

**THE CHANGING FACE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
IN THE NORTH:**

**FROM THE POWER PARADIGM
TO THE
SPIRIT PARADIGM**

AN ESSAY

By

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PROLOGUE

Because it is so different from the rest of Canada, the Northwest Territories would not seem to be a good place to study how people come together to develop their communities. But it is. And it is the differences, along with some of the similarities, that make it a natural laboratory for the study of community development.

Most Canadians live in a temperate climate (by our standards at least), huddled together in cities of various sizes, close to the American border, where the urban environment grows nature in the form of parks, front lawns and vegetable gardens in the back yard.

Most of us northerners live in an arctic climate zone, scattered about in sixty or so small communities, within a geographic area that is roughly 38% of the landmass of Canada--about the size of the subcontinent of India. In our wilderness environment, nature grows small towns and communities close to those places where it offers up its precious minerals, and allows the fish to gather in the spring, and where, for thousands of years, it has taught the caribou to migrate. There are, by the way, many more caribou than there are people. With a population of only 60,000, we could all fit nicely into Vancouver's BC Place stadium to watch a football game--if we were so inclined.

And yet, despite the significant differences between ourselves and other Canadians, we have much in common with our neighbours to the south.

Through the televisions in our living rooms we are linked to the beeping stars passing overhead and we have become, with our fellow Canadians, part of the global village. Our school children, like their school children, regularly set out on shamanic journeys through the magic of the Internet to visit strange lands and commune with people of other kingdoms. Our economy is tied to their economy. When Ottawa sneezes, we catch cold.

Our northern communities face many of the same problems that confront Canadians elsewhere--especially those in disadvantaged

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parts of the country: the alcohol abuse, the family violence, the illiteracy, the lack of skills needed to get jobs, the lack of employment opportunities. And, like people everywhere, we have our strengths, our innate skills and capacities, our belief in our cultures and traditions and our hope in the land we inhabit.

Like some communities elsewhere we are struggling through the "new realities". The settlement of land claims, the rise of self-government within the aboriginal communities, government downsizing, the transfer of responsibility for services to communities, fiscal restraint, constant reorganization of government departments, continuous efforts, many of them futile, to encourage new kinds of economic growth, division of the Northwest Territories--these are the winds of change, blowing across our landscape, obliterating the traditional landmarks and leaving us on our own to create a new path.

The story of community development in the North is a case history chocked full of learning experiences about what to do and what not to do. While our journey is our own, there are three things about our story that will be of particular interest to those who are making similar journeys in other rural areas and within our urban areas and inner cities.

Ours is a story of very rapid change. Only five decades ago many of our people still lived in snow houses and lived a life style that was much closer to that of their ancient ancestors than it is to the lifestyle they live now. They have lived through community development experiences in fifty years that it took most other inhabitants of Canada two centuries to experience. What we have here is community development in fast-forward. The lessons are here to be learned, but you can't blink.

Ours is a story of radical change. The division of the Northwest Territories in 1999 and the creation of two new territories has offered the peoples of the north opportunities for institution building that are unparalleled in this century. In many ways they are starting from scratch--having to come to grips with the meaning of governance, and re-think those values that are essential if people are to live together in a civil society. Our experiences--the questions we are using to probe our institution building--can provide significant insights to others.

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Ours is a story of cultural change. As we will see throughout this essay, the various aspects of community building are bringing together people from different cultures--and every step of the journey is a cultural step. Defining self-government, selecting decisions making mechanisms, agreeing on political representations, recognizing traditions, deciding on what languages to use, trying to find a common ground between western science and traditional knowledge--every step of the way requires some kind of cultural adaptation and modification. Our experience is relevant to other Canadians because, so much of community development occurs in an effort to help "visible minorities" find their place--and the place of their cultures-- within the Canadian cultural mosaic.

In a word, what we have in the Northwest Territories today is community development on a grand scale. We are creating a New North and we need to rethink all aspects of what we are doing. And the starting point is to re-think what we mean by community development.

Every year the Federal Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories are spending millions of dollars trying to develop northern communities. While these efforts may improve some services, they fail to develop communities. They don't recognize the changing nature of communities and the need for a more suitable framework for community development.

