot for two goats that he had raised.

Paul approached his usual shortcut, past a bed of volunteer gladiolas, with some that had brown and white blossoms. Nearing his house, he could see that the birch tree, which he pruned last spring, was sprouting again with new buds.

He opened the screen door and entered his home. He put the sugar on the cupboard, went to the couch in the living room, near the open window, sat down, loosened his shoes, laid down on the couch, his arms stretched back, and, with a deep sigh, relaxed, thinking “May all things work out for good... by thy grace.” He was tired, and he knew it.

He closed his eyes and took a deep breath that filled his lungs; then another and then a few more sleepy breaths followed. Before he took a tenth breath, he was asleep. His tired limbs and mind slept, and his strong heart did its duty.

~ Chapter Seven ~

The Other Side

In the distance, a factory whistle blew. Paul heard it in his sleep, opened his eyes slightly, and then closed them. For a moment, on the sleepy side of life, he realized he had taken a nap. He opened his eyes, braced himself on his elbows, and moved to sit up on the couch. After he gazed at his near world of consciousness, he rubbed his scalp, yawned, put his hands on his knees and pushed himself up, on his feet. He yawned again, stretching his arms and legs. Most of that needed sleep was out of his body now. He went to the wash dish and washed his face.

Water brought him back to the world again. As he dried his face, he peered from the window and saw Holstein cattle, grazing on a hillside, above his neighbor's valley. All of them were pointed north except one, who, apparently, found better eating on a path toward the west. White clouds spaced themselves high over the valley, and the true blue sky was reflected in the slowly, flowing water in the valley creek.

The trees on the other side of the road had leaves in full green. Seeing the green, he remembered that he read somewhere that abandoned human constructions in the tropic jungles are quickly reduced by jungle vegetation. "Wonder how much of the face of the Earth man really changes, if the soil and its plants and animals tend to quickly erase man's mark upon the world as soon as he leaves an area? The soil grows grass and brush, the animals move back in, and trees appear." As he pictured the idea in his mind, it involved so many new perspectives, that he turned away from the scene in his mind and chose to whistle and look for a jacket.

He found his beige favorite by the table, picked it up, and slipped into it. He turned on the radio, explored a few stations, and listened to one for a moment.

"Our plan is more fundamental, more basic," said a male speaker. "It seeks to establish a better, more equitable life for all. Handicapped persons are eligible for the Management Privilege; if they can qualify in the exams, in the positions they could serve. Mr. Nesie made no mention of handicapped persons in his plan.

"Also, in our plan, we provide for a dissenter to serve by going to one of those Frontier lands that are not communalized and teach the people the necessity for community development, according to their personal beliefs, even though their beliefs deviate from the policies of the plan, which Nesie proposed. Doing that, will earn such a person the Management Privilege in Immigrant Land.

“A dissenter who continues such work longer than four years, shall be eligible to receive the assistance of one “Volunteer”, for each four year term that dissenter served. Each Volunteer shall help the dissenter teach the dissenter’s ideas.

“If any dissenter or Volunteer desires to return from the Frontier area after serving a two year period of time, the remainder of the term can be completed in some production contribution at home. If such a person chooses to not complete the four year contribution, the person shall be allowed to serve only one four year term of Management.”

As Paul listened to the broadcast, he wondered, “To most people, does it seem complicated?”

“We cannot explain our whole plan in one half hour session,” said the speaker, “It is the fruit of many people’s thoughts. Many very important items are treated in our plan, which Mr. Nesie’s plan seems to overlook. Each day, for the next week, we will telecast, at this same time, additional provisions of our plan for dynamic action, which the Industrial Workers’ Party offers this great nation.

“Remember, the party that the people needs is the party that aims to go to the heart of the problem, and the heart of each of us is the heart of the problem. Unless we learn to desire justice above all other ideas, we shall find no way to pacify this Earth. I thank you.”

Applause and whistles, then another man spoke, “You have just heard Mr. Ruall Walther, president of the Industrial Workers’ Party, addressing delegates to a special session of the Industrial Workers’ Party. Free time was given in accordance with the law. The views of Mr. Walther do not necessarily express the views of the network or this station. Stay tuned for Supertime Frolic on ZBC, which follows immediately.”

At that suggestion, Paul changed to explore the stations again. Now, that he heard the Industrial Workers’ Party, he wondered how many groups of people would take up this plan and adopt it as their idea. He didn’t care. He was more interested in what the Congress would do about Nesie’s proposal. Other parties claimed to be the champions of justice, but President Nesie and the Old Gear Party presently led the power of government.

He continued checking the radio, dipping into commercials, music, and soap dramas. “Rock and roll” music was on most of the stations. After scanning almost half of the dial, he hit upon the local station, RUNX.

“Are you ready for Christmas? It’s easy to forget that, before long, summer will be gone, and when autumn is here, winter is sure to follow. All of us know that the highlight of winter is Christmas. When snow and ice are here, winter finds good cheer in the gayety of Christmas.

You need cheer this winter. Plan now, you can cheer the Christmas rush by having your shopping designed to prevent last minute confusion with one of our famous 'Top The Price Used Cars'! Every dependable model is now at your 'Top The Price' dealer. You can ride into the Christmas holidays in comfort and celebrate this Christmas in style with the pleasure and fine quality of your inspected used car from 'Top The Price.'"

"My god!" exclaimed Paul, "Advertising Christmas in summer!" He turned the set off in disgust.

"Oops!" he muttered to himself, as he looked at the clock, "That meeting's tonight... should be interesting."

With this thought, Paul poured hot water into the wash dish and removed his shirt. He remembered a health book, maybe some years ago, recommended whistling as a means of keeping good health. Deeper breaths were synonymous with whistling. A whistler's breath starts from the lower part of the lungs and fills the lungs with new air, activating the body's health.

He had a notion to whistle, but, his hands were holding the soap lather to wash his face, so, he chose to postpone his whistling exercise. He washed and rinsed the lather, dried himself; then, whistled, as he dressed in fresh clothes from his closet.

His home was built on the southeast slope of one of the high hills in the ridge. A favorite thrill of his was to hike to a clearing on the top of that hill and survey the countryside that surrounded it. In warm weather, it was a refreshing hike of about a half-mile to the top, through woods, which bordered the young man's land on the west. Red oaks bordered the edge, ash and maple trees grew abundantly in the deep woods. A sprinkling of birch clustered on the crests of two sunlit knolls along the upward slope of the hill.

The woods were part of a mile-wide game refuge that surrounded the city, and the wildlife seems to know it. A month ago, Paul had been weeding his garden in the evening just before sunset. He had paused for a rest, leaning on the hoe handle for support, looking at the remnant sky glow after the sunset. Atop a patch of red clover, in front of the sunset he saw the silhouette of two large ears on a head that was apparently watching him. For a few seconds, the young man remained motionless, awed by the sight. He was sure it was a deer.

Evidently, it had visited the red clover for its evening feed. His brown and white terrier, Sparky, staring intently, also noticed the ears, his front right foot was lifted sharing that ready, motionless moment; the deer remained still, then it turned its head for a glance at the sunset, and a moment later, again turned to observe the young man and dog, then again toward the sunset, and, like a dream, the deer left in a quick, silent, light-footed trot, its feet seemed to barely touch the earth as it returned to the woods. Immediately, the silhouettes of two more deer, with white

tails flashing, followed the first deer and disappeared.

“Isn’t that something!” gasped Paul to himself, “A whole family?”

He frequently heard and saw pheasants in this area. Hardly a summer week went by without hearing pheasant roosters shriek their calls, morning or evening, in this territory.

At dusk, other birds seemed to want to get the last word in before the quiet of nightfall settled in. The pheasants could be heard, calling each other, until the sun set below the horizon. Then, the Meadow Larks would finish their conversations with the sunset.

One evening, Paul heard Meadow Larks, piping out what they probably thought would be the last word in the neighborhood before the night darkness fell on them. Most birds had already sung their farewell to the sun and retired for the day. A few Larks, however, were still possibly telling the neighborhood what they had accomplished that day. But, coming across the hills from the west, the last rays of the setting sun had not descended.

Knowing that this bird, like many birds, will answer a reasonable facsimile of its own call, Paul answered the calls of these larks. As he imitated a call, one lark began to answer him, possibly thinking that it had to impress this impersonator to shut him up. Possibly thinking that it was the duty of that he bird or she bird to assume the task, that bird repeated the call again - as if to say, “this is how we really do it”, inserting an additional, sophisticated trill or change in the musical score of its latest lark call.

Each time, if Paul did his best to match the lark’s call, the lark would upgrade its call, and Paul then imitated the upgrade. The upgrade, imitation, upgrade, imitation continued, becoming an elaborate sophistication of lark conversation, each call and reply a little more magnificent.

Paul continued to imitate each call and add a little flourish of his own. This he did as the sun-rays disappeared, and darkness began to move in. After ten minutes of such mischief conversation, he began to feel somewhat guilty, realizing that he had also stirred up other bird families to again start their vocal sunset adieus. He was also tired of forcing himself to do that form of whistling - it didn’t come naturally; the song of the Larks was not his element. After a few more calls to investigate if any competitors remained, the last Lark quieted down, probably feeling satisfied that it did, indeed, have the last word.

~ Chapter Eight ~

The Calling

The clock struck six thirty. With a few brush-like pats, Paul straightened his coat and finished dressing.

“Tony, Here, Tony,” he called from the front door. In a moment, a small, black spaniel bounded into the house; his tail wagging and his rump twisting back and forth like a motor. “That’s a good dog; now you stay here! I can’t take you along!” The dog seemed to understand perfectly, but looked as though he was being cheated.

Paul turned the house lights off, closed the door as he left the house, but didn’t lock the door. He believed that an unlocked door was better theft prevention than a locked one. He figured that when it’s unlocked, the thief might think that someone is nearby who might return and catch him. A locked door tells the thief that the owner is away and the house is safe to be burglarized.

Paul walked down the path to the roadway that led to the main road. It was a pleasant evening; the air was scented with new-mown alfalfa, waiting for the air to dry it. The sight of hay brought a thought “Grass is plentiful as a feed for animals, and it is nourishing. If grass could be made into a palatable human food, the world’s demand for food could be solved.” Then, “but then, man isn’t using food he has right now; he wastes much of it.”

Two headlights came around the curve ahead. The young man moved to the side of the road to face the car. The lights could be seen to go down the little valley south of the hills, then, up again. They seemed to slow down, and then, they turned west at the crossroad. He watched, as the car accelerated to make the long climb over the hills in the west. The gravel on the surface of the road could be heard to roll under the tires of the fast-moving car, as it approached the top of the crest; then the car vanished with its sound on the other side.

It was quiet again. The moon was overhead in its first quarter, and the stars were all present. In the distance, the asphalt highway sang its wheee song from the tires of another fast moving car along its surface. About a block ahead of him, a small black object moved across the road into the darkness on the other side.

“Skunk... or cat, maybe,” thought the young man. It wasn’t long before the air stung with the sharpness of a skunk, removing the pleasant scent of alfalfa.

Everywhere, it seemed, the crickets were chirping in their orchestrated chorus, while the fireflies switched their miniature light plants off and on, on and off. Mosquitoes were also abundant, but not bothersome, as long as the young man kept walking. Ground water levels were normal, fed from winter runoff, and spring rains. During wet years, mosquitoes often took over the area, but not this year.

The young man had easy walking now, for he was beginning to descend the long slope, which curved around the hill to the east. The scent of pine approached him as he passed the pine and spruce trees along the road. High on the east side of the hill, he noticed a house, which he admired. Its masonry walls with its occasional projections of stone from the face of the walls, always reminded him of the storybook cottages of mountain people, that he read as a child. Its three-dimensional stone walls seemed to suggest that the cottage grew out of the hill as a natural part of the landscape. Curling smoke rose straight up from the fireplace chimney; some of the lights were on in the house.

Ahead was the highway. A dog howled somewhere in the distance, and soon, other dogs howled their replies, and dog conversation started. The hum, composed from some city industries was becoming more audible as he continued toward the city. The granite sheds were once again audibly shee-shawing slicing through huge stone blocks. Sounds which usually go unnoticed by city folks, became distinct, as he neared the city outskirts. Exhaust sounds of automobiles formed a pizzicato to an undercurrent, background hum of railroad telegraph lines.

He crossed the highway and then the railway. No train was in sight. Church bells rang the half hour past seven and reminded him that the meeting was a half hour away. Ordinarily, he could easily walk the remaining distance in about twenty minutes, so he wasn't concerned. He had plenty of time. He reached into his pocket, withdrew a clean, white handkerchief and blew his nose.

"Wonder if they will have that speaker tonight?" he wondered, "Should be appropriate."

The meeting, about which the young man was thinking, was the regular meeting of a single people's club, which started as an attempt to permit single people to meet others in recreational circumstances. These young club members believed in the original meaning of the word "recreation" derived from the word "re-create." If they wanted new energy and vitality, they needed to also rebuild their whole soul and body, so they could go back to their daily tasks with a refreshed countenance. They occasionally used a slogan, "Don't wreck-the-crate, Re-create." So, beside occasional athletic activities, they promoted mental challenges for themselves.

He came to Main Street and turned to the east. The business section of town was straight ahead, and the buildings had their signs lit up, but the street was not busy with cars. As he passed the Keen Cleaners, he noticed an illuminated clock in the window; it read seven forty five.

“Evening, Clem,” greeted Paul as he caught up to an older man, walking in the same direction, “Getting some air?”

“Yes, I thought I’d get away from the house for awhile and get a little peace,” replied Clem, offering bait for the young man to inquire.

But Paul changed the subject. “How’s your son, Jake? I once made a couple of student runs with him, when we were brakemen.”

“He’s all right. Were you a brakeman?” asked Clem.

“For a few months; then I resigned. I didn’t like the Sunday work and night work. It used to take ten hours to go a hundred sixty eight miles to Fargo. That’s only averaging sixteen, seventeen miles an hour, with a fair-size freight. We spent most of the time sitting on sidings, waiting for other trains to pass us, one way, or the other. If they would put double tracks on all lines, then the east bound trains wouldn’t disturb the west bound trains and vice versa.

“Railroadin’ wouldn’t be so bad for trainmen then,” continued Paul, “They could organize the freight runs and passenger service, so a trainman could leave in the morning and return home in the evening, the same day. Now, a trainman doesn’t really have a home or a home life. I heard one fellow’s wife say that she has to raise the kids and do most of the organizing and planning around the house. She said ‘Trainmen just become bums with a little money in their pocket.’”

“My boy said the same thing,” said Clem, “He felt he had no chance to live normally. But it wouldn’t have to be that way. Course not! But the rich who own the railroads won’t change things. They won’t put that double set of tracks in!”

“If automobiles had to run east and west on single lane roads, nobody could travel. Businesses would object. For the same reason, it’d be profitable to put double tracks in every railroad,” added Paul.

“True, but they don’t want to wait for that, and you can’t change them!”

“Yes, I suppose you’re right,” agreed Paul.

"It's a funny world," surmised Clem. He looked toward the business district with its bright lights. "It seems ordinary people never get the power to rule themselves, and to top it off, the world is round, so men keep running into their same, old problems. You can't ever run away from your problem - more than half the world away."

"Would it be different, if the world was flat?" asked Paul.

"Maybe, it'd be worse," smiled Clem.

"Could be," chuckled Paul.

"Well, this is where I turn off," pointed Clem, as they came to the corner of the block, "I enjoyed talking to you. Maybe, we can discuss politics again sometime."

"That might be. I'd like that" smiled Paul, "I'll be seeing you again. Say hi to Jake for me. Good night."

"Good night," replied Clem, with a wave of his hand.

Paul walked at full speed now. He had about five minutes to make the meeting. He knew it would take about five minutes to walk the remaining distance. He smiled, as he thought about Clem. In the book, that the young man had sent to Nesie was a similar plan for railroads. It described a two-track system, whereby traffic could move unobstructed. Division points would be located about every seventy miles. Crews could work from these points to neighboring points and back on the same day.

As he continued his quick pace, he remembered the statement about the student runs that he had made with Clem's son, remembering one occasion especially. It was on an overnight local run to a division point out west. They arrived on a Saturday, in a small town and couldn't start the return trip until early Sunday morning. Both Jake and Paul were anxious to perform their tasks and pass their student probations, so, they intended to go to bed early that Saturday night. Older trainmen had invited them for supper at a local tavern. When both young men arrived, they saw that it was also a dance hall.

Musicians were setting up instruments, and some townsfolk and farmers from the surrounding area were arriving for the weekly dance. The older trainmen saw the young brakemen, motioned to them to join their table, and bought them beer.

Some women arrived, who apparently knew the older trainmen, and joined them. After awhile, the women asked the men to dance with them. The two young men saw that this event would be an all-nighter and decided they had better get some sleep. They excused themselves with

that explanation, but the real reason was to avoid the situation, which was apparently going to become at least, a drinking party.

Early next morning, Jake and Paul and an older trainman rose early. The trainman suggested they catch breakfast at the tavern before starting back with the train. The young men agreed and went for breakfast with the older trainman. The tavern had lights on and was open.

At the restaurant, each man gave his order. Soon, the lady, serving them, began to criticize the older trainman, saying it was lucky he had left the dance early the night before, because the husband of the woman he had dated was looking for him. The older trainman stammered for an excuse but found none. The young brakemen were uncomfortably shocked to hear what happened the previous night with married women, and it was a double shock, because all the older trainmen had wives and families back home.

Paul shook his head, as he remembered that situation. He was now turning onto Eighth Avenue. The hall was halfway down the block on the other side of the street.

He opened the door of the hall and stomped his feet lightly, a winter habit, to shed snow from his boots during the winter. As he walked up the stairs, he could hear people talking, although he couldn't see them. Tiptoeing to the back of the auditorium, he found a seat. Apparently, he was a little late; the speaker had already begun.

“When we are young, we learn our ideals by faith. We are taught to believe every man has a right and duty to live. Our teachers tell us that we are social beings; we need other people, that we can develop our personal happiness by helping others develop their happiness.

“Somehow, in our later years, we begin to think it's okay to live as though the only responsibility we have is to ourselves. We plan to provide for ourselves and wish other people well - if they are an intimate part of our plan of life. People, who do not fit into our plan of life, are expected to shift for themselves. Our social relationships assume much of the character of, what a poet claimed is a selfish man. In his poem, a selfish man told an acquaintance, that it is hard to live with others, because he can't trust them. He can't trust the candlestick maker, the baker, or the farmer. “Only you and I, do I trust,” he told his acquaintance, “and I have my doubts about you.”

Paul listened to the speaker continue.

“In many ways, that is how we are,” expanded the speaker, “We learn to accept our ideals of justice, charity, and generosity only nominally. These ideals fit into our lives only in a staggered way. If they are convenient to apply - then we use them, we practice them. If they appear to be uncomfortable or unprofitable, we neglect them or maybe ignore them.”

“Such attitudes cause much loss of good in the world and lead us into refusing to do good to our part of the world. Every person, when young, as a boy or as a girl, would like to make the world into a place that would be ideal. Before long, they grow up thinking that they never could change the world, because they don’t have enough money or power.

“They automatically assume the Creator meant life to be dull and uncreative, that humans are nothing but creatures, led from birth to death by their impulses. This is how many people think, you might almost say most people of the civilized world think this way. They expect to be and are willing to be a nobody.

