

*This thinksheet is a letter to Millard Fuller, God's agent in the creation of "Habitat for Humanity"--and former immediate successor, as director of Koinonia, Americus GA, of a fellow-student of mine, Koinonia founder Clarence Jordan.*

Millard, here are a few random notes tangential to "Habitat for Humanity":

1. Since we built our own house recently, I'm aware of technical and popular architectural jargon. Walls have two "skins," both of which you can see, but not at once: an "inner skin" and an "outer skin." Both skins, together with the whole dwelling, provide (1) protection and (2) control-space for solitude/society--as our epi/hypo-dermis provide (1) protection and (2) control-space for internal physical functions. In addition to these four skins, the local/larger human communities are concentric layers of skin ambiguously related to the values of protection and control. In this musing, you see some of my reasons for associating the two words of this thinksheet's title. (I'm wellknown for my humorous word "skinbag" for person.)

2. A fundamental of modern architecture is the bromide "Every building makes a statement." Since we had freedom to design, build, and furnish our house, it says concretely who Loree and I are, what we sing about, what we long for for ourselves and for others. And its day-by-day interior/exterior condition signals our inner/outer condition and also influences that condition.

3. Our current communal-habitat, the little Christian community called Craigville, is kept at least in fair inner/outer condition by (1) devotion to God, (2) interpersonal concern, and (3) voluntary contributions of time/skill (e.g., Loree being the current chair, and I serving on various committies). Because "cleanliness is next to godliness," we see anything busted and anything scattered as enemies: order promotes shalom, disorder depresses the personal spirit and the community spirit. I'm thrilled with Harvard's Jas.Q.Wilson's recent THINKING ABOUT CRIME, and consider it so pertinent to you and me that I'm capsuling here: (1) Breaking windows being fun, it's done wherever two conditions are met: (a) one broken window is left unrepaired, and (b) stonethrowers conclude that, since nobody cares else the window would have been repaired, they can break the rest of the windows with impunity. Cp. my statement that only the first Jew murdered by Hitler was a crime: the others were only a matter of state policy. Or this: Only the first act of vandalism is a crime: what follows is only a matter of "having fun." Or this: Only the first act of adultery is a sin: from then on its recreational sex or the need for "someone who really understands me." (2) Community controls can no more be exclusively in police hands than (my analogy) can ministry be exclusively in clergy hands. (3) The positive function of police is to maintain the public tranquility against destabilizing behavior, viz., such disorder as promotes crime rather than the public welfare. I add: The occasional need to disrupt in the interest of a higher order --e.g., M.L.King,Jr.--is the exception that tests, but does not disprove, this rule. (4) When the positive police function is insufficient to prevent legal but disruptive and demoralizing behavior from slipping into crime, the police shift to their negative function, viz., crime-fighting. The social atmosphere becomes quasimilitary,\* and the distinction between police and military wears thin; society is at war with itself, a civil war with the populace as anxious hostage. (5) This battlefield atmosphere persists in a society that takes the individual more seriously than it does the community: (Wilson) "The law defines *my* rights, punishes *his* behavior, and is applied by *that* officer because of *this* harm. We assume, in thinking this way, that what is good for the individual is good for the community." "Victimless" crimes now mean crimes in which individuals are not victims--but, says Wilson, society is! Communities, as well as individuals, have rights; and public drunkenness, street prostitution, and pornographic displays can more quickly destroy a community than can professional burglars or even muggers. (Medical analogy for the two police functions: Fostering health is more important than treating illness.) I add a fascinating alliance of two forces that put the collective above the individual: traditional American society, and "affirmative action."

\*Cf. the massive popularity of TV's current "Hill Street Blues" with its multilayered social chaos.