Part One of this essay describes the current paradigm for community development--the Power Paradigm. It emphasizes the acquiring of power, sees development primarily in terms of economic development and control of services, and attempts to develop communities through the development of services. It fails to deal adequately with social issues and the changing political realities--especially the settlement of land claims and the rise of self-government. There is need for a paradigm shift.

Part Two presents a new paradigm for community development--the Spirit Paradigm. It sees the development of healthy communities as the ultimate purpose of community development. It focuses upon the strengthening primary relationships and building the capacity within northern communities to develop themselves.

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Part Three--Making the Paradigm Shift--suggests ways and means to introduce a more suitable framework for community development by moving from the Power Paradigm to the Spirit Paradigm.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET

For most of the last three decades, the concept of "community development " has been living under a cloud in the Northwest Territories. The term itself, particularly in government circles, has conjured up images of radicalism, and suspicion--and usually a hostile response. It is only recently, within the past few years, that community development (which I will hereafter refer to as CD) has come out of the closet. Today, we find communities all across the North that are "into" CD. But the future ain't what it used to be, and neither is community development.

For those of us who learned our community development skills in Canadian and American cities during the 1960s and 1970s, community development is all about power. Back then, power meant political power, economic power, the power of self-determination. Someone else had it--municipal, provincial or state governments, or the various power elites--and someone else, usually the people we worked for, wanted it. So the "have-nots" learned to adopt the tactics of the racial integration movement, the labour movement, and the peace movement and started pounding on doors and breaking down walls. Martin Luther King and Malcom X were our heroes, and Saul Alinski was our teacher.

We have now entered a new era in the North: the era of land claim settlements and self-government; the era of government restraint, decentralization, and what has come to be known in the North as "community empowerment". As I will show in this essay, in this new era the emphasis has shifted from building communities to *building community*; from getting power to *knowing how to use it*; from developing service structures and businesses to developing *the relationships* that must be the foundation for services and businesses; from developing programs to *developing people*. This new era requires a new way of thinking about CD. Two groups in particular need a new way of thinking about CD: government and the aboriginal leadership.

THE PLAYERS: GOVERNMENT AND THE ABORIGINAL LEADERSHIP

Government has played the key role in northern community development since the mid 1950's. Now its role is changing and changing rapidly--but it still controls much of the funding and determines how development will take place. Unfortunately, many civil servants (but not all) are caught in a time warp. They are trying to do what they have always done and they are always getting what they always got--communities with more services and less development. *The basic assumption of the government approach to CD is that you develop communities through the development of services.*

The problem for the aboriginal leaders is different but in some ways similar. In terms of power, they have moved to the front of the bus. They are in the driver's seat. But they have come to the proverbial fork in the road. In one direction lies the familiar path--the government approach of community development through service development based upon imported models. In the other direction lies the unfamiliar path of self-government, integrating traditional and modern approaches, but with very few models. There is a strong temptation on the part of aboriginal leaders to adopt the community-development-through-service-development approach of the civil servants. Why? Because it seems to give them power and it is familiar to them. They reason: "Our people may not like these services, but they are familiar services, and it is our native staff who will be delivering them. Maybe we should take the services and try to change them."

What both groups need is a new way of thinking about CD. This requires a new conceptual paradigm that will allow them to examine their existing assumptions about CD and formulate a new set of assumptions. Providing such a paradigm is the purpose of this essay.

Before proceeding, however, I want to pause for a moment to explain two concepts (already quite familiar to some readers) that are essential to this essay: paradigm and paradigm shift.

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PARADIGM AND PARADIGM SHIFT

In his classic work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*,¹ Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of paradigm and the related concept of paradigm shift.

A paradigm is a set of assumptions, models, rules and regulations that describe boundaries and tell us how to act and be successful within those boundaries.

Kuhn noted that scientists unconsciously adopt a certain paradigm to explain reality. In the case of modern science, the dominant paradigm for the last several hundred years was the paradigm developed by the physics of Galileo and Newton, the reasoning of Descartes, and the scientific method of Francis Bacon.