“To what could we credit this attitude?” asked the speaker. “I suppose, I should expect that many of you believe that life is just that way. Maybe, you have seen the world about you, act with this lifeless attitude - where people stop developing more of their talents, once they leave school, or get married and settle down.

“There are reasons why people don’t develop themselves. Life is meant to be a vocation, in which each of us has time to develop talents. Why don’t people continue to grow in knowledge; why don’t they continue to study and improve their abilities to do good works more abundantly?”

At this point, the speaker held out both hands, as though he offered the question to the audience. Paul was listening attentively to the ideas. A few latecomers tiptoed into the hall and found chairs in the row, just ahead of Paul.

“When I was in Africa, I learned that many of the needs of the people, could be satisfied by applying some ideas which I learned in America automatically and rarely noticed. Ideas about the use of materials, of foods, ideas about sanitation, things we assume in our everyday practice of life are revolutionary in parts of Africa.

“The simple skills were valuable for Stephen Jahn - the young farmer, who came from Kimball, twenty miles from here. He thought he had only a few talents to offer the work in Africa when he first arrived there. Eventually, he became one of the most influential teachers in that region. He taught local farmers how to rotate crops, how to clear the land without fire. He introduced some new crops, like peanuts, which did very well, and lumber trees by starting a nursery for tree seedlings. The growing season is longer there, and it seems all plants shoot up like weeds. Twenty-five years from now, they will be able to cut some of their first lumber.

“Stephen taught people how to think in terms of small implement applications on their farm plots, and to think in terms of sustainable tools. That was a big accomplishment, almost a revolutionary one. It might be considered primitive by our industrial minds, but it solved the problem there. Stephen might never have become the man that he is today, if he had not served

those years in Africa, the way he did. Some might say that he had it in him all the time. True; but, like many other young men in America, he might have ended up thinking only of himself and not have understood that his skills could help people solve problems.

“Like most young people, he wasn’t interested in getting rich. He wanted to explore his ideals. When business doesn’t permit young people to try their ideals in practice except under very stringent conditions, then a serious problem exists. If business doesn’t want the youth to practice their ideals, then the schools which teach these ideals are in opposition to business, and will fail to teach the ideals of life - health for the body, beauty for the soul, and truth for the spirit.”

Paul, listening in the back of the hall, was impressed with what he heard. The speaker continued his speech, as two latecomer young women tiptoed into the hall and took seats, two rows ahead of Paul.

“For several years, the missions have asked for young lay people to become lay missionaries in foreign countries. Some schools have been set up for the training of these lay people. The response has been impressive, but the demand for them is so great that every person, that finished training to date, is already asked to come to many countries, each of which sorely needs them,” explained the speaker.

“Recently, a great impression was made upon Americans by the announcement of a new plan by President Nesie. The four-year contribution that he has announced will assist the lay missionary approach in foreign missions. As you probably know, if the new plan becomes law, we will have a different way of life. Parts of the plan might seem objectionable to our present customs, but are not necessarily dangerous to our better customs. Maybe you will admit that there is much that needs to be changed in America.

“Few leaders have ever sought to change things very basically. They put in a law or two that gave us a little more money back from our taxes or took a little more money from us. They might even have passed a law that made four lane highways out of three lane highways, but these things were not changing our basic problems. Many of the critics of our system have been regarded as crackpots or traitors. Our minds were not open to thinking of real solutions for our errors.”

The speaker moved to the right of the audience a little, continuing to talk. He slipped one hand into his coat pocket.

“The surprise about President Nesie’s plan is not so much the things that will be changed. I think the shock of the plan came because the person who presented it to us was our foremost citizen, who, we thought was as corruptible as us, as selfish as us. Three days are almost past since his first presentation of the plan. We are beginning to recover from the initial shock of

the values involved.

“We now have a chance to build a great way of life,” said the speaker. “Great, not in the buildings it will erect or the machinery it will develop, or the quantity of goods that the people will possess. It will be great in the justice that it accomplishes, in the generosity it cultivates in the hearts of our people; great in the experiments it will use to build us into a people who seek the truth.

“We are presently trying to set up a program for work in the missions by lay people under the Frontier part of Nesie’s plan. We will need young people to build the nucleus of our lay missionary approach. I invite each of you to think about the new opportunity to make your life meaningful. If you offer time in the work of lay missions, you will find a fruitful life ahead of you, whether you remain in the work or return to a life in your home country. It seems that people who make a sacrifice to help people, never suffer a fruitless life. They seem to find joy as the fruits of their work, even in cases where the circumstances are trying. I thank you!” said the young speaker, as he concluded his talk.

The audience responded with applause; the speaker was smiling. Many people wore smiles of appreciation on their faces, but a few persons apparently had unresolved doubts about the ideas they just heard and refrained from clapping. A look of doubt hung on their faces.

Paul enthusiastically applauded the speaker. The two young ladies that came in late were politely clapping. A tall young man, with dark, handsome features, arose at the front of the audience, evidently intending to speak, and motioned for quiet.

“I wish to thank you, Mr. Conner, for your inspiring ideas. Perhaps, some members of our audience will someday find heart to become lay missionaries. Mr. Conner has advised me that if anyone is interested in learning more about the program, he will provide an address with our club president, where to write for more information. I guess, they tell me the lunch is ready to be served. After the lunch we will play cards. Can I hear a motion?”

“I move we adjourn!”

“Aye!” roared the majority.

“The meeting is adjourned.”

Young people in the audience began to rise and converse with each other, as they gradually moved toward the refreshments. Several persons were congratulating Conner. Paul got up and walked toward the refreshment table.

“Hi, Rose,” said Paul, walking toward the refreshments.

“Oh, hi!” smiled the young lady, “How’d you like the talk?”

“Good,” he replied, as both walked toward a table. “The speaker told the group what it needed.”

“I wonder if anyone will think about lay missionary work?” said Rose.

“Hard to tell. Many people are pretty comfortable in their present circumstances and wouldn’t change unless some impressive reward was a result.”

“What do you think of what he said?” asked a fellow who nudged Rose.

“I think it’s a wonderful idea, Leo,” smiled Rose, “Don’t you?”

“Yes, if it works,” replied Leo.

“It could work,” said Rose, “If the right people go into it, so that it is organized right; it would work. Then, other people would join.”

The three moved toward the refreshments table and joined the line up for refreshments. As they waited their turns, Rose turned, to continue the conversation with Leo and Paul.

Paul took a cup of tea and asked, “What do you think of Nesie’s plan, Leo?”

“I don’t think he’ll put it through. It’s like what Conner said. The shock of the plan came because the person who presented it was our nation’s foremost citizen. Once that wears off, the people will say the heck with that noise and maybe even throw Nesie and the whole works out.” Leo took a cup of coffee.

“I think people may not understand all of it, but they won’t go for any rebellion.” Said Rose, “They may talk loud about some parts of the plan, but they’ll agree with most of them.”

“Most people I’ve talked with don’t agree with the idea,” answered Leo. “They don’t like the idea of abolishing the money system.”

“They don’t understand it,” said Paul, “All the ideas haven’t been explained yet in the papers. They haven’t read much about it.”

“Yes, but...” began Leo, as he reached for a sandwich.

“Give them some time to understand the ideas, and I think you’ll find most honest people agree with them,” predicted Paul.

“Are they going to use a different kind of money?” asked Rose.

“They aren’t going to use any kind of money,” explained Leo. “When a person becomes twenty years old, he or she receives what’s called a Birthright. This Birthright would entitle each to the Standard of Living, which the government changes each year. The way I understand it, there’ll be one called “Family” which will contain the appropriate needs, adapted for each member of each family.”

“I’m not poor in my grammar,” smiled Leo as he saw the puzzled expression on Rose. “That’s what they call this, Rose - Man, Woman, Family - with or without the item called Child. I guess the Child is arranged into different values, too... for different children.”

“You mean they’ll replace the money system as we know it now?”

“Yes, Rose,” replied Leo, “The ‘Man’ will include the Birthright to goods and services that are needed by an adult male, who has reached twenty one years of age. It entitles him to this for each day of his life in America. This standard of living is designed to meet what is appropriate for a twenty five year old man; it was figured that a man at that age is generally at the time in life when he has the maximum personal needs. The ‘Woman’ is based the same way but for a woman.

“All the necessities for each category during that year will be included... not only food, clothing, and shelter, but a complete set of necessities for that year. If a bicycle or something else is part of the Standard of Living for that year, then it’s included,” continued Leo.

“You mean then, that the Woman, the Family, and the Child will include the needs of a woman and a child and a family?” asked Rose.

“Yes, that’s right, but don’t get me wrong,” smiled Leo, as he raised his hand to object. “I’m new to this, just like you people. All I know is what I have heard or read in the papers.”

“Leo’s right,” commented Paul, “The Man will be the standard of living for a man, and the Woman will be the standard of living for a woman.”

“As a child grows, its standard is increased to meet its circumstances. See!” said Leo, smiling at Rose, “It’s very simple.”

“Simple?” replied Rose, “Where will all those things come from?”

“Well, where do they come from now? Lots of those things are already being produced but are not available to people who need them. If you have the money to buy things, then you can get things. Without money, you don’t get, period! The government’s going to take over the production and distribution of everything and run it!” said Leo. Rose looked surprised, didn’t know what to say, but smiled toward Leo.

As the three people picked up their refreshments, Rose noticed an open table along the wall, called Paul’s attention to it, and the three walked to the table, took their seats, and relaxed.

“I need to read more about it,” said Rose. “Heavens, compared to you fellows, I know nothing.”

“Oh, Rose,” said Leo. “You probably have just been listening to show us how dumb we are; you probably have studied all about it and have a couple of requests from Nesie to act as his advisor about the plan.”

“Sure! Sure!” smiled Rose in mock approval.

“Excuse me, Leo,” said a young woman, who had been putting card decks on the tables.

“Hi, Eileen,” said Leo, “How about playing cards with us?”

“Okay, in a little while, I just have to set up the card tables.”

“Do you have anyone to help you?” inquired Leo.

“Do you want to help?” smiled Eileen.

“Sure! I’ll help,” said Leo, rising from his chair. “See you later, Rose.”

“Okay, Leo,” smiled Rose.

Rose and Paul continued to eat their refreshments and exchange views about current news and events while they ate.

Most people at the meeting were eating, talking, and visiting with others. The topics ranged from the speech by Conner and Nesie’s plan to the singing that the group did last week at their picnic. A tradition was apparently growing in the group, to have songs become a regular bill of fare at their social events. Being young, they enjoyed the group singing; being single, songs were a start for harmony. Tonight was different.

“Did you ever think about doing mission kind of work, Rose?” asked Paul, as he took a sip of tea.

As the question hit home, Rose looked thoughtful. Paul took another sip of tea.

“You mean before tonight?”

“Yes, did you ever think about being a missionary or working among the poor, maybe overseas or some place in this country?”

“Well, when I was young, I occasionally thought about becoming a missionary sister... but I never decided to do that.”

Paul now took a drink of chocolate, and with a few questions in mind said, “Maybe, you’ll someday go into the program that Nesie is starting for Frontier Lands.”

“Hmmm. Maybe. You never know,” said Rose, somewhat puzzled by why Paul asked the question.

“How about cards?” asked a blond young man, who approached the table with a friend.

“Sure, Vince, take a seat; you, too, John,” said Paul.

“We need some players,” added Rose with a smile.

“Do you play five hundred?” asked Vince.

“Sure,” answered Paul. “You play it, too, don’t you, Rose?”

“Sure do!” smiled Rose.

“You deal, John,” said Vince, as he shoved the deck of cards to his friend.

John shuffled the deck and then shuffled it again. He began to deal the cards in a smooth manner. His hands were large and muscular, but he clearly showed their dexterity as he dealt the cards. John was a farmer and the son of farmers; so was Vince. John was working large tracts of land, doing mostly grain farming and had the sunny complexion of a farmer who worked long hours in sunlight. Vince was an accountant for a large warehousing business and never went into farming. He had the poise of a slender person who hasn’t done hard, physical work - at least since a long time ago.

~ Chapter Nine ~

The Dialectic

A week had passed and Nesié's plan was not only proposed to the Congress, but it became the root of the most historic controversy in America. It seemed every official and member of Congress had a speech to make, each believing it his duty to impress people in government or back home by arguing about it. Some speakers just complained about the elimination of "elected representatives of the people." Some of Nesié's political opponents criticized the plan as unsound and outlandish. It became evident that the Congress was also surprised by the plan.

One political party claimed that the plan was a watered down version of their party platform of twenty years ago. Regarding that claim, one radio commentator said, "If political people had those ideas for twenty years, and the people have never heard about them, those politicians must have been whispering to some other people, somewhere else."

After a record number of hours were spent on the subject - the members of both houses of Congress agreed to give the new plan a four-year trial. If the system could show its fruits in four years, then the plan would have a chance to merit another four years trial, and be repeated if the people permitted it, by their vote.

The new law provided that, after four years, the people would have a special election to decide if this management privilege form of government should continue for four more years. At the end of every four years, thereafter, a similar election would take place to again decide if that form of government should continue - or if a return should be made to the political, capitalism form of government.

After much argumentation and a multitude of words spoken, the new plan was adopted, as it was originally intended but now spelled out in some four hundred pages. Congress kept the intent of the plan, changed it somewhat, but not basically.

An agreement was made to change the name of the new national government to "Community" and would be called that in all the regulations that would govern America. Its first function would be to regulate the operation of all distribution outlets for goods. After it is determined what amount of production is needed to supply people with their necessities, then the production operations would begin to arrange for certain quantities of specific types of goods. to be produced to satisfy and stabilize the need as it developed.

Basic industries would be given orders for certain types of materials and services. During this realignment phase of the new plan, the Community would provide the needs of unemployed workers and obsolete businesses by redeployment of workers to functioning industries and compensating businesses that would be absorbed by the plan.

Historically, there had never been a change in human life like the one proposed for America. Across the Pacific, a great change took place, last century, when China adopted Communism for their way of life. It was not, however, as immense a change as would take place under the new plan.

Today, the people of China were already more friendly to America. They had sent their best wishes that the new system would work satisfactorily. Their government issued a statement saying,

“The government and people of China are impressed with the intent to adopt the Birthright plan, and we admire Americans for the unique vision of that plan.

“The government and people of China are very interested in this American venture, and wish the American people success in that effort.

“If America demonstrates that its Birthright system is successful in satisfying the unalienable rights of its people, as its Declaration of Independence proposed, then the government and people of China will be interested in adopting a similar government.

“Since America is now entering the initial stages of organizing the new government, the Chinese government hereby suggests the possibility of allowing Chinese representatives to be actively present with the Americans who will have the responsibility to lead that development process. That would enable Chinese to learn what is involved in that effort. This suggestion may prove to be mutually beneficial for America. China’s ability and willingness to fund and assist the American effort could be invited.

“America owes China a huge monetary debt. America would find it to be difficult to pay that debt under the capitalist system, which it has historically practiced.

“China will offer the American people this proposal: If the American government agrees to teach Chinese representatives how to adopt a similar form of society in China and help China to successfully do that, China will absolve America’s monetary debt to China.

Some political leaders of America considered these good wishes to be a sign that America was taking a dangerous step. “We would be playing into their hands,” said one politician. “We’d be

taking the road that will lead to the kind of government that the Communist governments now have.”

That view was not shared by a variety of opinion makers and other commentators.

TV and radio talk show hosts rushed to find guests who could discuss the Chinese offer. Retired intelligence officers were guests on talk shows and on lecture circuits. Books quickly appeared that looked at the history of American and Chinese relations. World War Two was analyzed to find the significance of the relations of Pacific Rim countries to America and China.

The power center of America’s capitalist society was not happy. Although no expressions of hostility to the new plan appeared in the traditional major media, the banking elite realized that their historic, money control of the American economy and its culture would end since Congress passed the plan and President Nesie signed it into law. It would only have its status quo power during the transition period, while the Birthright system was put in place.

That was expected to take one year.

Nesie declared the nationalization of properties and resources, according to the provision in the new law. Nothing visible seemed to change. People still paid rents, mortgage payments and personal bills, but no purchases of properties or resource permits were allowed. Automobiles were not available for purchase. All distribution and production facilities were under the management authorized by Nesie’s plan. All taxes were required to continue, but the directors of the new plan managed the tax monies that were collected.

Soon after Nesie had accepted the plan, he decided to solve the American dilemma of having the largest prison system in the world. America led the world in having the largest number of people in prisons. The large number had embarrassed political and religious leaders for a long time. If America was a democracy, if Americans were practicing followers of the teachings of Christ and Moses, why had so many citizens been judged and sentenced as criminals and imprisoned? American democracy and American education evidently did not produce responsible educated citizens. It seemed that law-abiding citizens were a minority.

Nesie had thought about the causes of crime from the time when he was first drafted into military service. The indoctrination that he encountered did not distract him from wanting to find the true answer to the question, Why was he a soldier? Why are there enemies? He looked at warfare; what was its purpose? Was America’s military only for defensive purposes? Why was the military staff always telling recruits and the American public that they were protecting the American way of life? He noticed a subtle substitution of the word “protect” rather than the word “defend.”

That caused Nesie, as he said in his memoirs, to find what the military protects. He came across the words of General Smedley Butler, telling how he protected “American interests” in Latin America and elsewhere. Those were interests of corporations not the native people in those countries.

That led Nesie to recognize that American prisons were protecting corporations from responsibility for poverty and unemployment of Americans. Although, it was more expensive for government to pay for the cost of imprisonment of a person than it would be to pay to educate that same person through a college education, the corporate power, that controlled American government chose the policy of maintaining prisons, unemployment, and poverty in America.

During the years that preceded Nesie’s plan, America experienced an immense outsourcing of jobs to countries that had cheap labor. Eventually corporations realized it would be cheaper to shut down their American operations facilities and move them to new facilities in the cheap labor countries.

That movement to Asian and Latin American countries escaped the regulations that attempted to safeguard the health of American workers and customers. Some corporations continued to produce products made in American prisons by prisoners, but large corporations were seeking bigger profits and headquartered their operations in cheap labor countries.

Taxes left with the corporations. The benefits of those taxes no longer served the government functions as previously. The cost of prisons remained.

In one of Nesie’s follow up presentations about the new plan, he explained to the American people the vision about human development in America.

Nesie brought up the subject of prisons as a waste of human potential. He saw the solution as a process of supporting children from birth to successful adulthood.

“If we nourish their creativity, supply their enthusiasm with opportunities to learn and serve in endeavors for which they are talented and interested, their efforts will be productive and welcomed. Their achievements will be acknowledged publicly by granting them facilities with which to achieve their interests. Generations of satisfied achievers will express their gratitude for their opportunities by building a truly humane society and government for all of us.”

Prior to Nesie’s plan, prisons had become a profitable business. Prisons were being built in increasing numbers and were operated by private corporations for profit. Prisoners were unable to claim that they had been deprived of their unalienable rights, because the law of the Constitution did not recognize such rights in court.

Six months into the plan, America was economically busy. Production kept an almost identical level, as it had maintained before the adoption of the new plan. Some critics of the new plan were claiming with disdain, that the government assistance to workers, during the changes, would make them permanently dependent. Some critics were ready and hoping to help the plan fail in whatever way they could.

