

## **Camphill Not Service Provider - Community Across the Threshold**

Not so long after I arrived in the Camphill North American Region I participated in a conference on the theme of Social Threefolding. I was handed a paper from 1956 written by a German Waldorf School teacher. The article was entitled "Republican Not Democrat". I remember feeling at the time, just after President Obama was elected, that it was paradoxical to be confronted with a title like that. All of this however had the intended effect of making me read the document. What I was presented with was a clear perspective, originating from Steiner's Course for Teachers, that a transparently selected hierarchy was the appropriate way to administer an organization.

Through the next phase of my life in the USA in Camphill Soltane, interestingly the whole of the Obama years, I would often bring up this paper when discussing decision making. I thought that as we were an organization, like a school, that we too should be administered not by a consensus group process but by a duly appointed executive.

This struggle was clearly one that had been going on in Waldorf schools and other anthroposophical organizations for decades and it was still being discussed in a Social Threefolding conference in North America in 2008.

At the macro level the question of executive versus group process became one of the central struggles of the Obama era - the President versus Congress. At the micro level the struggle was between the administration of a service provider by an executive selected by a Board of Directors governed by the organization's constitution and the community being run by a group process of the senior coworker circle.

At all levels people who were not in the executive role wanted to be involved in all kinds of decisions relating to executive actions. There were also people who were worried about what could happen if a person had executive power who was destructive - a legitimate concern we would find out later at the macro level.

It was truly at the heart of the dilemma of Camphill that it was acting as a service provider.

Interestingly enough it was only after Brexit, Botton and the shocking end of the Obama presidency that I began to see a way towards peace and harmony beyond the Camphill/service provider conflict.

Camphill had almost lived an entire lifetime. Eleven 7 year cycles between 1940 and 2017 (77 years). The life of Camphill reached a point of decisive metamorphosis in the mid-twenty teens at the same time as a denouement occurred in the Botton crisis. Camphill was crossing the threshold.

Social Threefolding was, after all, the answer. It was an answer that had been there all along but which was hidden in the weeds of interpersonal conflict, and the ideological conflicts about how supports for adults with intellectual disabilities and autism should be provided.

It became clear to me that the specific nature of the threefold answer was in *separation*. Separation was usually the answer - it was the Greek etymological root of the word crisis. But separation was marked often by a person leaving a relationship or a place, either of their own choice or unwillingly. Sometimes separation was marked by someone dying. Many people who lived in Camphill communities however were not always afforded the opportunity to choose to come or go. For some people if private fees were paid or if financial support was available separation was not a topic of discussion. Other people just

could not afford to leave. If separation, or crisis, was going to happen for some people in Camphill it was going to have to be something bigger than just themselves.

Before finding Camphill I was a corporate lawyer. Corporate in the sense that I specialized in the legal framework of certain kinds of collective action. Typically one could assume that the state organizes rights in the community and that corporations were how collective resources and enterprises were organized. As for spiritual life it was a question how collective action was even relevant. A church? I had never fully come up with an answer to this and other related conundrums after having transitioned from corporate lawyer to Camphill coworker.

I had these two things going on in my mind:

'The wellbeing of a community of people working together will be the greater, the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of his work, i.e. the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow-workers, the more his own needs are satisfied, not out of his own work but out of the work done by others'.

"At the beginning of culture, humanity strives to create social arrangements in which the interests of the individual are sacrificed for the interests of the whole. Later developments lead to a gradual freeing of the individual from the interests of the community and to an unfolding of individual needs and capacities."

At Soltane we had been going through a period of transformation where the choice of each individual was becoming a central principle in decision making in general. Much furore had raged on during this time as this movement from a certain perspective seemed to pitch the individual against the community. A prevalent perspective was that if each individual wanted something different then at long last we may discover that we were just a collection of people with different values, different ideas of right and wrong and different ideas of what to do. People could choose to watch television, choose not to go to cultural events, choose to eat junk food. Some people thought this was the thin end of the wedge or even the end of everything. Some other people thought - bring it on!

One day I went running. It was just after it became clear who would be the next "leader" of the free world. (I could write another whole article about how the crisis of this event has actually helped bring the possibility of genuine social renewal closer). I was reflecting on the name "Soltane". It was the place of sanctuary in the Parzival story where Herzeloide brought the youngster to be protected from the slings and arrows of the world at large - so that he could develop in peace.

Soltane the place had a purpose of being a sanctuary away from the disturbances that could impact personal development. But the individual, in the story Parzival, could have another purpose. Parzival needed to be free, to make choices, to fail, to win, to be human.

So it came to me as my heart rate was cruising to 150 beats per minute that the individual, the free spirit, needed to be supported by an organization - as much as the community needed to be supported by an organization - as much as the resources and enterprises needed to be supported by an organization.

I ran home and registered [www.parzival.com](http://www.parzival.com).

Around 9 months later Parzival as a person directed service provider was born. It was an entity with a mission to support the “gradual freeing of the individual from the interests of the community and to an unfolding of individual needs and capacities”.

But what about the “wellbeing of a community of people working together”?

If Camphill was not to be identified as a service provider then what was it?

For many years the circle of senior coworkers at Soltane had been seen as the heart of Soltane. In the last decade though it could be asked that if the blood drives the heart not the heart the blood then how was the heart be composed?

The real fact is that all that happens in the moral life and all that happens physically in the world are brought together precisely in the human heart. These two, the moral and the physical, which run so independently and yet side by side for modern consciousness today, are found in real union when we learn to understand all the configurations of the human heart. (Steiner - “The Human Heart”)

This brings to mind the New Testament (Matthew 22:21) where a coin is considered and it is said “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”.