A paradigm is very useful and is, in many ways, an indispensable tool. It provides a foundation or framework for a group of people--in this case members of the scientific community--who want to do constructive work and communicate with one another. Without the paradigm they would have no common concepts or language--and they would have to continually go back and explain every little detail of their work. Paradigms are necessary to make any consistent progress. .

However, from time to time, people begin to do work, or discover problems that the paradigm doesn't seem to answer. They find themselves working "out beyond the boundaries". If this keeps happening, and happens often enough, we experience a paradigm shift. The old framework begins to break down. The new one has not yet formed, and there is a period of chaos. According to Kuhn, this is what happened when Albert Einstein came along and he and his colleagues began talking about quantum physics and relativity theory. The old paradigm began to break down and there was a period of confusion.

Unfortunately, as Kuhn points out, most people don't notice their own paradigms. They simply accept them--take them for granted as "the way things are". Because of this, they don't realize that they must make a shift and adopt another paradigm to deal with a changing

¹ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*: Chicago, University of Chicago press, 1970.

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situation and a new world. Instead, they get locked in their old ways of doing things and try to "make them work".

This is what is happening today in the world of CD in the North. We have failed to notice the transitions that are taking place in people's lives, the changing nature of community itself, and the need for new ways of developing communities. So we reach into our Power Paradigm tool kit for techniques and approaches--and we try to "force the river". But this won't work, for reasons that we will soon discover.

WHAT'S AT STAKE HERE?

It is not a matter of an intellectual exercise--replacing one intellectual construct with another. Every year northern governments and aboriginal organizations are spending millions of dollars trying to develop communities. Unfortunately, as I intend to show in the first part of this essay, much of that money is wasted. The problem is not a problem of fraud or even mismanagement.

It is a problem of thinking. Northern leaders--both government leaders and aboriginal leaders-- have not thought through the assumptions they are making about how to develop communities.

They are assuming, for example, that the real problem is a lack of power. Once communities receive power--or manage to wrestle it from someone else--they will have the wherewithal to develop themselves. But they are quickly discovering that there is a difference between having power and having the ability to address the underlying social problems in the community.

They are assuming that the major reason for the lack of development is the lack of an economic base in most communities. So the best approach should be one of helping even the most remote communities start businesses and find jobs. But it has become increasingly apparent that most remote communities will never have a viable economic base.² If we identify CD almost exclusively with economic

² They have very small populations, they are too far from markets, transportation costs are too high, they lack support services required by businesses, they have difficulty attracting skilled staff, there are not enough employment opportunities.

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development, then there is really no reason to get involved in community development in small communities.

They are assuming that the best way and the quickest way of developing communities is to turn over services to them. Service development and delivery becomes the vehicle for CD. But we often end up with the same services, with the same kinds of problems and constraints, being provided by a different group of people. We develop the service systems but we don't help communities develop themselves.

The excuse is often given that we don't have the time to re-think the nature of CD. Things are happening quickly. We have a "window of opportunity" that might snap shut if we don't take advantage of the existing options. ("The policy may change so you must act quickly." ... "Money is on a first-come first-serve basis" ... "You have to get your funding requests in to meet this year's budget deadlines.")

But there is another viewpoint. If we don't re-think the nature of what we are doing, if we don't test the assumptions that are guiding our development strategies, we will continue to waste precious resources, frustrate our efforts at real development and get locked into something that we never wanted in the first place. To quote the Chinese proverb: "If we don't change directions, we are going to end up where we are headed".

To suggest that we need to change direction is not to indicate that everything that is being done in the name of CD is wrong. There are many sincere people working long hard hours travelling down a road for which there is no road map. But there is now ample evidence to demonstrate that what we are trying to do isn't working--at least in terms of community development. We have come to that critical place and time in the history of the North where the decisions that are made now will have consequences for generations to come. There is no "quick fix". We have to stop and re-think what we are doing. The stakes are very high.

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PART ONE: THE POWER PARADIGM

Part One begins with a brief discussion of how communities have traditionally developed themselves--or have been developed--in the North. Next comes a discussion of CD as a tool. From there we look at CD as it is presently being practiced. The section concludes with a summary.