Until recently, life in America had been complicit with the power of financiers, controlling the entire industrial economy. Their corporate wielding of financial backing could favor or eliminate small valid enterprises that were attempting to establish themselves. These wealthy financiers had been so influential with their money lending power and marketing practices, that they controlled the economies of most small nations throughout the world. Wars had been started and stopped, according to their pleasure. Native leaders of subjected nations were often assassinated, if they sought to build a cooperative society. Only a few were rarely successful in thwarting the large resources of the American financiers.

At present, there were more such native leaders in former American colonies than ever, because they were able to grow in the shadow of the diverse forms of communisms in China, Vietnam and Cuba. Because the struggles of those communist countries were examples that could be imitated, native leaders in some countries were able to emerge; without those examples, they might have been liquidated by the financiers with their money machinations.

The native peoples of America seemed to be biding their time trying to carry on as usual. Except for the apprehensive response, which native leaders expressed when the new plan was discussed, any visitor would have a difficult time discovering, much anxiety among the native peoples. Most native people were reluctant to reveal their thoughts about the plan publicly. Privately, native people were informing themselves on the details in the new plan.

Adoption of the new plan doesn't mean that it would be successful or even long-lived. The comparative quiet of the real opponents of the plan could mean that they were waiting for a crucial time to thwart the plan, when it gets into difficulties. The wealthy classes of America have been conspicuously quiet in their statements about the plan. Some observers have analyzed that silence to be an indication that the plan is just a scheme of the rich to obtain more power.

In rural areas, the farmers were quiet. Many of them didn't know if it would be safe to disagree with the plan. They understood that they would eventually lose control of their holdings of land and be permitted to possess only a limited family homestead.

Many small farmers believed that the new plan would be better than the present farming system. The small farmer had a difficult time competing with the large farmer in marketing his crops for a good price. In recent decades, mechanized farm production had increased greatly in America, and the small farmer needed more mechanized equipment to produce a competitive

crop.

Simple farming practices were unable to competitively produce crops profitably. Simple methods depended on a cheap labor supply. In years gone by, a family labor supply was available but not today.

Working on a farm had been a break-even business for many small farmers. They received their personal food supply and a simple living for long hours of work. The fruits of their labors were less than what most city workers received. Family farms offered better environments and comparatively good conditions in which to raise families. In the new plan, families probably could enjoy those conditions on fewer acres of land. The new plan might offer a more equitable lifestyle for farmers.

Most large farmers, however, were not interested in the fruits of hard work; they tended to believe that the fruits could come as a result of efficient operation, shrewd marketing, and self-interest protection. They opposed the plan.

In the large industrial regions, most workers were quiet and working in their usual way. Observers didn't expect much disagreement because the industrial workers of large cities would benefit from the new plan.

Some Labor leaders had voiced criticism of the new arrangement for organized labor under the new plan. The new law stated that all leaders of organized labor would be required to be workers at the time that they served as a leader. Labor leaders were typically not workers during their leadership, nor did they live on a wage that only equaled the workers they represented.

Years ago, a worker risked losing his job, if he became a labor leader. When unions chose to pay leaders a salary, then leaders could negotiate with employers without fear of losing their job. Gradually, the salaries of labor leaders grew until they far exceeded the wages of the workers that they represented.

After the alignment of the economy would be established and all work arranged to fill the real needs of the people, then the Birthright would be given to the people according to their circumstances. The goods and services that each person needed, would be provided after looking into a scope, which would read the DNA of the eye and search the national DNA archive to confirm that this person's DNA was the person with the unique DNA that was on record. In recent years, this technology was used in various businesses, stores of distribution, and government services. -

For years, minorities had the practice of continuing to have large families. White men, who studied population, grew concerned with the thought that eventually minorities would become

a majority population and obtain political and social control.

White people have serious reasons for their fears of minorities. For five centuries, the white man's civilization had ruled and murdered minority peoples ruthlessly, exploiting their labors and treating them as beasts of burden or slaves. What whites feared was that the injustice, cruelty, and genocide that many white people had practiced in the past against minority people would be practiced against white people now to avenge for acts which were committed by some white ancestors, but which whites today did not commit,

Among the minorities that would profit from the new plan, were the native peoples. White people had stolen their lands. The white government had pledged in over 300 treaties with native tribes, that they would follow the treaty agreement. But the whites violated every treaty. White men showed that they had less regard for native people than the cattle that they brought to graze on the lands of the native peoples.

In the new plan, native people had, at last, the chance to assume their equal human dignity in the Community.

They would keep their reservation lands, their traditional authority, and their cultural traditions to hold vast territories in common under tribal use law.

The Limited Homestead provision in non-homestead areas would become a right for every family. Native peoples had a tradition of respecting their elders. The new plan would support this custom.

The initial distribution of limited homesteads would occur in the following manner:

“When production and distribution have been stabilized, and the performance of the necessary work of America has been assumed by the Servant program, then the lands of Homestead areas shall be distributed according to the following method:

“Native persons will have the first choice of a homestead plot in the Homestead areas. Then, non-native persons that are oldest will have their choice in the remaining Homestead areas. Distribution shall continue to other applicants in this fashion:

“If two or more persons of the same age choose the same area, then the person possessing the greatest need for such location shall obtain it. Health requirements shall be first in importance on such ties. Family needs will be an important consideration also.”

The system of laws, which had ruled America, was notoriously voluminous in regulations and qualifying laws. It was expected that the new plan would have less than half as much regulation

as the former system of law. Some supporters of the plan thought that further improvement could be accomplished.

Six weeks had passed since what Nesie started had passed into law, and many of the young people were being organized into work programs in the natural resources areas of the country. Vast areas of marginal land were now being planted with seedlings of lumber tree species and organized into a tree farm system, in which crops of trees would be planted each year.

It was claimed that about forty years later, a lumber crop could be harvested each year thereafter, if young saplings were planted to replace the trees that had been harvested. Trees would be harvested in certain areas at a certain time, and then that area would be replanted with nursery seedlings from original parent stock trees that would be deliberately left standing.

It was noted that from the beginning of the plan, the majority of Americans were in favor of this reforestation program. For years, this had been a long felt desire of ecology experts.

Within six months, wells were being tapped in the semi-arid and desert regions to irrigate sections of land. The partial diversion of rivers was also being piped to the desert lands, which had remained thirsty for centuries. It was expected that after one year, many salt areas of the desert country could be changed into arable soils, suitable for crops of vegetables for Americans. Salt deposits would be leached into the deep desert subsoil pools by flooding the land with wastewater. Then vegetable and cover crops could grow on the re-created topsoil. During the first year, these desert areas were gaining the most public attention.

Almost a hundred years ago, white people in America historically believed that they needed to exclude Asian people from immigrating to America. The white American government passed laws that permitted only a hundred and 10 Asian people per year to immigrate. The policy was based on a fear that Asian people would be able to work for lower wages because they are accustomed to very hard work and a simpler life, and would take the jobs that white people had. It was also said that Asian people were able to surpass whites in jobs that required patience and precision, as in gardening and many production assembly tasks.

White people also had long been fearful of letting the Asian people immigrate to this country because, in their homeland, some Asians lived in crowded circumstances, due to population centered in coastal strips. The topography of the land offered only limited resources from their islands.

With that view in mind, white labor leaders believed it was necessary to exclude Asian people, because whites could not compete with the endurance that Asian people possessed. They also believed that whites couldn't be happy in a simpler custom of life with fewer mechanized conveniences.

Asian people were accustomed to living on simpler foods and in simpler, efficient houses with simpler implements. The fear most often expressed was the different life style and customs that they possessed.

During the first year, the new plan faced all the problems of this dilemma squarely. A public announcement invited citizens to become Contributors in Re-Creation projects. A Contributor would spend two years in this work and receive only a subsistent living but earn a Management Privilege. Deserts were to be re-created into arable land.

Only a handful of white people enlisted as Contributors. The Director had arranged to publicize the invitation vigorously among Asian people who lived in the coastal cities of Immigrant Land, and many of these people accepted the invitation. Some even asked the Director to permit an additional immigration to America of Asian relatives. The Director and leaders of the Departments agreed to increase the immigration for these people who would agree to work as Contributors and settle in the desert country for four years.

Some loud disagreement occurred during this action by the Director. The criticism didn't survive long, however, because it was evident to Americans that the desert needed the project and white people had been unwilling or unable to enlist.

In the first year, the desert became a visible beehive of activity. Asian people were soon importing plants from their native lands that were appropriate to plant on the desert and make them bloom. Trees began to grow as well as did fruit hedges and shrubs.

The demands of the desert caused changes in nearby cities. Sewage treatment plants were built with the defined purpose to clean up many rivers that had been formerly used as great open sewers to the oceans. Sewage and the sludge that normally were lost to the river and oceans, forever, now became useful and valuable fertilizers, as sludge was spread on the desert surface to be tilled into sand, producing a fertile topsoil.

Asian people, who lived in the desert, imported valuable varieties of plants and trees that were new to the American native horticulture. From these trees, they planned to someday harvest valuable products for industry and convert their industrial wastes into fertilizers. Certain areas of desert soils were suitable for Perilla and Tung trees.

During the second year, the Community conducted thorough news coverage of activities in "Asialand," as some desert areas became nicknamed. White people's fears were beginning to subside, when the first fruits of the desert project appeared on grocery shelves.

The desert was also where the first attempt was made to communalize the lands of America. It

was easy for the Community to try it there because there were virtually no resident owners of these arid lands.

For centuries, these had been unproductive lands that held little interest for even the aboriginal people. But now the lands and residents were organized into communal farms. Young people could volunteer to perform their four years of service by developing dry land agriculture and its semi-desert chores. Young people were permitted to stake homestead claims to limited plots of desert land, which the Community agreed to assign to them after the four years of their contribution had been served.

Among new developments that occurred during the first year, as a result of the Desert Re-creation Project, was the clarification of immigration policy, which permitted immigrants to come to America. The main requirement was that he or she would be willing to try to serve a four-year contribution to the economy. Any immigrant, who served a four-year contribution, will have given America as great a service as a natural born American. This helped immigrants to be fully accepted as citizens.

The desert reclamation plan mixed young white people with Asian people. Formerly, young men were drafted to serve in the armed forces, The new plan had no conscription, and a young man or woman could volunteer to serve either in the armed forces or in reforestation, flood control, or desert reclamation.

A young person could earn the life-long Management Privilege by a two-year service with the armed forces, whereas four years of service were required in desert reclamation, reforestation, or flood control projects to earn the Management Privilege.

The shorter service time in the military was part of the strategy used by Nesie to allay the criticism of persons who demanded a large military defense force. The shorter time required for the military service seemed to convince those critics that the new plan was favoring military preparation.

The new plan began to accomplish demilitarization by attracting young people to serve in peaceful and productive works rather than the armed forces. By the end of the first year, enlistments in the armed forces dropped to half of what they were the previous year. Smaller military enlistments were expected in future years.

Young people of America were clearly not interested in war or its preparations. It was evident that most of them would rather serve four years in a fruitful, interesting, hard work, like reclamation projects, rather than spend a mostly, useless two years in the armed forces. Almost fifty percent of the young Servants chose to do this in the first years of the projects.

The Need-Production Plan was worked out for all trade, industrial, and commercial life, during the first year. This provided a well-ordered arrangement of dependable production and distribution. Surprising statistics silenced some of the most vocal critics of the Management-Privilege Plan, when they saw production and efficiency increase at a greater rate than had been recorded during the previous twenty years.

Management experts claimed that eliminating inefficient handling and distribution processes made it possible to increase production. They also explained that, in some instances, production processes, that were now employed, had been lying idle for as much as forty years. Some former owners of patent or copyright privileges would not permit their use. Industries needed such processes because they were superior in manufacturing quality products.

For years, people had been talking about devices that they knew existed, which could have improved the performance of products, or operation of vehicles, especially safer industrial production. Many people suspected that the reason such devices had never been permitted to reach the market was because decisions in banking and industry felt their profit or control of the economy would be lost if such devices become available.

One of the amazing changes, made in the lives of industrial workers was the elimination of most night shift work. Labor unions had formerly opposed automation, when it replaced workers. Under the new plan, that result was often a blessing. Automation replaced human labor on jobs with conditions that were detrimental or dangerous to workers.

Many interesting things were happening, as a result of Nesie's plan. Some age old dreams of men and women were beginning to be pursued.

Automation was extensively applied in the metal industries.

"Magnoelectricplastication" processes were developed to form new atomic elements, usable in making alloy products.

Automation also enabled the conversion of the torque energy of the Earth, into electrical energy.

Efforts were being pursued to harness the power of gravity and might soon empower devices. If gravity is a combination of forces, acting sequentially, and if one or more of the components of gravity could be intermittently separated and focused, as a motive force, it might then enable particulate energy to move and be directed during two or more of its phases.

As someone once had said, "When the money profit motive is banished from America, the creativity of people will be released from its control by financiers."

~ Chapter Ten ~

Proof and the Pudding

Three years had passed, and the end of the fourth was still ten months off, at which time, a momentous decision of American history would be made. In reality, that decision would be shaped by several developments that came to the attention of Americans in these three years. The meaning of those developments also was just around the corner. Thus far, there had been no revolution in America, but the people were busy. Time flies for busy people.

The hustle and bustle in large cities had always been regarded as a necessity to clinch deals, but that had suddenly changed. The excitement of the buying and selling of deals was gone because buying and selling were gone. The cities, with their towering dwellings to serve capitalist commerce, still remained, but were changed. Their facilities and abilities to integrate the supply and demand of goods and services were now orientated to satisfy the true needs of America instead of the avaricious potential of money profits for investors.

The centralized concentration of production and distribution of goods and services had begun to change. Transportation already permitted reliable distribution, even to remote areas of America. Production operations were being designed for smaller cities and communities. This would permit more young people to serve near their homes during their four-year contribution.

By the second year, young people, serving their four-year contributions, performed most production work.

Brokerage by commission was eliminated but the skills of brokers became important in the Supply Department. The brokers received orders for items and placed orders for their production. Their work enabled the Supply Department's Dispensary Division to direct the distribution of all items to their place of need. With that information, the Census Division ascertained the quantitative needs of each item in the Standard of Living and composed orders for their production.

With this arrangement, no city needed to be a railroad or trucking hub of the country. The freight system resembled a vast capillary system. Each and every thing was transported to the place, as needed.

People were supplied with goods, according to the Standard of Living that was set for the cur-

rent year by the Community. Products were produced in the quantity and quality when they were needed. Unnecessary and inferior products were no longer produced.

As production was geared to the needs of the people, the decentralization of industry became possible. The city population of America began to decline when the centralized labor supplies of the old system were not needed, and people were free to leave the city congestion accordingly. Some urban people migrated to the open land country, to claim their four-acre homesteads.

The people of the cities gained a new outlook on life, some by moving to, what many called, a "ranch" in the country. Some didn't own much more than the month's rent during the old system, but now could have four acres of land, on which they could plant both seeds and ideas.

Some people were trying to keep the old political parties organized, but parties had become obsolete when money no longer controlled what work would be done and who would do the work. As each new day passed, more people seemed to understand what Nesie's campaigners had meant, regarding the Management Privilege plan of life. Workers and consumers were freed, as their Declaration of Independence intended in the words "unalienable Rights" - the right to what they need in life.

Preventive medicine became the focus in the field of medicine; the emphasis was on maintaining good health as the best prevention of illness. Appropriate medical care was now accessible to everyone.

Under the old system, financial gain had become the main motivation of many who become doctors; medical practice was a lucrative medicine. Medical care was available only if the patient was able to pay for the care.

The costs of medical care had risen under the monopolistic control of the medical societies, until the average working family could not afford medical care. This resulted in the spread of diseases, due to postponed treatment and neglect of early symptoms of illness. It had been a household warning to children in the homes of many families, that they should dress warmly and eat their food, so the family would not go poor, paying huge medical bills to doctors and hospitals.

Doctors and medical associations opposed all practices that familiarized people with a working knowledge of medical practice.

But in the last three years, a new type of medical practice gained access to the American scene. The medical colleges were beginning to train young men and women as Medical Social Workers with a practicing knowledge of general medicine. These graduates were assigned to practice a system of house visits. House calls by doctors had been almost completely abandoned by the old system of medical practice. The plan was to have these young medical workers visit homes

regularly each month to learn if there were any special needs that people had for medical help.

Nesie's concept of Social Medicine, as it was called, almost eliminated venereal diseases, polio, and tuberculosis. It had been known that early detection in most diseases meant early recovery. Early detection could also eliminate the chief weapon of disease - communicable disease. Social Medicine now was able to identify and treat disease carriers, by improving the health of people.

This introduction of Medical Social Workers was so significant a change, that for the first time in the history of America, the need for hospital beds had decreased. A ten percent decrease during the last eleven months, was due to the medical care that was given to people who previously suffered alone.

The conclusive results of the new medical program were that serious disease and illness were very greatly decreased by early detection of the beginning of diseases.

Free treatment of disease and illness permitted the complete application of medical knowledge, which had been long known but only minimally practiced. Medical practice was no longer based upon the patient's ability to pay. It was now based upon the need of healthy and sick people.

For many years, the churches professed a desire for social justice, but church leaders were very slow to introduce organized efforts to effectively establish social justice for everyone. Under the new plan, churches could take advantage of the Frontier Land opportunity. This arrangement permitted a young person to serve a four-year Servant contribution as a missionary.

Missionary leaders of the church organized lay missionary training programs to prepare young people for mission work. Church ideals and Community ideals were taught to these young, mission Servants. At times, this became difficult for some missionaries in the early days of the program. Some ideals of the Community appeared to be incompatible to the ideals of the church. Some church leaders objected, to the communalization of land and industry, as a violation of their belief in private enterprise. Most churches, however, solved much of this problem when they investigated their teachings with an historical scrutiny.

Gradually, scholars of church teachings began to issue opinions, which interpreted the communalization of property as a proper expression of human enterprise. With each right that is given a person, they reasoned, a corresponding obligation is also given. Just as a person is given a right to satisfy his or her needs, a person also is given a corresponding obligation to adapt their satisfaction of those needs in sustainable ways. The scholars taught that personal rights could be justifiably exercised in the Management Privilege form of life because it uses sustainable ways to satisfy everyone's needs.

The communalization of Frontier lands and industry opened a new vista of church growth and life. The combination of Management Privilege ideas and church ideals seemed to be able to achieve great results for the Community and greater results for the churches.

Church leaders refrained from publicizing their new successes. As the Community saw the successful social results of the church missions in Frontier lands, it gave aid and encouragement to those missions.

Some missionaries became frequent and formidable proponents for international cooperation. They found that some lands were unable to produce certain necessities. One missionary said: "It seems that the Creator has designed the Earth in such a way, that no one spot on the Earth has everything in abundance. Each area has a scarcity in something it needs that would enhance human life. That which is scarce in one place is in abundance elsewhere. To obtain our necessities we need to share our abundance with people elsewhere and establish friendly relations everywhere. So it is with the whole world."

With the new plan, America became a different citizen of the world. Where before, it occupied a place of much disrepute because of its ruthless economic exploitation and violent militarism, America was now becoming a new land. Other nations regard its change as a promise of great success.