It was becoming clear to me that Soltane had been like a coin with three surfaces: Heads, tails and the edge - the individual, the other and the community - I, thou, we.

What would be the configuration of the heart of the transformed *Camphill* Soltane?

At the Camphill Dialogue held at Soltane in 2014 I had, quoting David Bohm “On Dialogue”, warned against “destructive misinformation” playing a part in the evolution of Camphill. I brought this up at the time of the crisis of Botton. (See Camphill Correspondence Fall 2014) My point was that when “sides” get polarized and human beings do not dialogue, truth is the first victim. Anyone who has followed the US political situation and the advent of “fake news” (even to the extent that “fake news” is now “fake news”) ought to now understand this phenomenon. There was a strong feeling in 2014 of polarization. On a personal note I received my first hate mail - including in the form of a card sent to me on the occasion of the birth of my daughter - with cut out newspaper letters... Arguably polarization is what happens when appropriate separation does not happen.

By the time that I sat in the wings of the Camphill Dialogue in Aberdeen in 2017 with my 3 year old, after wandering around and meeting donkeys and laying in the sun on the slopes beneath Camphill House I felt as if there was a new beginning. I sensed that the polarization had transformed. Crisis had led to “Things Fall Apart”.

I had heard that in the fall out from the Botton crisis coworkers had formed a new community, the Esk Valley Camphill Community, and that they were working with an entirely different provider agency, the Avalon Group. It seemed to me that the crisis and transformation of the composite community/provider model which had been so dramatic was leading to different kinds of changes across continents. But there was one common theme - Camphill *not* service provider.

As the heart of the Soltane community the senior coworker group had been dysfunctional. The moral and the physical were not working independently and side by side they were all mixed up and palpitating in either fear or desire.

The lifeblood of the community was all the proceeds of the work all the human beings in the community created. This blood would activate and form the substance of the heart. As a response to the polarization of the world we needed to be all of us stronger together - apart.

The remnants of the senior coworker group at Soltane met through the summer of 2017 and formed the Soltane Association with the following at its heart:

1. The Association envisions a world where people of diverse backgrounds and abilities find commonality to work toward a positive future for the planet.
2. The mission of the Association shall be to cultivate community without borders where people can learn from each other and experience continual growth for the betterment of the world.
3. The Association achieves its mission through
  - a. Opportunities for transformative lifelong learning and creative endeavor
  - b. Ecological stewardship
  - c. Community-based social enterprises
4. The values of the Association are:
  - a. Intentional Gladness
  - b. Compassionate Interest
  - c. Acquired Enthusiasm
5. The founding of the Association is inspired by Anthroposophy and the Camphill Community.

To be a full member of the Soltane Association you needed to pay your dues each year in time bank dollars. In other words each free individual had to choose to transparently “make over” the proceeds of their work for the wellbeing of the community.

On Michaelmas 2017 the board of Camphill Soltane approved that the leadership of the Soltane Association would automatically be members of the Camphill Soltane Board. Finally members of the board governing the resources would be chosen by everyone committed to the purposes of the community, and who could demonstrate that commitment by engaging transparently in the work of the community.

Camphill Soltane had now evolved into a distinctly threefold organism. The Soltane Association, a rights sphere organ where everyone in the community had an *equal* voice. Camphill Soltane Inc, which incubated and operated enterprises and stewarded community resources according to the principle of *brotherhood*. Parzival where the individual was supported to be *free* to follow his or own her karmic destiny.

### **Footnote - Economic Community and the Fundamental Social Law**

When I first joined the economic community in a Camphill I was told by someone who had been a Camphill coworker for some time that I may notice that the people in the economic community who seemed to use the most resources never “asked” for any money and no one gave anyone anything. I found that difficult to understand at the time. I found out over 20 years of being in an economic community that in my experience everyone just received what they needed without any question and it was not once in that whole time that I experienced that someone openly offered not to receive something in order to support someone else’s needs. It was a beautiful theory which one always assumed some awesome people somewhere else in a Camphill galaxy far far away were really practicing. Here at home on the other hand it was just like getting a salary except a salary people set themselves changing whenever they decided they needed more.

It has long been my belief that the “communitization” principle of resource allocation in enterprises, including enterprises where payment is received for providing services to other individuals, led to a significant disconnect between the economic exchange in the enterprise and the work needed to be performed for that exchange to occur. Whenever I tried to discuss this point however the fundamental social law was brought up: “the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of his work, i.e. the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow-workers, the more his own needs are satisfied, not out of his own work but out of the work done by others”. But what is missing, I believe I later started to truly understand is that one needs to actually take real stock of the “proceeds” of work. If someone is willing to make over \$5 for a loaf of bread then that is the proceeds of that work - not the \$50 someone who does that work needs. That other \$45 has to actually be made over by someone else who has \$45 from the proceeds of their work - whatever that might be. But what I was seeing was that no one knew what the proceeds of their work were, they only knew their needs and maybe the needs of others - and there was no making over from one person to another but rather funds were taken from a large organizational account the proceeds of what work, if it was even related to work at all, was very uncertain.

What was needed was two things. Firstly a economically transparent and responsibly managed enterprise, whether it be a farm, a cafe, or a service provider. Secondly a vehicle whereby people could make over the proceeds of their work to others.

The first became Camphill Soltane Inc. The second was the Soltane Association which incorporated a time bank where members could give and receive based on their energy and their needs.

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