THE THREE ERAS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

How have communities traditionally developed themselves, or been developed, in the North? The answer depends upon what period of time we are talking about. We can identify three distinct eras of northern development, each one with its own CD approach: life on the land, life in settlements and the new era into which we are moving--life in community.

LIFE ON THE LAND

From time immemorial up until quite early in this century, the vast majority of northerners lived on the land. They lived together in camps, they shared a nomadic existence as hunter-gatherers, and they had little day to day contact with outsiders.

In terms of community life there were two dominant relationships. The relationship of people with the land--upon which they depended for their sustenance and survival--and their relationships with one another, as members of family groupings (and, to a lesser extent, as members of bands or tribes). The two relationships were intimately linked. Without the land and the wildlife as a source of food, clothing and housing, there was no survival. But survival also depended upon the assistance of one's family members to help harvest the natural resources and provide support and protection

During this period aboriginal people had contact with outsiders. There was a thriving fur trade in parts of the North, the Yukon had its gold rush, the aeroplane was beginning to open up the North, and southern companies were moving in to develop natural resources. There were also the missionaries. Toward the end of the last century the

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mainstream Roman Catholic and Protestant churches sent missionaries to the North to proselytise. They travelled from camp to camp preaching and holding services.

During this era, then, CD was very much about maintaining the essential relationships--with the land and with the members of one's family or tribal group. Though the aboriginal peoples had contact with outsiders, the outsiders had a very limited impact on their traditional way of life.

LIFE IN THE SETTLEMENTS

In the 1940s and 1950s, concerned with the problems of starvation and disease, Ottawa began to gather people together in settlements. Most northern peoples gave up their nomadic existence, though they tried their best to maintain their ties with the land.

Settlement life brought many benefits to northern people. They now had houses, a source of income through welfare to tide them through difficult times, medical services and schools for their children. But settlement life was a mixed blessing. Cut off from the land, they became dependent upon government and they began to experience significant social problems. Also, they found their culture, language and traditions--which had been based upon the land--under siege.

In terms of CD, the people in settlements did not develop themselves. They "were developed" by others.

The government played the dominant role. The federal government created bands under the Indian Act. Leadership passed from the elders and traditional leaders to the newly elected band council members. In addition, the federal government provided policing through the RCMP, schools, nursing stations and treatment centres in the South to deal with tuberculosis and other diseases.

In the last two decades the territorial government has also played a dominant role in settlement life. It has taken over from the federal government the delivery of most day to day services. It

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has played the key role in the development of municipal government, which it is now using in many communities as a base for the transfer of services.

The Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches also played a significant role in CD. Local priests and ministers were often key players in community decision-making. In addition to meeting their own ends of proselytising, the churches helped Ottawa to “acculturate” aboriginal peoples through the residential school system they operated. For most of the school year Children were separated from their families. They were forbidden to speak their own language, were forced to learn English or French and had to adapt to the “white way” of life. Unfortunately, as we have discovered in recent years, along with the schooling often came a significant amount of physical and sometimes sexual abuse.

The third dominant force in settlement life was the Hudson Bay Company. With its long history in the North, the HBC established outlets in most communities and, until quite recently, was a major source of food staples, clothing and hunting equipment.

In recent years, the dominance of the three major “developers”--the government, the church and the Hudson Bay Company--has rapidly come to an end.

Government, aware that it has often fostered a colonial mentality, is trying to share power. It is making efforts to hand over to aboriginal groups and local communities more authority and responsibility for self-determination--though often not quickly enough to please the aboriginal groups. In addition, faced with a large national debt and significant fiscal problems, it is discovering that it can no longer afford the systems and infrastructures it helped to establish. So it is turning over to communities the responsibility for the delivery of more and more services. (Unfortunately--at least from the community perspective--it is not always able to turn over all the resources required to deliver the services. So, in some quarters, this transfer of services is seen as “down loading”.)

Though the mainstream churches still play a role in many communities, their influence has declined significantly. Because of its celibacy requirement, the Roman Catholic Church is unable to provide enough priests, and it has not developed an indigenous clergy.