Americans, however, were hesitant in being friendly with communist China and Cuba. They were gradually replacing fear with trust and confidence in the honesty of communist people. They realized that people were the same everywhere; what you do to them, they will do to you, so do for them what you want them to do for you. What you give, you will receive.

The most newsworthy topics for the news media involved the Frontier Lands. Usually, the supplies of basic necessities were obtained from the Frontier in which the missionaries worked. Accessory supplies, which permitted basic improvements in these lands, were the big order, which the Community back home supplied. New requests, for basic industrial equipment, were constantly being entertained by the Community Supply Department. Requests for small implements were the most numerous. Missioners seemed to find that if small implements were available, a combination land intensive and labor-intensive food and fiber production system could then be most efficient.

American labor unions had undergone dramatic change. Attempts were being made by some remaining labor leaders to organize the four-year Servant contributors into unions, but with little success because the role of labor unions was not needed. The young who chose to earn their Management Privilege were not earning wages that needed to be negotiated, as in former times. The ideals that union workers had struggled to achieve in the past were, in effect, mostly

achieved. Workers were getting their appropriate necessities under the Standard of Living. Those who chose to work did it voluntarily and were not obliged to work. Those who work have shorter workweeks and good working conditions. Unions, for these reasons, had become almost extinct in America.

After three years, the majority of older workers past thirty years of age had retired, some with four-acre homesteads and their Standard of Living coming to them reliably. The Management Privilege program was advancing toward the goal of having industrial production done only by young people serving their four-year contributions. After they achieved that contribution, they, too, could retire. They could also use their Privilege to begin to manage other work of the Community.

Presently, young people were still working at the age of thirty, but the goal was that young people would serve their contribution during the ages of twenty-one to twenty five. Those were thought to be the years, when people were most idealistic, ambitious, strong, and productive.

New ideas had not declined during three years of the Management Privilege way of life. Last October, the Economy Department announced over nine thousand new awards for new techniques and devices. Formerly, many inventors patented their devices or techniques and tried to market them with manufacturers. Oftentimes, manufacturers would buy an inventor's patent rights to prevent a competitor from manufacturing such a device. Sometimes, manufacturers never used an invention, because their factory was set up for a different device, sometimes of inferior quality, but their market position was often well established for their inferior device, and their profit from the manufacture of that product often would be dependable and maybe greater than the profit that might be realized from the manufacture of the better invention. It was often true, however, that some great inventions were not marketed, because they would threaten an already established product.

Under the Management Privilege way of life, the Community assumed the rights of all inventions or techniques, including material that was formerly copyrighted. With the new plan, each inventor of the past and all new inventors received an award from the Community, according to the use that had been made or will be made of it by the Community.

Plans of devices and techniques are registered with the Economy Department. Each January, it announces requests for inventions in certain fields and lists, and at the same time, lists the awards that might be won. An inventor who wins an award obtains a right to a certain time period for the Study Aid. This Study Aid consists of an opportunity to experiment or work on an idea of the inventor's choice, with the Community providing the tools that are needed and advisory help from whatever scientists or persons the inventor desires.

Offers of such Community awards attracted applications from over forty three thousand per-

sons, during the past three years. Most of these people did not receive an award because their inventions were not workable, or they were in some manner a copy of previous devices, or because they would have undesirable effects on the Community. Some of the latter group did not have their devices utilized but did earn a partial Study Aid, enabling them to get help from scientists and experts to modify the effects.

Persons, who received Study Aid awards, were very honored people in the Community. Each year, the whole nation celebrated a major holiday called Pioneer Day, which paid honor to current inventors.

Community service and people working in Frontier Lands is portrayed in the media as valuable and conveys personal recognition, honor, and respect for a job well done. The new media highlights good deeds. This reverses the old pattern of making scandals the biggest news.

~ Chapter Eleven ~

Doing the It

The river was running slowly, with its heavy weight of water. The young man was drying himself with a towel, as he watched a friend swim upstream to the narrow strip of sand, which jutted from the shore. The water of the river was low, the current was slow, and the sandbar served as a beach for the two swimmers. In a few moments, his friend reached that beach and sloshed out of the surf, throwing handfuls of water ahead of him.

“Boy, is it nice!” puffed Andy, as he brushed his blond hair with his hands, wringing some of the water from it. “That’s one part of paradise we didn’t lose.”

“Some say it’s the best body exercise,” said Paul, “It uses almost every muscle in the body.”

“I enjoyed swimming back home in the quarries,” said Andy, standing near the water’s edge.

“We had quarries, too, back home - granite quarries,” added Paul, “some were almost a hundred and fifty feet deep; nice, crystal clear water with a freshness that left no dryness after you finished a swim.”

“Ours were sandstone quarries,” noted Andy, “They weren’t so deep, but very nice to swim in. When you swim in a lake back home, it seems that you get a sort of dryness afterwards, on your skin or something.”

“Huh! I know what you mean,” agreed Paul, who was now dressing into his clothes. “It’s as though you’d been in some kind of chemical. Back home, they used to brag to tourists about the fine swimming in the city lake. The fellows living around town, knew better though; they use the quarry holes and wouldn’t swim in the lake.”

As the two men dressed themselves, they reminisced about their hometowns, which were far away from this part of the Nile in which they had just been swimming.

The men finished dressing and then walked to the edge of the road that led to the mission village of Gonda. They broke off branches from a dried bush, shaped them into sticks, and hung their bathing trunks on the sticks. Andy was from Duluth, an inland seaport on the southwestern shore of Lake Superior. Paul came from Sauk Rapids, on the east bank of the Mississippi River, where the western prairie region meets the hardwood and conifer forest regions of central Minnesota.

Neither of the men had been acquainted until about two years ago, when they enlisted in a church project. Andy was twenty-two years old, when he enlisted. He had a brief previous experience as a metallurgist, followed by a stint as a surveyor, working with a mining engineer and geologist in the northern mining district of Minnesota. He had finished one year of survey experience before he decided to serve his four-year contribution in Frontier work. The church program qualified for that contribution.

“What have you heard from that group in Sauk Rapids?”

“They’re all spread out, doing different things in various places. The last I heard was it had something like two hundred fifty new members. Didn’t you have something like that in Duluth?”

“We needed something like that, but it never developed,” said Andy.

“Where are you guys going?” asked a voice from behind them.

Both men smiled as they turned to see who it was, They knew the voice well and were expecting to probably hear it under these circumstances.

“Hi, Rose,” smiled Paul, “How did it go?”

“We were studying a lizard,” answered Rose.

“Lizard? Where did you find a lizard?” asked Andy.

“By that bend in the path by that broken gum tree.”

“Yeh, sure,” answered Andy, still combing his hair.

“Doris and I were walking along the path when we saw this dark green lizard; it must have been ten inches long.”

“Oh! A small one!” replied Paul.

“It didn’t look small when we saw it,” insisted Rose. “We watched it for a minute. It was looking at us from a nest under a rock, and we could see its young ones, hiding behind it, moving under the rock.”

“Where’s Doris?” asked Paul.

“She’ll meet us on the valley trail.”

“Where’s your trunks?” smiled Rose, noticing that Andy was carrying an empty stick.

“There it is!” said Paul, pointing to a lump on the road.

“Will you hold this?” asked Andy, handing Paul his stick.

Andy jogged back to the little pile along the gravel roadway in the distance, retrieved the trunks, and trotted back.

“Good thing you noticed it. That lizard might have eaten it.”

“The one we saw was big enough to do it.” countered Rose.

“Would those little ones need to help?” asked Paul.

“That mother could eat it all by herself,” said Rose.

Rose smiled; the young man chuckled. Andy returned, waving the trunks in his hand, breathing somewhat fast from the jogging.

“Well, that’s some exercise I won’t need to get later.”

“Here, Andy, I’ll tie it on for you,” said Paul.

“I don’t know how it fell off. My belt must have slipped.”

The three began to walk again, carrying their swimming garb and occasionally glancing back to be sure that the swim trunks were still riding the sticks. They talked about the hot temperature and the clear skies. About an hour ago, it was ninety-four degrees and no breeze.

The trio entered a narrow path that branched into a roadway. A young woman was sitting on a large rock alongside the road, waiting for them. Her beautiful and friendly face was smiling. As the three walkers approached, both fellows saw her but pretended they didn’t see her and deliberately continued talking to each other as they walked past her.

The woman on the rock saw this obvious trick and was not lost for wit. Once they were past her, she howled a loud rattling growl, jumping up somewhat like a lion might, when pouncing from the brush. Despite their pretense, this surprised the two men and forced them into a retreat reaction as they turned to look around. Even Rose reacted. Doris laughed at her success,

and the walkers could not help but admit her success as they laughed.

“You thought you’d ignore me?” smiled Doris, as she pointed her finger at the men.

“What took you so long?” asked Andy.

“She had to put the babies away,” interjected Rose, as she winked to Doris, “Did that big mama lizard let you go?”

Doris immediately caught the drift of Rose’s ploy, “Oh! She was big and fierce, but finally she allowed me to go.”

“You were lucky,” smiled Paul.

“I don’t care what you guys think. It was fierce!” said Rose, trying to avoid a smile.

“We know; don’t we, Andy?” said Paul. Andy nodded in agreement.

Doris and Rose were also from Minnesota. Doris came from Kimball, a little town, southwest from Sauk Rapids. She had learned to cook when she was young, learning skills from her mother, that were commonly expected of women in that area. She had joined the young people’s club and took a night school course in dietetics. She didn’t realize then that she would one day help to improve nutrition for Sudanese people.

Rose had been a dental assistant. She heard a lecture that was presented to the young people’s club, and decided to study nursing after hearing about the need for nurses in mission work. That led to doing nursing work in Sudan, arranging family health care among the Sudanese people. Sometimes, she helped to deliver babies, do simple surgery, extract teeth, set broken bones, and do a variety of other things.

Some people called her doctor; some persuaded her to doctor even their horses. A horse was a very prized possession; it helped them raise food and pull their wagon; it was almost as dear as a child. If a horse became sick, it was as serious as a family illness. Rose was consulted for treating some family illnesses and as a midwife. Most Sudanese women were adept at delivering babies, but some requested her help to prevent their babies being born blind or disfigured from disease.

“Good things can be done if the effort is made,” said Rose. “I would never have thought four years ago, that someday I’d be working in Africa and swimming in the Nile River.”

“The Blue Nile,” corrected Andy with a smile.

“That’s right,” agreed Rose. “That project that you’re working on, Andy, did you expect you would make it possible for the Nile to make electricity and irrigate all that crop land?”

“Not when I was home,” agreed Andy seriously, “You know, many times you have skills that you don’t realize you have. I knew mining and soils pretty well, but I never thought that the three summers I spent on construction work, during college, would be so valuable.”

“You had your mining education and geology,” noted Rose.

“Yep, but that construction knowledge that turned out to be my most important knowledge, the way it turned out here,” explained Andy.

“Do you sometimes wish that you would have learned civil engineering along with your mineralogy and geology?” asked Paul.

“When you take mine engineering, you get a lot of basic concepts and techniques that are similar to civil engineering. It’s applied to the mining field, but much of the basic work is the same for other kinds of engineering.”

“Why couldn’t America have granted the help for the Aswan Dam? You’d think they could have foreseen that Nasser would remain a friend if he would have got the help Egypt needed,” said Doris.

“Politics!” declared Andy.

“And money.” said Paul

“When you got politics,” continued Andy, “you got politicians who are always in the game, at least partly, for the money they get in bribes or influence. When someone handles the problems of a nation, with fortunes in contracts at his direction, the temptation to pocket some money becomes very great.”

“Then, too, America, in those days, wasn’t under the present system. If a little nation like Sudan wanted help to technically build a dam, and their native country was too poor, technically and financially, to do it themselves, its government had to go to a capitalist foreign country for help. Countries like America usually demanded that the small country mortgage most of their national wealth for, maybe fifty years, or more, before they would help.”

“Mortgages on those loans usually gave the nation who loaned the money, such control over national affairs of the little country, that the little country became a colony, unable to rule its own

land. Many such countries lost their sovereignty. Look at the case of Iran,” said Andy.

“Well, it was different with Aswan,” analyzed Rose.

“What will it require of Sudan to build the project, you’re on?” Doris asked Andy, as the young people kept on walking.

“Well, the labor is free, in a way of speaking. As you know, Sudan followed the example of America and started a four-year contribution system, too. Their native workers will do most of the work on this project. Many young people will serve their four-year contribution by working on this project.

“The wages won’t cost the Sudanese people anything except their food and necessities. Most of the materials for construction are coming from local materials on government lands. It’ll be a concrete structure.”

“That’s supposed to reclaim how much waste land?” asked Rose.

“Oh, the water could conceivably serve almost two million hectares of land, if scientific agriculture is used like that which he is trying to introduce,” answered Andy, as he pointed to Paul.

“Maybe more,” added Paul. “Much of the water, that is used in crops that are irrigated, is lost in evaporation and lack nutrient solutions for the plant. Proper balance of nutrients could produce a cover crop that would retain much of the water and reduce losses by evaporation.

“Do you know that it has been figured, that almost one fourth of the Nile River is lost in evaporation during its trek to the sea. Think, then of all the water that is lost along its course through the dry lands. Much of the summer floodwater is lost through evaporation and much of the little rainfall that is received is lost.

“The project should enable most of these losses to be stopped by providing water for the cover crop which can keep the water in the soil and also tune up the whole area climatically. Fifty years from now, the climate might be changed significantly. More vegetation would cool the land surface and bring more rainfall this way by preventing the rainfall from evaporating before it hit the ground,” said Paul.

“Well, you guys just keep up the good work,” said Rose, “You’ll get your reward in heaven for doing such good work.”

Both young men smiled, but somewhat uncomfortably, with the praise. It was true, however, that these two young men were doing great works in Sudan. The project was chiefly the product of Andy’s planning and the young man’s estimate of water needs for a complete water dis-

tribution plan whereby quick-flow covered irrigation ditches would carry river water to the subsurface reservoirs and fields everywhere. Andy designed the capacity for the project, so that it would permit multiple uses of the water.

The two men had taught the Sudanese people to build small cataracts along the river and draw water by means of sliding gates, to raise the height of the river water in places until it could periodically fill the covered irrigation ditches behind the riverbanks, that led to fields of corn, cotton, rice, and peanuts. When the river height would drop to a specific level, the gates would automatically close to conserve the river.

The young people were now about a half-mile from the mission village. In the distance, could be heard the putt-putt of the mission tractor. Carlyle Lome was probably using it to cultivate the one hundred eighty acre patch of peanuts in the large south field that adjoined the mission yard. The field had formerly been badly overgrazed by the livestock of local natives.

Carlyle was about twenty-three and had already served four years in the armed forces. He had worked as a carpenter with a relative, who taught him basic carpentry skills. While working as a carpenter, back in America, he had a chance to associate with two bricklayers, who taught him a working knowledge of bricklaying. Occasionally, he helped to do bricklaying and became adept at handling a trowel.

When the project was started and material was needed for concrete, about twenty-five feet below the surface was found a deposit of calcium carbonate, which could be used for cement production. Overlaying the carbonate was a clay hardpan. This hardpan had to be removed to access the carbonate for cement production. It was decided to use the clay to make bricks from the clay. Excavating the overburden became Carl's mission. He organized a brick factory, which produces very good common bricks for local use. Then he gets what he needs for the concrete as a dividend

A local school was almost completed, which had exterior brick walls and brick pillars as roof supports. The exterior walls were interspersed with beige-colored brick pillars, having Flemish Bonded brick walls as skirts between the pillars.

A machine shop, built with the brick, would soon train local boys in machinist and mechanical skills. This entire project attracted lots of local interest. The power plant of the village was also a local brick building. It contained a generator, with a fifty thousand watt maximum output. For the present time, it was more than adequate. After the school and machine shop are finished, the power will need to be increased.

Carl was important for the mission. Often, a certain crop needed work and other persons were tied up in other work. Usually Carl found a way to finish his own tasks and find extra time to

help out. It was evident, that he liked to do this helping out. He almost jumped at a chance to harvest a crop or work, if it included running the tractor. Driving a tractor was to Carl what an airplane was to boys.

Carl also came from Minnesota. His home was Cold Spring, a little town about twenty miles from Sauk Rapids. He joined the Frontier project through an acquaintance with the young people's club in Sauk Rapids.

A cloud of dust was visibly rising in the distance.

"That's Carl," Paul said. "That tractor snorts when he's riding it."

"I think he likes to see the dust fly behind him," smiled Andy.

That remark made everyone smile.

"Did anyone ask him to go swimming with us?" said Doris.

"I did," replied Andy, "but he told me that he had a swim, early this morning. He gets up before the birds, you know."

Families farmed their lands together with other families according to a schedule, The members arranged their work into group efforts, As many as five different pieces of land would be cared for in a day. This system of work has been a great benefit to everyone.

The group helps each individual persevere in developing plans and how to find the psychological and physical stamina to live.

The missionaries found that when proper education was given Sudanese people in the meaning and value of cooperative living, they would develop an amazing infrastructure and culture that could inspire the culture of industrialized peoples.

The sad, present condition of the native cultures of Africa was largely due to their exploitation as European colonies. Their colonial masters prohibited industrial development. Europeans ridiculed the backwardness of Africans and attributed it to their culture and racial origins.

The truth, however, is that European colonization of native peoples prevented native progress for hundreds of years, while the European colonialists prospered by violently forcing the natives to extract natural resources and give them to the colonialists. Europeans forget that without the labor of people in the slave colonies, western civilization would not have been built.

“I need to stop in school for something,” said Andy, “I’ll see you later.”

The two women and the young man continued walking toward the mission house, which was the headquarters for the mission staff. At this mission, the housing quarters for the staff consisted of simple cottages, each of which provided accommodations for four persons.

“See you after supper,” said Rose as the two girls waved a farewell to the young man and turned toward their cottage.

Paul waved and continued walking towards his cottage. Chinjon was a nickname that the local people had given Paul. It’s a name for a shrub-like gum tree, a species of Acacia, from which is extracted gum arabic for commercial use.

The natives started calling him by the nickname, after he improved their harvesting methods of wild gum trees and domesticating them. Fields of young trees were now growing under the care of native farmers. The little trees had not grown much, since their original planting, but looked very promising for the future. Wild native gum trees were producing abundantly, due to systematic care and harvesting. Building local factories, to prepare the gum into finished commercial products, is being considered, but the future still claims such plans.

As Paul walked along the road, nearing the sidewalk to his cottage, he thought of similar in Minnesota. His cottage brought to mind the house he owned back home, all the winter apples - harvested by now - the taste he experienced - juicy - back home?

He knew that he would weaken his discipline of sentiments, if he tried such memories - again, at the little cottage - for a moment - he smiled at the resemblance it had to his house - back home?

He opened the screen door, went inside, hung his trunks on a line, hanging below the ceiling - began to whistle a Sudanese tune that had an African repeat beat. He opened his locker, and selected clothes to wear for the evening.

~ Chapter Twelve ~

Then After

One year after Nesie's new plan was adopted and put into effect, it met very little rebellion. The people calmly accepted the plan. Many people tried to figure out why this lack of rebellion existed. Some thought that the real enemies of the new plan were waiting for a time that was more opportune for them, a time when a crisis or scandal would occur among the leaders of the plan. Then the enemies could spring their attack to convince voters that the plan was a failure and to vote against it. These predictors were partly right and partly wrong. When no crisis occurred, there was no opportunity to spring an attack.

Other analysts thought that the enemies of the plan would try to obtain the majority of jobs in the new administration and scuttle this plan from within. So far, this didn't happen. Favoritism didn't exist.

Perhaps, the real reason that no threat to the new plan visibly emerged was due to the era when the plan was adopted. The previous system was riddled with corruption, injustice, extravagant graft, and hopeless expectations for workers and the widespread poverty. Such conditions were peculiarly favorable to adopting Nesie's plan. It was different and surprising, by its uniqueness. As in any surprise, a person soon identifies reality and makes decisions to deal with it. Some observers expected that opponents would collect their consciousness and organize resistance against the plan, but this didn't happen. Instead of trying to figure out how it happened, people were willing to try it as a change for the better and expecting a better life. But to have it sweep in as a national law so quickly, some must have thought, "Could it have been rigged? Who knows?"

Politics had always been a difficult mystery to most of the people of Immigrant land. Politicians had ruled them from its beginning, making policies without their direct consent. Government became so complicated, that few people knew how to participate in the decisions of politics.

The real political power had rested in the hands of a band of men, who designed the original constitution to enable them to gradually takeover the power of the people to rule themselves; contrary to the Declaration of Independence, which told the people of the world why Americans were kicking sand in the face of King George.

As to unalienable Rights claimed in the second paragraph of the Declaration, Paul thought they are truths that prove themselves to be appropriate for human life; they include the right

to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and other opportunities, waiting to be identified by conscientious citizens and their genuine governments.

No church, state or organization can claim to have the authority to remove them from a person. To make sure that every person can use those rights effectively and appropriately, people organize governments for one purpose, which is the responsibility to make sure that each person is able to fully use the unalienable rights.

People are created equal with the right to form their government and create laws and policies to serve their safety and happiness.

Before Nesie's plan was adopted, the controllers of money bribed politicians to pass laws that favored the controller of banks and their industrial intrigues of corruption and crimes.

The agenda of the wealthy class was difficult to figure out during the past three and a half years. They did not rebel when the Community communalized the lands of America.

Before the new plan was instituted it was estimated that the wealthy class of people had only one tenth of the lands they owned under cultivation. They lost this land, except for the four-acre homesteads, which they were permitted to keep from their holdings.

The Community initially rented the industrial properties, which had been owned by the wealthy class, but now, much of that property was no longer used, due to a balancing of production to the needs of the country.

The rents that were paid to the property owners were given in the form of the traditional currency. This currency had an exchange value only with other owners like themselves because the economy no longer bought or sold things with currency; everyone had what they needed, through their Birthright to the Standard of Living. The currency was meaningless for most people.

When the Community stabilized production, only some factories with special facilities continued to be rented. When better production methods became possible, new factories were built by the Community on public or communal land,.

While the wealthy were finding their property and their holding of money to be of no advantage, they publicly uttered not a complaint. This was a mystery and raised some perplexing suspicions. Some owners were suspected of anonymously owning extensive industrial properties, which they didn't want to be revealed by complaints from those properties.

Many cities had changed, due to the new plan. Industry, formerly, had been heavily centered in large cities, and consequently, those cities experienced more changes.

This particular day was a cold day in Minnesota. It had just received a plunge of cold Arctic air, and people were bracing their spirit to tolerate cold weather, if it was coming.

The thermometer read ten degrees below zero. Snow was lightly covering the ground to a depth of three inches or so. The cold spell was about three days old now, with below zero readings as low as minus fifteen degrees. This was not unusual for this time of year in this land of water with cold and warm varieties at different times of the year. A really cold winter would likely experience several -30 degrees days.

There weren't many people outside this morning. Most of them seemed to walk the shortest routes to their destinations and didn't hesitate going there. Cold weather seems to foster forgetfulness, forget something at the place they just left, and then to scurry back to what they forgot.

The weather was typically a topic of conversation, because after a few days would pass, a new type of weather could show up. No one type of weather had a dominant hand. Wind, snow, blizzards, dry spells or wet spells visited this area. Weather's whole family, including tornadoes, used Minnesota, with its many lakes, as their vacation grounds.

As the vote day approached, to continue or reject the Nesie plan, observant people could see, that the wealthy class had not changed or retired. People were noticing the beginnings of a widespread campaign to restore the political capitalist system.

To the smallest villages, came men and women, visiting eligible voters to explain that some benefits, introduced in the new plan, could be improved under their alternative plan.

It was much different from the political campaigns of four years ago. Instead of a flood of literature dropped at doorsteps, and a virulent advertising campaign about issues, there was only a house-to-house visiting campaign. Although it wasn't spectacular, it seemed to be having some success. People in small towns were telling about visits from political party members, wearing plaid shirts to create an appearance of being ordinary people, designed to touch the heart and mind of each voter they met.

The Desirecrats, the small labor parties, and even the Old Gear Party's political workers were using the same approach in visiting the homes of ordinary people. This was unusual for the Old Gear Party, because they had always, before this, represented the interests of the country's ruling class, the wealthy, and they ignored or opposed the interests and concerns of ordinary working people.

Farmers and workers tended to keep an open mind about visitors. They were interested in learning the truth about things. Many people had grown up on a farm or their parents had been

farmers, and, without realizing it, equated this trait with honesty. They welcomed a visitor who came to their home, gave the visitor a chair and their full attention. After the visitor finished selling or whatever was the purpose of their visit, the locals might not “buy the goods” or fancy the reason why the visitor chose to stop, but they listened to what the visitor had to say.

Nesie’s Homestead plan had deeded every participant a four-acre plot of land. Many city dwellers had accepted the offer. Many who had been urbanized, now joined a spreading ruralization. City custom and rural custom became a mixed blend in the Community. Some city people became thrifty; some farmers became spendy.

In Sauk Rapids, political advocates visited every home at least once, and some houses more frequently. A few owners put signs in front, asking all politicians to stay away.

As each day approached the day of decision, the campaign to restore political capitalism increased.

The post office conversation corner was busy, with letter senders and letter getters, coming and going. Friends nodded to each other short greetings but kept moving, while vapors of their spoken words briefly hung in the air.

“Morning, Saul,” puffed a fellow, wearing a visored cap.

“Morning, Bart.” answered Saul - dressed for cold weather with large brown earmuffs, covering a blue tassel cap, that had been slipped over his head. Both men stopped and conversed, warming the toes of their feet by tapping one foot, then the other to keep them warm.

Several passersby greeted Saul, who waved back to each one, while he listened to Bart.

“I received a letter this morning from our friend,” smiled Bart, “He’s still in Sudan, and so is Rose. He plans to come home to visit when his two years are up in February.”

“Oh! Will it be two years then?” searched Saul, for his memory.

“Yes, on the seventeenth of February. Remember, when he and Bob left we had a champagne feast, the night before, at Jay’s house - the first champagne that some of us ever tasted, I might add,” said Bart.

“The last for some of us,” added Saul. “How time flies! To think, it’s almost four years since Nesie started the whole thing.”

“Yes, and we watched Nesie explain it on TV, remember?”

Saul smiled. He was still the politician. During the years that the Management Privilege administration existed, Saul was planning, with some Desirecrat leaders of Minnesota, to restore their party to power. He hoped to introduce better conditions in the nation by adopting a political process that would preserve the elected representative system but eliminate salaries for public officials and create a system of honors

It seemed to resemble somewhat the old "dollar a year" pay, which some high executives were said to receive for serving in some high government offices, to which they were appointed by the President for a limited time.

Saul hoped to continue the successful measures that had been introduced but eliminate the testing method for acquiring leaders.

"Are you working in the door-knocking campaign?"

"Yes," replied Saul, "You will like the plan we're boosting."

"You think so?" asked Bart.

"Yes. We're showing people how they can govern themselves, without passing a test."

"There are tests in politics, too, right?" hinted Bart, "A person has only a small role - to vote for one of two or three candidates. You have no chance to become the top official, if you are a candidate. How many people ever became a candidate? Very few!"

"The management-privilege system will become a government of brains," countered Saul, "Brains can be a vested interest, just like bad politicians."

"If they limit the terms in politics and don't pay politicians, then you might have an improvement," noted Bart.

"That's what some of us in the Desirecrat Party are trying to get into the platform," said Saul, "But we're having a tough time. The powerful interests of the party want the money. They claim their plan will keep corruption out of politics, but I figure money will make corruption."

"What are you doing this morning?" asked Saul, "It's too cold to stand here and freeze; why don't we get a hot chocolate at the Cafe?"

"Good! I've got a half hour," said Bart.

The two men turned toward the direction of the Cafe and walked quickly, trailing puffs of vapors from their spent words.

The Cafe, to which they were going, was Community Cafe, one of thousands like it across the nation, which were officially set up to invite people to come in and drink refreshments, as compliments of the Community government.

The Welfare Department installed the Cafes, after they found evidence, based on their case studies, that people were able to maintain good health more easily by using delicious fruit and vegetable drinks to improve their nourishment.

Although, all people were receiving a good supply of foods, some families still did not eat the proper combination of foods or require their children to eat right; they ate too much of some things and not enough of other things.

The Community thought it is wise to provide free fruit and vegetable juices to whoever came to the Cafes. Children were avid consumers in this program, especially young ones, who were literally “tanking up” with the juices.

Cold weather isolates many rural folks in their houses and a warm fire. Charlie Tingle was one such person. He had four acres left from the eighty-acre plot of land, which he farmed when he was younger. He kept the house, barn, granary, and machine shed.

Now eighty-three years old, and spry when during warm weather, he customarily keeps close to the kitchen stove in the winter.

A forty-year-old row of fragrant junipers and large golden willows slowed the cold northwest winds to a quiet whisper of breeze, as it touched the sheltered north side of his house. Charlie continued burning wood in his cook stove for heat and cooking. He refused a Community offer to supply him with natural gas heat.

“I have a good stove and good wood, why should I change?”

He continued to burn kerosene in a chimney lamp for his evening light. He never had electricity, because the cost was too much to install an electric service in his house under the old economy. The Communal Electrification program now made electricity available to everyone who needed it, but Charlie decided he was accustomed to the oil lamps and could live his remaining years peacefully without electrical improvements.

Some years ago, his neighbor gave him a crystal radio, which required no electricity, no batteries, and no station tuning. It was always “on”; but only received two local AM radio stations.

Electric bills and telephone bills would have caused a hardship for Charlie, years ago, and Charlie likened this radio as a godsend. He could listen to the stations and hear news about the world without having to pay for the service; it was almost unbelievable for him.

Radio and television used to have the disadvantage of advertising, saturating the programs. This was changed under the new plan. The Community operated the radio and television industry and eliminated the need for program sponsors and commercials.

Charlie praised that change that eliminated money in America. It proved to be valuable in many ways, it saved the trees that would have been cut to make pulp for the commercials in magazines and newspapers and ended TV and radio commercials interrupting programs. People were tired of commercials, Once in awhile, Charlie reminded people of the quotation by the world famous novelist, Sinclair Lewis, from nearby Sauk Centre.

“When they write the obituary for America, it will read:
‘She died because of advertising.’”

Charlie was sitting by the window in his kitchen, observing the countryside to the east, as he listened to his radio with his set of headphones. Drab-looking hills, in the distance, could be seen. On top of the tallest hill, stood a water tower, which supplied the former prison, now known as Gray Stone College.

In the days before the new plan, the prison was a reformatory for half-hardened men who had been convicted of crime. Prisons, as usual, contained only some of the people who had committed crimes. Many of the worst criminals never went to prison because they were “respected men”, who the courts said deserved “a quality time to reform” unlike most inmates who paid for their crimes spending their lives behind bars instead of parole.

The towering walls, which surrounded the reformatory, were still intact. They had been built from large stones of gray granite, which were quarried from a deep quarry located within what became the prison walls. The first prisoners were ganged to the task of quarrying the heavy blocks that were shaped to huge bricks in the commercial granite sheds of adjacent towns. Bricklayers from the towns contracted to lay the bricks, course upon course, until they literally imprisoned themselves inside the twenty-five foot, high wall. When the wall was completed, the reformatory could claim to have the longest prison wall in the world.

Local men of commerce, always ready to stir up business, decided that this fact could be commercialized by catching the attention of tourists to the significance of that fact. They constructed a long, elevated sign, which was suspended between two giant pillars above and across the main highway, as it entered the city outskirts.

The words greeted all drivers who entered the city from either direction, "Welcome to the City with the Longest Prison Wall in the Whole World."

For years, city officials thought the sign attracted visitors to come and spend some money at their businesses. Eventually, a local controversy erupted demanding the removal of the sign, successfully arguing that the sign was nothing to brag about, and repelled tourists.

The sign came down, the prison stayed. Tourists pass by.

The former prison, whose tower Charlie could see, was no longer a prison of strong, barred corridors and cells. Gray Stone Prison became Gray Stone College.

Most prisons, under the old system, had been regarded as necessary; their steel enclosures were appropriate for the removal of anti-social or disturbing men from society. Prisons were considered to be successful if they could thwart the expressions of prisoners. Society felt criminals were misfortunate throwbacks in human evolution and sought to cast them out of society and prevent their return and rehabilitation.

One theory, claimed that crime was a sickness and gained some support when it claimed that psychological deficiencies were the root cause of crime, and prisoners are sick people, needing treatment.

The Nesie plan set up a Crime Council, which found that prisoners were one time small innocent children. Their assignment, if they were to choose it, was to discover why babies became criminals. That challenge became the mission of the Crime Council, which learned that children were shaped by the environment in which they lived. Many things could be included in an environment, but the Standard of Living was found to be the most significant influence of all.

Some criminologists claimed that criminals had formed and lived individual systems of reasoning that were rarely a total aggression against the basic logic of society. Instead, they were a digression in logic that feared competition in the environment of society.

Persons became criminals, when competing became for them a conclusive, personal interpretation of the world about them. Not all social deviates become criminals. This questioned the concept of competition. Many of the world's leaders had manipulated people to compete in behalf of themselves as leaders, without the leaders personally being required to personally compete. During a time of stress, Society tolerated their type of deviation, but not that of ordinary criminals.

Good and bad men have been social deviates, probably since the beginning of human society. Nesie reminded the public that good and bad environments also existed since the beginning of

humanity. "Let's change the environment," he insisted.

A few writers of old had described society as a system of ideas, which were instituted by certain deviates that gained civil and social power. These writers also said that history shows that society is always oscillating between different concepts that could be regarded as deviations.

The term "common man" once was used, and still was used by some, to claim that the mass of humanity are similar; some say they are like cattle who lack the ability to deviate from the condition of life that is imposed on them.

The new plan started to change the reasoning of convicts, through a college program, which had teachers replace guards and cottages replaced prison cells, and convicts became students with books that presented the opportunity to learn their strategy for life. As a result of this short trial of prison reform, the crime rate plunged almost to zero point, in the first year.

Society was changing its views of crime. But, some people were still not willing to accept convicts into their social life. Only some of the graduates of Gray Stone College had so far returned to society. Time, it was said, heals all wounds, and success would help more people change their attitudes. The schools were teaching young people a new regard for deviant people.

As Charlie listened to the radio, he saw a man turn into the roadway, leading to his house. The man was tall, wore a winter coat and cap, and carried a packet under his arm. As he neared the house, he could only see the back door. Charlie never used the front door, and the large overhanging branches of a volunteer cedar tree hid the door. The man looked for an entrance, found the door by the back porch, and he walked toward the house.

Charlie rose to his feet and pulled a chair from along the wall for his expected company. When three light knocks were heard, Charlie called out his customary greeting, "Come in! Come on in!"

The man carefully opened the door and greeted Charlie with a smile.

"Good afternoon. Are we going to get some more snow?" said the visitor.

"Well, it's a new moon," answered Charlie, "and we can usually expect a change in the weather, at that time. If the wind stays from the northwest, we won't get any, but it looks like it might change to the west, and then we might get some. Here, take a chair."

As he offered the chair to the man, the visitor opened his coat, took off his wraps, draped his coat over the back of the chair, and sat down in the chair to face Charlie - near the stove. Charlie opened the stove door, poked the coals up a bit, added two pieces of split wood on top the

fire, and opened the draft a bit to get the fire burning higher.

“Well...what’s new in town?” said Charlie, as he hung the stove poker on a hook by the side of the stove.

“I guess you might say most things are new, nowadays,” said the visitor. “That new plan has changed so many things in life, that it’s hard to tell what things were like before.”

Charlie walked to his chair and sat down, crossing one leg over his knee. He glanced out of the window for a moment; then cupped his hand on his ear that was closest to the man, and asked, “What’s your name?”

The visitor straightened his tie and replied, “My name is George Bress.”

“Oh, Britz,” answered Charlie, as he lifted his hand from the ear and waved his hand to say that he understood.

“That’s pretty close,” smiled the stranger.

“I knew a Britz by Pierman, where I grew up,” noted Charlie.

“Oh? That must be Britz, B-R-I-T-Z,” spelled the visitor, “My name is Bress, B-R-E-S-S, Bress.” enunciated the visitor, as he corrected Charlie.

“Oh! Bratz,” said Charlie, as he again misunderstood the name.

The visitor’s face had a slight, puzzled expression, but he quickly regained his composure and didn’t venture another correction.

“What do you do?” asked Charlie, a slight, quizzical expression on his face.

“You mean what kind of work?” asked the visitor.

“Yes,” answered Charlie, “You aren’t no farmer, are you?”

“No,” answered the visitor without smiling,

“I could see that.” interrupted Charlie.

“I used to be an attorney at law and a realtor.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Charlie, “A lawyer and a land agent!”

“That’s right,” agreed the visitor, with a slight smile, “The new law changed the practice of law four years ago, and I didn’t continue.”

“I suppose that was kind of hard on you lawyers.”

“Yes, it was,” agreed Bress, hoping to explain what happened to the practice of law.

Formerly the land was loaded with lawyers, who were always drumming up business as legal counselors for people who didn’t know the intricacies of the law. Now, the lawyers were all either working for the Community without pay, or they weren’t working as lawyers. A lawyer could practice law and represent people who weren’t familiar with the laws of the Community, but they had to do that without receiving any money.

Their position was somewhat similar yet different than that of young people. They had to earn their Management Privilege by a term of Servant duty; they were free to study the new laws in a seminar, and would be eligible to practice law, if they passed their exam.

This arrangement was unsavory to many practicing lawyers, after the new plan was enacted. But, a new crop, of law students, were being groomed to practice law for the people without pay. They learn that it is a privilege to inform people of the new system and to negotiate suitable applications for offenders and the Community.

All students are taught a general familiarity with the new law. It has been estimated that in ten years time, most people will be able to present their cause in Community Court. This was partly possible, because the law now was not based on precedents but on articles of principles that were clear and understandable.

“That is why we are going around talking to people,” said the visitor, as he summarized his presentation. “The new plan has many good things that our country needed for a long time, but this country has also lost the political control that was possible under an elected administration.”

As the visitor talked, Charlie listened to each word. His ears perked up and didn’t miss a thought, mixing the meaning of the man’s words with the judgment that came to his mind, while looking out of his window.

“I disagree!” said Charlie. “I know what the political game used to be like. When my wife was living, I once had a hand in politics myself. I belonged to the Non-Political League. All kinds of farmers belonged to it and some workers, too, at the time. The purpose was to get a fair return

for the farmers' crops and a living wage for working men."

"Tinsley was the leader of the organization. He used to go to county fairs and give speeches," explained Charlie, as he continued to gaze out the window.

"He tried to convince farmers that they should build their own elevators to store their grain and sell it when the price was right, instead of selling right after harvest to the millers and grain exchanges, when the price was low. I remember him once saying, 'A big milling company made more money by moving grain through the cupola of one elevator than a farmer could earn the entire year, raising grain on a section of land...' He meant ... they controlled the price of grain and all farm commodities by buying them from the farmer at a low price and selling them at a high price to the bakeries, packers, and food market chains."

The visitor wondered about Charlie's statement but kept his opinion to himself.

"They wanted me to run for the legislature, as state senator," said Charlie, "I finally accepted the nomination and ran against a man by the name of John Pinterson. During his campaign, he used to buy drinks for the men at the taverns that he visited. I waited to catch him and then report him, but he was too foxy. He had his friends set up the drinks and have the bartender tell the people that they should vote for Pinterson. I lost," said Charlie.

"That's the bad kind of politics," said the visitor, "We aren't proposing that kind of politics. We believe that electing public officials can be combined with the idea of public officials working without pay."

Charlie again listened closely to what the visitor had said and still looked out the window, as though he was searching if the cedar trees might contain the truth about what he heard the visitor say.

"And the people would have a chance to be better represented by choosing who was to serve in an office," continued the visitor. He drew open the packet he had carried and withdrew some cards and a paper bulletin. He offered them to Charlie.

"I'd like to leave these with you," said the visitor, "so you can learn more about what we propose."

"I see," answered Charlie, with a nod, "you can leave them. I've seen all kinds of them lately. You're about the third fellow that has come and talked politics. I tell you, you might have a good idea, but politics is all the same. They might say that politics gives the people the chance to rule themselves, but it always ends up that the politicians want the power to rule and will cut out people who oppose them."

“Aww,” sighed Charlie, “that new plan isn’t too bad. As first it seemed puzzling, but it does lots of good in the right way, and it isn’t such a bad idea to have those tests for office. At least, those fellers that get the office, show that they got the best brains. They aren’t getting the job because they’re rich or because they promised to vote for the rich.”

“The new plan does have good points,” agreed the visitor. He saw that he had not been able to convince Charlie, but maybe a bit of agreement might warm Charlie to what the literature explained. He put his things back into the packet and began to put on his wraps. Charlie was still explaining his ideas, as the visitor rose to his feet and waited for a break in Charlie’s talking.

“I’m, not one that’s agreeing with government, but I tell you that new plan is the best thing I’ve seen in all my days,” remarked Charlie.

The visitor took advantage of the pause in Charlie’s commentary to walk toward the door, carrying his belongings, hoping to politely escape.

“Well,” said the visitor with a sigh, “I’d better get going again, or I won’t be able to make my appointment. Do you have the time?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied Charlie, as he turned in his chair and pointed toward the pendulum clock on the opposite wall and said, “Two thirty.”

“Oh! I see it now” said the visitor, “Where does Claude Babcus live?”

Charlie rose from his chair. “See that barn?” said Charlie, as he pointed through the window to the east.

The visitor looked and answered, “Oh, is that where he lives?”

“That’s his barn,” chuckled Charlie, “You’ll see his house, once you get in the yard.”

“Okay,” said the visitor, “Well, thanks for your time. I hope you decide to read the bulletin.”

“When I sit by myself, I do a lot of reading and studying, it keeps me occupied.” said Charlie.

“Okay. Well, goodbye, and thanks again,” smiled the visitor, as he walked through the back door.

“It was nice to meet you!” said Charlie, “You say your name is Bratz?”

“That’s pretty close,” smiled the visitor, “As they say, it doesn’t matter what you call me ... as long as you don’t call me late for supper.”

Charlie chuckled; he heard that one before.

The visitor smiled and waved his hand, “Goodbye!”

~ Chapter Thirteen ~

A New Day

It was a new day; the snow was deep, and the air was fresh from the heaviest snowfall of the season. Snowplows were still working to clear the streets. The metallic scraping of snow shovels, digging out the seven inches of white from concrete sidewalks and asphalt driveways of homes were heard everywhere. It was not a record snowfall, but, once again, it proved that weather wasn't always predictable. Weather forecasters were trying to figure out where it came from; they didn't expect it.

Bart was bundled up, wearing mittens, scarf, a parka and overshoes and standing on the cobblestone platform in front of the railroad station, watching a snowplow clear the spur tracks in the rail yards.

The temperature was twenty-eight degrees above zero, somewhat balmy for Minnesota. Fortunately, there was almost no wind; the light snow could easily drift if it was picked up by strong winds. The fluffy, white clouds above were moving speedily in an easterly direction, as though, they had a schedule to deliver snow at some other place downwind.

Several groups of people were waiting on the platform, and some people were waiting inside the station. Transportation had been made a public utility, almost four years ago. Anyone can ride trains and buses without the requirement to pay a fare or show an ID or show a pass.

This access to transportation was very welcome when it was first instituted. People made great use of trains in the first days of the system. It was crowded wherever a person would travel. People were visiting relatives and friends, whom they couldn't afford to visit previously. Gradually, people realized that the chance to travel would be there if they wanted it, and travel slacked off. People seemed to have had enough of travel; they tested the opportunity to travel without paying and found it to be real. They may also have had enough of relatives and friends, for a while.

Travel also slowed due to a simple arrangement. Each Standard of Living could only be received from an assigned store in a person's homestead district. A person, who wanted to take a long trip without provisions, would need to apply for a Transfer, which would then enable the person to use the Standard of Living at any store. This application typically took a week, except for special circumstances, but wasn't due to red tape. It was a simple caution to people, to think twice before taking a needless trip.

Long trips were not unusual, however. Older people found the public transportation system to be the fulfillment of a dream come true. They could visit places of scenic beauty or historic significance, which they had always hoped to see but couldn't afford because of the cost of the travel. Long trips usually produced some traveler's fatigue, which led many people to think twice before taking another trip again.

Bart was waiting to meet the next train from Palopolis. The large clock on the wall of the train station showed the time of several time zones. Local time was ten twenty four. On the board, which listed the Arrivals, the train from Minneapolis was listed as due to arrive in six minutes.

The east-facing block signal, about a hundred yards to the west of the station, was red and the station mast was horizontal. Everything was ready for the train that was due. Mail carts, with their noisy, steel-rim wheels, were being rolled out to the platform with sacks of mail that would be transferred to the mail car on the train. Baggage carts were also being rolled out, with trunks, packages, and suitcases that would be loaded in the baggage car. A city bus drove up, stopped, and opened its doors. Several persons stepped off the bus and walked to the platform. Then, the bus departed.

In the distance, was heard a train whistle. Some children had heard it, too, and excitedly told their parents that the train was coming. Again the whistle was heard, but somewhat louder. Two long whistles, followed by a short whistle and another long whistle, sounded as the train was approaching some crossroad, a few miles away.

People on the platform began to stir now, checking their belongings, to be sure they had friends or family. One man was embracing each of several young children, one after another. A short way to the left of Bart, a man reminded a friend to "Be sure to write."

Some people stretched their necks to see if they could see the train. They couldn't see it; it had not yet come around the south bend.

"How do you like the snow?" asked a voice behind Bart.

Bart turned around to see who was speaking.

"How are you?" smiled an elderly man, as he clasped the hands of another man, of about the same age. "Lots of snow makes for a lot of shoveling."

"Did you vote yet today?" asked a tall, middle-aged man with glasses.

“Yes, as soon as the polls opened. Quite a few people were waiting there before the polls opened. I think there’ll be a big turnout in the voting.”

“I think so, too. It’s a mighty important election. Can I ask you, what side you think will win?” asked the tall man.

“Well, Jeff, I think people are kind of confused. They like the things the new plan has done, but they have been told that they should have more control in the government, and I think that many of them will fall for that political crap.” explained the elderly man.

“I think the money people are going to make a big push in the large cities.” said the tall man. “Of course, there are fewer people left in those cities now.”

“I noticed this morning, when I voted, that there were some signs and cards on telephone poles, and some local politicians were passing out sample ballots to voters. They probably urge people to choose the political option on the ballot.” said the elderly man.

“Remember how the politicians claimed that the founding fathers thought political government was the best. A lot of people have a type of patriotism that worships the men who started the country and wouldn’t do anything that they didn’t do?”

“Aww, that’s bunk!” said the elderly man, “Why, those guys lived in a different age. There were fewer people and fewer opportunities. If they would be living today, they’d support the new system.”

“That’s what I think, too. Many people don’t think that way; patriotism is a kind of sentiment. That’s all it means to them,” added the tall man.

A whistle was heard again. The rumble of train wheels and the high pitch of diesel engines were loud. Bart turned to the south, almost expecting to see the train’s lead engine appear. The two men behind him were still conversing.

Then, the train blasted the crisp air with a few loud, shrill whistles. Bart knew that it had to be just around the bend, for those whistles were used at crossings, and a highway crossing was located there.

“It’s coming! It’s coming!” shouted an excited, little boy to his parents.

The busy roar of the diesel engines throttled down to a lower pitch. After a moment, the big headlight of the lead engine on the train emerged from the oak trees that grew along both sides of the track.

Children became more excited as the train approached the station. The roar of the engines began to drown out conversation. People began to back away from the track, as a station worker walked along the platform, gesturing to the crowd to move back. Other workers were moving the mail and baggage carts closer to the track.

When the train came to five hundred feet of the crossing, it blew a long, steady, hollow-sounding whistle, then paused, and then it began its crossing whistle as it approached Main Street; lights were flashing on the crossing arms, as they descended to block all cross traffic.

The hum of the engines increased as the train approached the station platform, its wheels alternatively clickety clacking, as they crossed each rail joint. A turbulence of wind swept ahead of the first engine of the train as it whisked past the people and made people hold on to their hats. The train slowed gradually, until the tenth car was directly in front of the station door. Then, the air brakes of the train wisshhed loudly, slowing the train to a stop. Then the diesel engines tapered to a weak hum.

The conductor and brakeman had already opened the stairways of the train. People on the platform crowded around the stairways of the train, anxious to climb aboard, but the conductor waved the waiting people to step back and give the passengers a chance to disembark.

Bart moved toward the tenth and eleventh cars. The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth cars were passenger cars, as well as the first five cars behind the mail car. People were getting off from the cars. Bart liked to ride toward the end of a train and was probably thinking that most people had a similar preference.

“There he is,” said Rose. “He doesn’t see us. Let’s surprise him.”

Paul picked up the luggage and pointed to a spot behind the crowd. Rose nodded approval. They walked circling behind the people waiting on the platform. From this position, they could approach Bart and surprise him with a quick “Hello!”

Bart was still looking for them, beginning to wonder if they had missed this train.

Rose and Paul were approaching Bart, with smiles of mischief on their faces, motioning to each other about their plan. When they were about fifty feet from Bart, he turned around, as though he sensed something. He noticed Rose and then Paul and broke into a big grin.

“Trying to catch me unaware, huh?”

“Hello, Bart,” said Paul, as Bart grabbed him with a hug. “Bart, have you ever met Rose Bork-

amp?”

“I think we went to school at the same time; you were a year ahead of me, weren’t you?”

“I believe so.” smiled Rose, “I’m getting to be an old lady.”

“A very pretty old lady, if that’s the case.” smiled Bart.

“Ah, you’re my friend!” smiled Rose, as she patted Bart’s arm.

“How about we go uptown, to see if it is anything like we remember it.” suggested Rose.

“Good idea!” said Bart, “Let me help you with your gear.”

“You can take that big, brown box and maybe this little bag.” suggested Paul.

The three people picked up their luggage and began to walk. Each one, thrilled with the joy of meeting each other.

“We can take that bus.” said Bart, pointing to a green and white city bus, which was loading passengers on the platform.

“Okay.” said Paul, “Hope they wait for us.”

The three friends hurried with the luggage. A short line of people was waiting to board the bus.

Bart stepped in front of the bus to read its route sign, “This should take us up to sixth or ninth; it goes to ninth along Main Street. We can take it and get some refreshments at a Cafe. I want to find out what you have been doing all this time.”

As they entered the bus, Rose smiled, observing the passengers.

“We’ll need to stand.” said Bart, as he noticed the seats were full.

“That’s all right.” said Rose, “It shouldn’t take long.”

“Yes.” agreed Bart.

“We had a very nice trip.” said Rose, “We took the train all the way from New York.”

“You took the boat from Africa?”

The bus started to move, and each one grabbed one of the ceiling straps of the bus; Paul leaned his legs against the luggage to keep it from tumbling across the floor. When the bus came to Main Street, it made a sharp right turn to exit the parking lot, and headed west on Main Street.

“Did we take a boat?” smiled Rose, as she glanced at Paul.

“We took a tramp steamer from Port Said, through the Mediterranean ... then to New York.” said Paul.

“We had a wonderful trip along the north coast of the Mediterranean. The ship docked at some coastal cities to unload and load freight, which gave us a chance to visit and see what the people were doing.”

“Those countries have such nice climate.” added Rose.

“Along the south tip of Spain, the heat of the deserts in Africa makes their climate much hotter.” added the young man.

“Did you take the same boat across the ocean?” asked Bart.

“Yes, we went from Egypt to New York without changing ships. Our ship carried gum arabic from Sudan - destined for New York.”

“That gum arabic was a result of his hard work,” said Rose, as she pointed to Paul.

“Oh? How was that?” said Bart.

“He taught the people how to harvest wild gum trees more efficiently and how to domesticate those trees.” said Rose.

“Really? That is something!” noted Bart.

“What’s been happening here?” asked Paul.

“Lots of changes!” said Bart, “You came at a crucial time; today’s Election Day.”

“I heard some people say the same thing in Chicago.” said Paul. “It’s hard to believe that four years will soon be up. I was telling Rose this morning, it’s hard to believe that two years have gone by since we left for Africa. When I look back, it seems like just a snap of the finger.”

“It might seem even more so if you had lived here.” said Bart. “Every day, something new is being started. Some ideas that were put into practice surpassed my fondest dreams. Take that Standard of Living; I never would have believed that the money system could be discarded. The Standard of Living is the finest thing they ever dreamed up. It ended all that double-dealing that they called business and all the waste that was so common before. It’s all gone now.” said Bart, emphasizing his last sentence with a dismissive wave of his hands.

Paul listened with interest. He didn’t expect to hear so many good words for Nesié’s plan and half-expected to return to a nation of grumblers, disgusted with the new way of living. Folks used to be great believers in excitement and fascination, and a good, just world would be too calm for them, too boring and some almost seemed to believe that gangsters and criminals were needed to make society interesting.

“Excuse me.” said a young woman, as she slipped by the three straphangers. She pulled a buzzer chord; the driver looked into the rear view mirror, and slowed the bus down as it came up to the corner of Ninth Avenue. After the woman stepped out, the door closed again, and the bus resumed its journey.

“There’s the river.” noted the young man, as the bus approached the bridge.

“Frozen over, just like in Africa, right?” kidded Bart.

Paul chuckled at the thought. “Several times, I would have enjoyed to see snow; when I was walking in the hot, dry sun, snow was a refreshing memory. We had so much hot weather there.”

“Winters seemed attractive when you’re working in the warm sun, day after day.” added Rose.

“We had lots of it here; we could have shipped some over.” kidded Bart. “Did you read where one Arab leader was considering towing some huge blocks of ice that had broken off from the Antarctic ice shelf to Arabia and convert it to fresh water?”

“Yes, I did.” said Paul. “Rainfall is so slim, where we were, you can’t depend on it for a crop. If they could get twenty inches of snow, or that ice, those dry lands would use that water.”

“I can hardly wait to skate on some frozen water here.” said Rose.

“Or tobogganing or skiing.” added Paul.

“Why don’t we make a date to go skating Sunday afternoon. The ice is solid on Lake George,

the snow is plowed, and the warming house is open then, if you'd like to do that?" suggested Bart,

Paul thought for a moment. Rose thought for a moment. What possible engagements might come their way by that time?

"That would be fine with me, Bart." said Rose.

"Sunday's fine for me, too." said Paul.

"It's a date, then!" said Bart, "After dinner, we can meet there."

The bus approached the former business section. Several boys were skating on a rink in the middle of a blocked off side street.

The new economy utilized many former business buildings for producing or distributing goods and services to the people in the city. Some buildings were vacant but available for people, who wanted to hold group activities and needed a room.

The bus drove past Fourth Avenue and continued on Main Street. Like other passengers, Rose and Paul were looking at the passing scenes, comparing the changes and improvements that had taken place while they were gone.

The young man had continued his interest in the Management Privilege process by reading while in Africa but seeing examples of the reality in person was a fulfillment.

"There's a Cafe, over at Fourteenth Avenue, right off Main." noted Bart, "It's a nice place; we can catch refreshments there."

"Okay." said Paul,

"Good!" agreed Rose.

Bart pulled the buzzer chord at Eighth Street; the driver looked back through his mirror to see who wanted to get off the bus. He slowed the bus as it approached Ninth and pulled up to the corner. Each one thanked the driver as they stepped off the bus and headed for the Cafe.

Paul reached down to pick up a handful of new snow, pressed it into a ball, took a bite of the snow and tasted it. Rose smiled, as she watched him, remembering how at times she would have liked to do the same thing, when she was overheated in the sun.

“I heard they started these Cafes to improve people’s health.” said Rose.

“That’s right,” agreed Bart, “and it seems to have worked very well. The Leaders claim that the need for medical and hospital care has greatly diminished, since the plan was started.”

Some people were leaving the Cafe, as these three arrived. Paul looked into a window of the Cafe and saw that the place was almost full of people. Many were seated around semi-circular counters that were placed along the length of the building. Bart motioned to direct them to some seats in the rear of the building, and Rose and Paul followed him. Two young women were serving people at one counter.

A waitress asked a girl of about ten, “Want another one?”

“I’m all filled up.” said the girl, as she wiped her mouth with a napkin.

The waitress smiled and went to other people at the counter. They explained to the waitress that they had already placed their order.

The waitress approached Bart, Rose, and Paul.

“Hi! What would you like?” smiled the waitress.

“Do you have orange juice?” asked Bart.

“Yes.” answered the waitress.

“I’ll take some orange juice.” said Bart.

“Do you have other juice?” asked Rose

“Sure!” said the waitress, as she picked a menu from beneath the counter and handed it to Rose. Paul could also read it.

“Rhubarb juice!” said Paul, “I’ll take some rhubarb juice.”

“There is such a variety, it’s hard to decide.” noted Rose, as she scanned the menu.

“You’ll have time to try all of them while you’re here.” advised Bart.

“Every time you come up town, stop in and get some. That’s what I do; everybody does it. The Community encourages everyone to make use of the Cafes. No food is wasted.”

“He’s right,” agreed the waitress, “Juice keeps people healthy.”

“Here’s one,” noticed Rose, “Sauerkraut juice.”

“You’ve had that before,” reminded Paul, “You know what that is; it’s just like the kitchawa you used to drink in Gonda. It’s fermented cabbage juice, in a salt brine with some spices.”

“Doctors say it’s good for the treatment of ulcers,” noted the waitress.

“I don’t have ulcers,” smiled Rose, “so I’ll take tomato juice.”

“Can I have some more plum juice.” asked a rosy cheeked boy.

“I’ll get that for you, when I finish with these people, ok?” smiled the waitress, with a wink toward the boy.

“This is another thing that is fantastic in the new plan,” noted Bart, “I hope that people will vote for another four years of the plan. Many fruits and vegetables used to rot in the fields under the old system if there was a surplus that was not purchased by consumers.”

Paul listened and then remembered. “I neglected to give you Bart’s last name, Rose.”

“Oh, I knew it. It’s Raines, isn’t it?”

“That’s right,” replied Bart.

“Here you are,” said the waitress, as she brought the three orders on a tray.

“Thank you,” said Rose.

The waitress smiled, “You’re welcome!”

After each of them drank their glass of juice, Rose and Paul ordered a refill.

“That is excellent juice,” noted Paul, licking his lips.

“All the juices are good,” said Bart, “I know. I tried them all.”

The thought, of delicious juices, brought other thoughts to mind.

"I better get home and surprise mom and dad," said Rose, "They don't expect me, I told them I couldn't tell when I was coming."

"Does a bus run on Ninth Street south?" asked Paul.

"Sure," replied Bart, "One runs every three minutes."

"Every three minutes?" asked Rose with surprise.

"That's right; very few people drive anymore. The Community doesn't include passenger cars in the Standard of Living anymore. They found that it would be more practical to expand the public transportation."

"I read that for long trips, the Community provides trains and transcontinental buses, for free, is that right, Bart?" asked Paul.

"Right! In emergencies or special instances, they can also use airplanes."

"That's a lot easier than driving and eliminates the congestion and road rage that I remember," said Paul.

"And it eliminates wasted gas and all the metal that was used for millions of cars," said Bart. "Believe it or not, they say that there's a bus within fifteen minutes, on every secondary road in America. A bus comes by every fifteen minutes."

"I heard that," said Paul.

Bart smiled.

Rose put her empty glass down and glanced at the wall clock.

"Time to go; hate to leave you," said Rose, rising from her seat. "Where do you catch that bus down Ninth?"

"Right across the street," said Bart, pointing his finger.

The three gathered the luggage, thanked the waitress, and left the Cafe. They walked to the bus stop across the street. A bus was just coming down the street. Rose waved to the bus; it pulled up to the curb and stopped by them.

"I'll probably see you at the club meeting, Rose," said Paul.

“Or Sunday, at the lake.” answered Rose.

“Right, I forgot about that.”

“Our club will meet Wednesday at the parish hall.” reminded Bart.

“Do you belong to it?” asked Paul.

“For over a year.” replied Bart, “I’m what they call the ‘Host.’”

“Well, what do you know.” said Rose, “We were members, too.”

“I know.” answered Bart, “Both of you are welcome.”

“Okay. You, too?” she asked, looking at Paul.

“Sure. We’ll see you Wednesday night.”

“Eight o’clock!” reminded Bart.

Bart helped Rose get her luggage aboard. They waved goodbye to each other and smiled as the bus took off down Ninth Street south.

Bart and Paul started walking back toward Main Street.

“She’s a nice person.” said Bart.

“Definitely. She showed that the last two years,” said Paul. “She has a fine sense of humor and seeks truly good things in life.”

Their thoughts lingered for a moment on their impressions of Rose.

At Main Street again, Bart said, “If you wait here, a bus will be along in a few minutes that goes a block from your folk’s home.”

“Oh, good!” said Paul, “Will you stay up for the election returns?”

“There won’t be any returns broadcast, Reporting any election results is prohibited until one hour after all the polls in the country have closed,” said Bart. “It prevents the voting in eastern time zones from influencing voters in the western time zones.”

Voters had been prompted for years to go with the leading vote getter rather than the candidate with the best vision and integrity. Now, nobody will have been influenced by hearing early returns from the eastern part of the country - like it used to be.”

“That’s a real good change!” said Paul. “That always bothered me to see those network commentators broadcast results while people in the west still hadn’t voted.”

“Me, too. Each voter can decide by their self,” agreed Bart.

A green and white bus was approaching the bus stop. Paul collected his luggage. Bart picked up a peculiar shaped object.

“What’s this?” asked Bart.

“That’s a disso,” replied Paul. “It’s a symbol of their old god of rain. Another fellow and I were presented them because we helped the native people build an irrigation project in the dry lands.”

“They sort of honored you by putting you on the level of their god?” asked Bart.

“They don’t worship that god anymore; they haven’t for three hundred years. The symbol occupies a cultural custom among the people. They wish good luck to another person by giving that person something, containing this symbol. It means they wish the person the best fruits of rain; they don’t get much rain there, so they wish what is very valuable to have - water.” explained Paul.

“What an interesting custom.” said Bart.

“Will you be watching the returns at home?” asked Paul.

“Yes, dad is very interested. He’ll want me to sit up with him.”

“I’ll see you Wednesday evening at the meeting.” said Paul.

As the bus rolled up to the corner, Bart said, “I’d like to find out about going over there myself, to Africa.”

“I think you would be happy, if you did,” advised Paul, “You might not work miracles, but a miracle might happen to you.”

“When I see you Wednesday, I’d like to talk with you about that some more,” said Bart.

“Okay, we’ll do that. See you then!” waved the young man, as he stepped into the bus.

He found a seat and put his luggage on the floor by his feet, as the bus started again, heading west on Main Street. He noticed how astonishing it was to see the difference in traffic on the street. There were only trucks and busses and bicycles traveling on the streets. Across the aisle, a man he recognized was seated.

“Hi, Charlie.” said Paul, offering a handshake with a smile.

The old man looked but didn’t recognize him. He blinked his eyes and looked again, then, a smile came to life on his face.

“Well! What do you know! How are you? How’s Africa?” asked Charlie. “You look kind of different, your face looks ... more brown, like you’ve been in the sun. I didn’t recognize you at first. You back on a visit?”

“Yes.”

“Did you see any of those wild animals over there? There’s supposed to be all kinds of wild animals, according to books I read when I was small.”

“Yes, I did get some sun. I didn’t get to see many wild animals, cause I was in the dry lands area, something like a desert. There aren’t many big animals where I was stationed. I worked in the dry land area in northern Africa.”

“Something like out west, I suppose.” said Charlie.

“Something like it but quite a bit worse.” said Paul, “They get only a fraction of the rain they get in the southwest.”

“How do the people live?”

“Well, many live near the rivers, many along the big river that runs through the country, the Nile River. The people need to irrigate all their land. They were acquainted with very simple methods of irrigation. It was slow and enabled families to farm only a small piece of ground. But they farmed those small pieces of land very well, better than many farmers used to do in this country.”

“What do they grow there?” asked Charlie.

“Mostly rice, a little wheat. The wheat is a different kind than we grow here. They grow quite a bit of corn; they have good varieties of corn, it grows well there, needs less water than our varieties.”

“Do they sleep in the afternoon, like they do in Mexico, before noon until the middle of the afternoon?” asked Charlie.

“Yes, they do; they have to; it’s so hot there, that the heat would kill a man if he worked like people do in our northern climates.”

The bus was about four blocks from the home of Paul’s parents. He looked at the road ahead, as Charlie asked why the people don’t get wells and irrigate.

“Who’s going to dig the wells?” asked Paul, “It costs money to dig wells or at least it takes a lot of digging. Also, the water table is not shallow, like it is here.

“We started a better irrigation system,” said Paul, “The people built a big dam in Egypt, the Aswan Dam, on the Nile River. That will water almost two million acres when it is completed.”

“Two million acres?” asked Charlie with surprise, “My, oh my! That is something! Did you help with that?”

“I helped build the irrigation, that was used, but the Soviets financed the dam and the British did the engineering work on the dam itself. I worked on a dam upstream on the Nile in Sudan, that was built on the pattern of the Aswan Dam”

The corner was coming up, where Paul would get off. He rose from his seat and collected his luggage toward one side of the bus.

“You going to visit your ma and pa?” asked Charlie.

“Yes, I haven’t seen them yet, I just got home.”

“Will you be coming out by your place?”

“Yes, one of these days.”

“I saw your dad come out often, since you were gone. He stopped over at my place a week ago and we talked. He’s easy to talk to, like you and me, when we used to talk politics.” said Charlie.

Paul smiled. He pulled the buzzer chord. It wasn't really necessary, perhaps, since the passengers were all listening to the conversation, including the driver who had been listening between periodic glances to his rear view mirror. Charlie had a custom of talking loud without the inhibition of young people.

"Well, it's been good to see you, Charlie. Take it easy. I'll be seeing you in a couple of days. Did you vote today?"

"Yesiree!" piped Charlie, "First thing this morning; keep those dang politicians out of Capitol City. Those blasted schemers came out to my place, trying to pull the wool over my eyes."

The bus stopped and the door opened. Paul picked up his luggage and stepped out of the bus.

"Goodbye, Charlie, I'll stop over in a few days."

Charlie waved his hand and muttered a good bye, continuing with some fiery words about politicians and rackets, mainly for the benefit of his audience of riders on the bus.

When the bus pulled away from the curb, Paul began to cross the street, looking both ways carefully, out of habit to the heavy traffic he remembered of former times. Traffic was no problem for him now; the only vehicles on Main Street were the bus and a truck, which was a ways off.

Across the street, was the bowling alley that his uncle Tony built, years ago, now also was a Cafe. It looked like it still was in use as a bowling alley. Its polished, dark, red granite facing was spaced with rows of glass block windows. Its big parking lot that was packed in other winters had only bike racks with several bikes

"A bowling alley, built and owned by his uncle, now it is also a Cafe." thought Paul.

He passed the Cafe and crossed a side street to enter a horseshoe alley, which curved behind his parents' garage. When he was a boy, the alley served as a foot-race track for youngsters in the neighborhood. On summer evenings, it became the neighborhood playground for games of tin can alley and hide and seek.

Paul walked along the back yard fence, so his folks wouldn't be so apt to discover his coming, and he could surprise them. The snow was deep, and he had no overshoes, so, he took a run, leaping through the snow, hoping to escape wet feet.

He tried the door to the back porch; it was open. He quietly entered the porch and carefully closed the door. He heard no voices. He remembered that the kitchen door usually squeaked, so, he slowly opened the kitchen door to avoid the squeak. This time, the door hinges didn't squeak, like he remembered them. He went inside and could now hear voices from the television. As he started to close the kitchen door, it started to squeak, so he very slowly closed it.

"What time is it, George?" called his mother, from downstairs in the basement.

"Twenty after three, twenty four after three." answered his father.

In a moment, his mother called again, "I wonder if he might come home today? He said sometime in February, and his two years are up today. I got a funny feeling, like he might be coming home."

"Aw! You and your funny feelings." replied his dad,

"I had it for a couple of days, as though I was being told that he was coming."

"He'll come when he's supposed to," suggested his father.

"I think he's here." said Paul's mother.

The TV had a news program. A man was speaking about voting.

"Ninety six percent of registered voters are expected to turn out today." said the man.

Paul heard the footsteps of his mother on the basement stairs. He waited. As she reached the upper landing and entered the kitchen, she unexpectedly glanced at her son; the surprise moved her to immediately reach for her chest in shock, and her mouth opened, "I knew it!" she yelled. "I knew you were coming!"

She rushed to embrace him with a hug, crying out in an excited voice. "Pa! He's here!"

His father rushed to the kitchen, smiled as he saw his son, and embraced him.

"When did you get in?" asked his mother, reaching her arm around her son.

"About an hour ago," answered Paul, his face beaming with joy.

"Why didn't you tell us that you were coming today?" asked his father.

"I didn't know if I'd make it today."

"I was telling your dad, that I had the feeling you were coming today."

"She always gets those kinds of feelings," said his dad, winking to Paul.

"Did you have anything to eat?" asked his mother. "Are you hungry?"

"Don't ask him." said the father, "Just make him something."

"I'll make a pot of raspberry tea. You drink tea, don't you?"

"That'd be fine, mom." he said, as he removed his coat and cap.

"Well, how are you?" asked the father as he sized up Paul head to foot. "Do you eat enough? You look like you lost some weight."

"Oh, I had plenty to eat. I never suffered in eating."

"How long are you going to stay?" asked his mom, as she began to prepare the tea.

"A lot depends on what the vote decides today. I'll go back, even if the political system is chosen, but that would make things much more difficult in getting back, if the present plan is rejected."

"I saw Bart about a week ago." said his mother, "He said you wrote him a letter and invited him to go to Africa."

"Yes, I did. He'd like to go. If the new plan is voted to continue, then we could really do some good work there."

"I was reading the Frontier section of the paper, about two weeks ago, where another dam like Aswan will be built," said his dad. "Is that right?"

"The plan is to store more water during the spring floods." said Paul.

"The article mentioned you and a fellow from up north by Duluth, Andy..."

"Andy Trosk!" replied Paul, "He did the engineering for the irrigation. He's a jewel of an engineer."

“The article sure thought so; it told how the main irrigation culvert was shaded from the sun to prevent evaporation and that it carried a flow equal to a small river.” noted his father.

“That’s right. that was Andy’s doing. He suspected the clay materials needed for the project were there and designed a sonic finder to locate their exact locations and also designed a quarry system to process them.” added the young man.

“It said you designed the irrigation system.” added his father.

“The people of Sudan, themselves, did the building of the system. They have some fine craftsmen. I helped them plan some of the applications, but some of the basic ideas came from the people.”

“Well, are Sudanese people there, too?” asked the dad.

“Sure, in the south of the country. They are a bush country people; they know the woods and its ways of life. In the north, there aren’t any woods, because it borders on the Sahara Desert. It’s mostly large areas of sand with some grasses and small types of brush.”

“Here! You can sit down and have these sandwiches and an apple.” said his mother, as she brought a plate with the food. “The tea will be ready in a minute; the water just needs to set a little while.”

Paul sat down, and his father took a chair across the table from him. Paul said a prayer, and then began to eat a sandwich. His father watched him as he ate. After a few moments, his mother brought a cup of hot tea for the young man and one for his dad. She poured herself a cup of tea and sat down to enjoy her son.

“Is Jim still in radio?” asked Paul.

“He’ll be doing that stuff till the day he dies!” replied his father. “He’s maintenance engineer for RUNZ; does all the repair and troubleshooting.”

“Is Miriam still near Kimball?”

“Yes, they have four acres left; the Community farms the rest. Ernie teaches boys in the Agriculture Service Program,” explained his mother, “So, that way, he’s still into farming. He likes it.”

“Did they keep their house as part of their four acres?”

“Yes, and those two small machine sheds. They were close to the house and useful for Ernie. They included the orchard on the west side of the house, where they have those good apples,” said the father.

“The Community has the barn. Ernie and Miriam don’t need it; they just do a little gardening.” said his mom.

“Are Joe and Fred out east?”

“They’re not too far apart. Fred works somewhere between Washington and New Jersey,” said the mother, “And Joe is in New York.”

The three drank their tea, conversing, and enjoying their company.

Paul updated himself about his brothers and sisters, After they were all talked out, he leaned back in his chair and relaxed.

“I think I better get a nap. I haven’t had much sleep these last couple of days. When I was traveling; so many things to see. I want to listen to the election returns tonight. If I don’t get some sleep now, I’ll be too tired to stay awake.”

“Go upstairs and lie down. Throw one of those blankets over you, so you don’t catch cold,” advised his father. “I’ll turn the heat up.”

“Everything in your room is about the same as you left it,” said his mom, “If you pull the blinds, it will be dark enough to rest.”

“When do you want to be called?” asked his father.

“A quarter to ten.”

“Will that be early enough?” his mother asked.

“Sure!” replied his father,

“Well, I’ll see you later,” said Paul. “It’s good to be home again.”

His dad and mom smiled.

Paul walked upstairs to his old bedroom, sat down, took off his shoes and laid his light sweater on a chair. He noticed the walls were newly painted light green which covered a Bible quota-

tion, which he had copied, years ago, to remind him of the course he wanted to take in life.

He found a blanket, closed the blinds, and stretched out on the single bed. As he slipped beneath the blanket and closed his eyes, thoughts began to float through his mind, but he dismissed them and began to say a prayer. It started as a mixture of gratitude and resignation for what has happened, what he hoped would happen, and that, whatever would happen would be what God wanted to be. Before he had finished the prayer, he was fast asleep.

~ Chapter Fourteen ~

For Me and Thee

“Are you awake?” In a moment Paul was journeying out of a sleep paradise and saw his mother by his bedside.

He rose on his elbows, “Yes, mom, I’m awake.”

“You wanted to be called at a quarter to ten; that’s what it is now.”

“Okay, thanks.”

His mother left the room. Paul shut his eyes again and inhaled a deep breath to the bottom of his lungs, held it for a moment, and then slowly exhaled the sleep from his lungs. It seemed to energize him. He threw the blanket back, moved his legs and feet over the side of the bed onto the floor and sat up on the bed. He flexed his arms in a long stretch, twisting his upper torso at the same time. He inhaled and exhaled a few deep breaths and then, with a glance around the room, he was wide, awake.

He folded the blanket and put it at the foot of the bed. He slipped into his suit coat and put on his shoes. After his shoes were tied, he stood up and stroked his long hair backwards with his hands. He walked to the steps and went downstairs. At the kitchen sink, he drew some water and washed his face.

“Did you get a good rest?”

“Yes, mom.”

“Dad’s out by your place.” said his mom, “He took Tony along.”

“Where was Tony before? I meant to ask about him.”

“Oh, dad left him run earlier, this morning, and he didn’t come back until about ten minutes ago, just before Dad left for your place. He’ll be wild when he sees you.” smiled his mom.

Paul smiled, as he dried his face. He named the black curly-haired dog after his uncle, who liked to pet dogs.. This dog had been a great companion for Paul, a few years ago. Wherever

Paul was, the dog could usually be found.

“Want a cookie? They’re fresh; I just baked them.”

“Yes, I’ll try some.”

“Take a glass of tomato juice; It’s some that I canned last year.” His mother withdrew a bottle of juice from the refrigerator and poured a tall glass full of the thick, red juice.

“Thanks, mom.” With cookies in one hand, and the glass of juice in the other hand, Paul walked carefully to the living room. He set the glass on an end table. He walked to the TV set and turned it on. It reminded him of the set on which he had watched President Nesie propose the new plan to the nation.

In a moment, a little glimmer of light spread into a complete picture. Paul turned the volume up to hear the man pictured on the screen and then took a seat across the room. He turned a lamp on beside him, and took a drink of juice.

“We have the returns for many of the eastern provinces and will report them to you after the polls close in those areas having Western Sea Time. Seven minutes from now, the last polls will be closed, and we hope to bring you the results of the vote.” said the announcer.

“Overseas, there is news about a technology in the cold regions of Korea’s Islands, where people, for centuries, have derived a living from a form of food culture that is not well known by Americans. Residents of these islands have a system of cultivating gardens beneath the sea.

“The islands are off the coast of China. China contains the largest population of any nation on Earth. The people of these islands, as well as people from the mainland, harvest sea plants from the sea by a unique screening device.

“A sonic device is submerged in the sea, sending specific sounds of frequencies that promote the growth of certain plants during the growing season. At the time for harvesting the plants, certain frequencies are transmitted in the sea, which persuade animals to leave the area and not hamper the harvest process.

“After the harvest is finished, the frequencies that repelled the animals are shut off and replaced with the frequencies that encourage growth for plants and animals. The animals return to feed on the plants again. Without the animals, the plants would grow into thick mats and kill the plants. Without the plants, the animals wouldn’t survive. Their spawn sticks on the plants and soon feed on gelatin, which forms on blooms that in the spring.

“The Economy Department has planned to send researchers to the islands to learn their methods of seawater aquaculture. If the methods prove to be appropriate for us in fresh water lakes, the new food culture may be introduced, within a year.”

“You didn’t have any supper.” said Paul’s mother, as she brought a tray of food to him.

“Thanks.” said Paul, as he glanced at the blue dish of sauce. “Are those the huckleberries we grew three years ago?”

“Yes, there are still about fifteen quarts left in the fruit cellar.”

He tasted a spoonful of berries. “They’re good!”

“I think they are my favorite berry.” said his mom. “I could eat them twice a day.”

Paul nodded and dipped into the sauce and berries. He remembered how easy it was to raise the berries and how profusely the plants would bear. Few people around Heim Rapids were acquainted with or ever grew huckleberries. When the young man ordered his first seed for huckleberries, he was trying what local truck gardeners had not tried. His first crop was an impressive success.

“It is now eight o’clock in the west.” said a man on the TV. According to the regulation of the Election Division, we are now permitted to report the results of today’s voting. All of the votes have not yet been counted.

“We have some results from some of the provinces in the Eastern Sea time zone. Not many results are in yet, but we have a sampling, which might give us an idea, which way the vote might have gone.

“In New York, the vote from six hundred forty two out of seven hundred fourteen precincts, the vote to return to the political system is leading by nine thousand two hundred and sixteen votes.

“In Massachusetts, with four hundred seventy four out of five hundred thirty nine precincts, the political plan leads the Nesie plan by seven thousand, four hundred twenty two votes.

“Reporters in this area say that this seems to be the trend. In the southeast coastal states, the trend also seems to slightly favor a return to the political plan. We take you now to Neil Douglas in the city of Miami.”

“Thank you, Dale. Miami, in former days, was a boomtown with snowbird tourist trade from

the northern cities, during cold, northern winters. In recent years, it has become a health center, with the Community offering new types of therapy for stress. Former tourism companies want to restore the area as a vacation center but tourism depended on money, and you know the ending of that story.

“The vote returns have probably been influenced by voters who enjoyed advantages under the former political system. The tourism industry opposed the new plan, although they have restricted their opposition to vocal opinions. They have campaigned heavily with advertising during the pre-election days and their campaigners went door to door in this area several times, placing posters on telephone poles, trees, and walls of buildings. Bulletin boards advised the people to vote for the political plan.

“The efforts of political campaigners have been the big reason that this area has supported the return to the political plan. In the Miami district, only seven percent of the voters chose the Nesie plan. Although this pattern did not carry through in the rest of the state, the political plan was leading. So far, two hundred seventeen precincts have reported almost one hundred thousand votes in support for the political plan. It looks like a political plan victory here in Miami. I return you now to Dale Edwards in Chicago.”

“Thank you, Neal, for that report. We have word now from the center of the nation. We go to Charles Nogood in Kansas City, Nebraska.”

“Thank you, Dale. We are in the heart of the vast grain country. It has seen days when farmers lost their farms because of drought and depression, and days of prosperity during the peak of the war-years with cost plus income for agriculture production.

“One resident described it by saying that the days of the drought were the same as the days of prosperity. He said the real product that was marketed from the farms, during the drought was the erosion of the topsoil. Bad farming practices destroyed the fertility. Selling farmers on using chemical fertilizers made fast money, but they destroyed the soil and water of the land, doing it.

“This fellow said, during the war, farmers prospered with boom demand for grain and big income from bumper crops.

“But the war killed our farm sons on the battlefield; their blood was what we paid to obtain our prosperous income.

“The vote in Nebraska has been tending to favor the political plan by a one percent margin. Some observers believe the support for the political plan is from farmers who were forced to sell their land to the government and chose to be paid in cash. As it turned out the cash was useless.

Large agribusiness suitcase farmers had owned most of this grain country. An average farm was over five thousand acres. When the new plan reduced the holdings of these people to four-acre homesteads, they couldn't influence policies, as they formerly had been able to do.

"The most recent report we have from the precincts is that the political plan leads in one hundred eighty two out of two hundred fifty six, by a margin of less than three thousand votes. That is the situation in Kansas City. I return you now to Chicago and Dale Edwards."

"Thank you, Charles. We have word that the Director has issued a statement about five minutes ago. We have a correspondent in Washington, who was at the conference, when the statement was released. We now take you to David Chetley."

Paul was still eating huckleberry sauce. He took a drink of tea and continued to watch TV. He was intensely interested in the voting because he felt that it meant either the success of President Nesie's Management Privilege program or a road to future disaster.

The new plan so far has actually had a short life and grew under very adverse circumstances. Enemies were everywhere, at home and abroad when it started.

As Paul watched television, his disappointment increased. According to the reports, so far, Nesie's plan might not win the vote. The eastern states seemed to prefer the political plan.

It wasn't difficult for him to understand why these results were occurring there. That region had been the center of political power since the beginning of the nation. Aspirants to political power and its perks flocked to that region. It contained the vast majority of the population and had been the industrial center for two hundred years. But, Nesie's plan had achieved what no other system of economy ever achieved - economic and social justice.

Paul had always believed that people wanted a society, which provided social justice and economic abundance and would support a government that did that. Nesie's plan was beginning to do that. Yet, the results of the election, so far, seemed to indicate that many people were not willing to support that achievement.

"As we have just heard David Chetley report, the Director has announced that he will be ready to start the election of political representatives, if the political plan wins the vote. He has also said that he would be willing to advise any political leader if the political plan wins. David said that the Director indicated there would be no limit to the advice he would be willing to give during the transition. When asked about the hopes he had of seeing the new plan continue for another four years, the Director said that he had complete confidence that the new plan would succeed when all votes were in.

“So far, the votes have not indicated such a trend. Eastern states have been giving the political plan a consistent edge. If this pattern appears in the rest of the country, the money system that was rejected four years ago will return.

“As I look to the tabulation board, across the room, I notice that new numbers have come in for the north central states. Minneapolis is almost one third in, and the political plan is leading there, by almost thirteen hundred votes. North Dakota has about twenty five percent of its returns in now, with the political plan leading by seven hundred votes. Fargo shows forty percent of its votes with a half percent lead by the political plan.

“It will take some time before we will get the returns from the western states, since they have just closed about fifteen minutes ago.

“Charles, it struck me as interesting to hear what some observers have said.”

“From what region, Dale?”

“They were speaking as residents of the Mississippi Delta region. They said that the balance of the power in this vote would rest in the southwest provinces. These are the desert provinces, which have profited immensely from the new plan, during these past four years. There has been a huge influx of population in those provinces, a considerable portion of which is AmerAsian people, working and living in these reclamation projects, and they are expected to heavily vote in this election. Polls have shown that they totally support the Nesie plan and will vote to continue it.

“Another important element in this election will be the vote of native Americans in key southwestern and northwestern reservations. They have benefited, with the Nesie plan. Their leaders have urged their people to vote for extending Nesie’s plan.

“As a footnote, Dale, much of the increased supply of fresh produce for the nation is now coming from those provinces.”

“That’s right, Charles, The most predictable element in this election seems to be Servant men and women who are giving their contribution to the Community. Some observers think that these people will vote full support for the Management Privilege plan.

“They point to the increased enlistments of young people in some of the Reconstruction programs in the last two years. This, they say, is evidence that young people favor a de-emphasis on the military service. Almost two million Servants are in various programs. The Nesie plan could win the approval of most of those, now serving their contribution. If this is true, not only the young would vote for it, but their families would also support it, and that could swell sup-

port for Nesie's plan three or four times most present estimates.

"Parents of many of the Servants have already voted. It is not known whether those votes are providing the support, which Nesie's plan is receiving. The desert provinces and the cut over lands of the northwest contain many of these Servants, and they will vote! We are still waiting for voting results from that area."

Footsteps could be heard on the porch. Paul knew the peculiar rhythm of the footsteps to be those of his father. His heavy step seemed to pause slightly, followed by a softer step. The door opened, and Paul's dad entered the living room.

"How's it going? Are the politicians winning?" asked the dad, as he studied the television picture.

"So far." said Paul, with evident disappointment.

"Those big boys have been planning this moment all along." said the father, "I wouldn't be surprised if they bought the election."

"How could they do that?"

"They could buy off many voters, buy off the counters, the fellows that are in charge of the voting machines that do the counting of the ballots." explained his dad. "There are a lot of people who would still cheat for gold and silver."

"They would have to do it all over the country, though. That wouldn't work, it'd be too risky."

"You wouldn't need to do the whole country, just heavy population areas that have always displayed voting patterns opposing the corporate rich. Disqualify eligible voters of those groups on arbitrary grounds, using mumbo jumbo language that people can't understand. Trim or turn the margin of the opposition's vote." said his father, as he watched the television set, picturing the tabulation board with the returns.

The father removed his coat as he watched. Paul's mother entered the room. "Do you want a cup of tea?" she asked.

"You have some ready?" asked the father, as he looked up.

"Yes." she replied, moving toward the kitchen, expecting a yes.

"I'll take some. Bring some in for him, too." said the father

"I just had some." said Paul.

She fixed a tray with cookies, apples, the tea, and three cups. It was a large pot of tea and could easily spare a cup for her. She turned out the kitchen light and carried the tray to the living room.

"I didn't want all that," said the father, "Just the tea."

"You know you can eat some fresh cookies which I baked today. You always like apples; there's a knife to cut the apple." said the mother, as she poured tea into three cups. She took one cup and took a seat in an easy chair across the room. Paul took some cookies and a cup of tea and chose a chair along the wall.

"We have a report from one of the mountain provinces. It is only a small return from Big Stone province. Forty-two of three hundred and seventeen districts are in. It is almost a tie in the returns, with the political plan gaining a slight majority of sixty-three votes. This is a mining area and was expected to be unpredictable in its vote.

"Although many small miners did operate profitable businesses under the old plan of four years ago, the great majority of mine workers did not oppose the plan when the mines were put on a decreased output. They had much to gain from the new plan; they could work if they wanted to volunteer. Safer mining technology and working conditions interested many miners who liked the possibility to satisfy their curiosity by discovering what the earth below the surface had to offer.

"Miners now live as well under the Nesie plan as other workers, if not better. The historic, bitter antagonism, between mineworkers, and mine owners no longer exists because nobody and everybody owns the natural resources. Mining is a Volunteer process.

"Returns continue to come in to our election headquarters here in Chicago. We are gradually getting more complete returns from the eastern states. Parts of the states are almost completely in now. The northeastern provinces have over ninety percent of their votes in, and the contest seems to be getting closer.

"In New York state, with ninety two percent of the districts reporting, the political plan is leading by a slim majority of eight hundred votes. This is one of the closest races so far. New Jersey has almost eighty five percent of its districts reporting now. Results of a few of the other states are still not in sufficiently to make any predictions. The political plan leads in New Jersey by one hundred sixty three votes.

“I was speaking to my good friend, Jim Ryan, a few minutes ago.” said the announcer, as he turned away from the tabulation board. “He told me that we should remember that rural districts come in later than the metropolitan districts. This may mean that an influential vote change might occur when those votes come in.

“He also reminded me, that formerly, the rural vote was always highly predictable, but now, the great decentralization of large cities has occurred, that enabled city people to move to their four-acre homesteads all over the country. They will vote as rural residents this election. Those four-acre voters will most likely support Nesie who gave them their four-acre plots. Formerly, the so-called farm vote could be expected to vote a certain way, but even the farmers are on four-acre plots and may tune in to what makes the new four-acre people so happy.

“This rural vote has yet to be counted and may one way or the other be the decisive margin, when all votes are counted.”

Paul’s mother finished her tea and rose to take her cup to the kitchen. Paul went to the kitchen, too.

“Where’s a towel? I’ll help you wash the dishes, mom.”

“Oh, there aren’t many dishes.”

“I can help you.” insisted Paul.

“There’s a towel in the bottom drawer.” said his mother, as she ran water into the sink.

Paul opened the drawer and selected a blue-flowered towel and pushed the drawer shut again. His mother began to wash dishes.

“See how your dad’s doing.”

Paul laid the towel on the table and walked to the living room.

“Anything new?” he asked.

“About the same.” replied the father. He handed the tray to the young man, “There’s still some tea left in the pot.”

Paul carried the tray to the kitchen and set it on the table. His mother took the dishes, put them in the sink, washed them, and put them in the drying rack. Paul started to wipe a cup.

“Are you happy to be home?”

“Yes,” answered Paul.

“Will Nesié’s plan go in again?”

“I don’t know.” He picked up another cup and started to wipe it. “The way it looks now, they’re going to throw it out.”

“Will it be better, if the other system goes in?”

“Worse!” said Paul. “I don’t see how it can be good. The same evils we had before will probably come back with money ruling the system the way the crooks and their politicians want. When politicians are running for office, it’ll mean that same old corruption again.”

“Do you think Fred Martins will run for office again?” she asked, wiping the tabletop with a dry cloth.

“I don’t think so. If they’d have men like him it wouldn’t be so bad to have a political system, but they won’t have guys like him getting into office. I doubt that Martins would even try to run.”

“You can put that pan on the shelf by those pots.” said his mom. “If you want to sweep the floor, the broom is in the wash room.”

Paul hung his dishtowel on the dry rack. He found the broom where his mother had said it would be.

“It’s getting late,” said his mother, “I’m tired. I think I’ll go to bed. When you finish sweeping, put the broom back and close the door tightly, so the cold air doesn’t come in.”

“You’re not going to watch the returns?” Paul asked.

“I washed clothes today, I’m tired, not much interested in the returns. I’ll find out what happened tomorrow.” She yawned after the last word.

“Okay. I’ll see you in the morning, mom.”

“Yes,” she said and walked out of the kitchen.

Paul finished sweeping and emptied the dustpan in a wastebasket. He put the broom and dustpan in the washroom, switched off the light, and closed the door.

As he entered the living room, his dad leaned back in his chair.

“Those politicians are going to win, I believe.” said the father.

Paul glanced at the TV set and walked to a chair. He sat down and listened to his father speak.

“The people are like a bunch of sheep. If someone gives them a little gab, they fall for it. They don’t think!”

“It was a mistake to put those tests in so soon,” said his dad, “When they started those tests, only the best educated people could succeed in the tests. People with the best education had rich parents and all kinds of schooling. They were bound to get the jobs and bring the interests of their fathers to power through them.”

“It would have been different, if tests started after, say ten years or even four, five years. The education system that they started now, could then have trained the children of the poor, as well as the children of the rich. The real value of the test would then show itself; the young with the best brains and motives would have got the jobs instead of the ones with the best education.”

Paul didn’t say anything. What his father had said was probably true. He now regretted that he didn’t think about it when he wrote his ideas to Nesie five years ago. If Nesie would have had that idea, a better system could have been used.

“They talk about dictators. They don’t need any dictators. The rich guys can rule the people with a few slices of bread. continued the dad, “What they need is some direct action.”

“Like what?”

“Like what Nesie tried and did. If this time it doesn’t work out, then somebody needs to do it another time. Whatever happens, Nesie showed this time that it is possible to build a government and change society on the meaning of those paragraphs in the Declaration.”

Paul was profoundly speechless. His father continued watching television give election results. Paul was feeling glum that the outcome might be what the votes were suggesting.

Maybe it was foolish, but he had expected the people to overwhelm the election with a vote of confidence in the new plan. So far, there was no such vote. The new plan was even slightly behind. The announcer, talking for the past half hour inferred that the old political system was almost a certainty to win.

“I think I’ll go to bed, too,” said his father, “The returns won’t be in until tomorrow, anyhow, and I’ll pray something happens to change it. The way it looks, the Almighty will let this alone.”

“Maybe, when the desert provinces come in, it’ll change things,” encouraged Paul, “A few of the returns from that area might show that more voters favor the new plan.”

“Yes, but the big industrial cities of the east have always held the power. Maybe, the people who moved out of the cities in the last three years and have pieces of land, will save it.” analyzed his father, rising from the chair and opening his shirt. Slowly, he walked across the room, still watching the TV screen.

“I notice that people aren’t voting as much as usual in the eastern provinces,” said Paul. “Take New York for example. There used to be about nine million voters in that area. Yet, those tabulations on the board show only about four million votes with ninety percent of the returns counted. What happened to all the other people? Did they move out west or to the desert states?”

“Did they move to the mountain states? Many city people have dreamed of having a ranch at the foot of a mountain. How many of their sons or daughters became Volunteers and will have voted in other states with reconstruction areas?”

“Yes, that’s what the announcer said when you were in the kitchen,” said his father, “They were trying to find records of the Economy Department to see how the Standard of Living was distributed lately, to learn if there was a big shift in the population to the west and other states.”

The father and son watched the announcer report more returns. His dad launched a big yawn, stretching his arms out, then bending his hands and forearms back to his head.

“I’m going to bed, you should get some sleep, too. I wouldn’t stay up too late, if I were you.” said his dad.

“Okay, dad. Good night!”

His father walked up the front hall to his bedroom. The announcer was getting tired, too. A man brought him a glass of water, and he also looked tired.

There were lots of numbers in that election headquarters. On one wall was the huge board, which contained running totals as they came in. Two men were tending to the task of upgrading the posted results as new returns came in. In the background, a number of telephone operators were receiving calls and calling out results to the two men at the board.

Paul yawned as he watched. He would be well satisfied if Nesie's plan won by a scant margin. Almost half of the states were in, and the political capitalism plan still held the lead. The lead had shrunk, but it was in the lead.

Paul thought of the saying, "Gone the way of all flesh." He didn't want to believe that the saying pertained to the future of humanity. He wanted to believe that people could improve their lives. "That proverb is only words," he thought to himself, "It's easy to say words; it doesn't mean they tell the truth."

The announcer continued to read reports. "Eighty four percent of the vote in Minnesota is now in. The political plan is losing by a slim margin of only thirty-nine votes."

"Wow!" he thought, "Can you believe that? I guess that shows that each vote does count or should count."

This news lifted the young man's spirit a little. At least, his native state wasn't completely wrong, he thought. The remaining sixteen percent of the vote might increase the vote in favor of Nesie's plan.

With this bit of news, his mind drifted a little to thoughts of Africa, and how he enjoyed the work he had done the past two years. He thought of Andy and Doris and the rest of the missionaries who were still there, working out the plans for bettering Sudan. It was pleasant to think about, especially for him, as tired as he was.

He smiled as he thought of his experience among the Sudanese people with their customs, charm, and good sense of humor. He remembered the dogs of the young children, how they followed the youngsters wherever they went, whether it was swimming or climbing the high hills.

As he was smiling about what he was remembering, his eyes gradually closed with tiredness. He was drifting away from the voice of the announcer; it didn't convey any news to him anymore, as he sank into sleep.

"I know it's late for many of our viewers, but stay with us, we are seeing a possible movement." said the announcer, as the young man began to take the long, slow breaths of deeper sleep.

"The latest returns are coming in now from the far west and are being posted on the big board. they show that ..."

The End