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Though the Anglican Church has been more successful in this regard, its influence also seems to be declining. The mainstream churches are experiencing more competition from various evangelical sects and witnessing the rise of aboriginal spirituality, especially among many younger people who want to return to the ways of their elders. In addition, mainstream churches have lost much credibility because of their role in residential schools and the abuses these schools permitted and concealed.

As for the Hudson Bay Company, it has disappeared from the scene--replaced in some communities by Northern Stores. Most communities have seen the development of cooperatives and small operations run by private entrepreneurs.

As I have noted above, the settlement of land claims and the development of self-government, coupled with the decline in influence of the traditional developers has created a totally new political and social environment for northern development. This, in turn, requires a new way of thinking about CD.

LIFE IN COMMUNITY

The term "life in community" suggests that the challenge of the new era is not to develop communities, or infrastructure or service systems--for these things are already developed. The new challenge is to develop *community*--a sense of community based upon the establishment, or re-establishment of primary relationships. The primary relationships are the relationships with the land, with one's own personal aspirations, with one's family and extended family, and with one's organizations. We define community in the traditional aboriginal sense as: *the intimate relationship with all living things, both animate and inanimate*³. Inherent in this sense of community is a maintenance or restoration of culture and language.

To emphasize the importance of community does not mean that jobs, economic development and services are not important. They are. But

³ I am indebted to Di Ann Sue Blesse for this definition. See *Northern Canadian Aboriginal Teachers' Perception of Classroom Learning Environments*, Department of Education, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Fall, 1997. Unpublished Master's Thesis.

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they are not an end in themselves. They are, rather, the extension or manifestations of what is really important--relationships.

As one might expect, for aboriginal communities and for their leaders, this is a time of great transition. They look back fondly to the era of life on the land. They want to rediscover their culture and traditions, renew their Spirit and restore the strong sense of relationship--with the land and with one another--that existed in those simpler times. They have mixed feelings about the Settlement Era. They want to retain the benefits that came to them during that period. But it was also a time of destruction. They blame the Settlement Era for the severe social problems they now have to contend with, for the loss of identity and culture, and for the struggle to get out from under the colonialist mentality of government.

And so, as northern communities continue to make the transition from Settlement Era to the Era of Life in Community they are going through difficult times. This is the period of chaos and confusion predicted by Thomas Kuhn--the period of upheaval as groups move between paradigms. There are no road maps, no blueprints. There is very little time for thinking and enormous pressure to make decisions and take action. For some this is a very fearful time. They look back to the settlement world as they knew it--and they are reluctant to stumble around in the wilderness in search of the Promised Land. They want to go with what is familiar to them. For others it is a time of great hope. They are confident that with the settlement of their land claims and the development of new governments in Nunavut and in the West, there is a new opportunity -- a chance to create a new world for themselves and their children. To "make it happen" they are turning with renewed hopes to CD.

THE RISE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

For the most of the last three decades the whole concept of CD has been living under a cloud. We can trace the suspicion of CD--especially on the part of government--to two significant events: the Berger Inquiry of the mid-1970s and the famous Baker Lake Affair of 1977.

In the mid 1970s the federal government asked Justice Tom Berger to conduct a study to determine whether government should approve the development of a gas pipeline down through the Mackenzie Valley,

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the traditional homeland of a number of Dene and Metis groups. During the community hearings some members of the Dene Brotherhood (now the Dene Nation), on the advice of their consultants, began holding discussions with members of the American Indian Movement--an organization associated with radical and confrontational tactics. This created an element of fear among politicians and public servants in the North. The Commissioner of the day, Stuart Hodgson, began travelling around the western NWT with an armed bodyguard. When Berger recommended a ten year moratorium on pipe line development, to give aboriginal groups a chance to settle their land claims, many non-aboriginal northerners saw the decision as "anti-business." They placed the blame at the door of CD activists who used headline grabbing tactics to promote their cause.

In Baker Lake, a small Inuit community on the west coast of Hudson's Bay, a group of young "radicals"--some of whom eventually became prominent politicians, aboriginal leaders, and members of the NWT business community--tried to hold a community development workshop for aboriginal leaders throughout the NWT. Featured prominently in the workshop were the organizational tactics of Saul Alinski as spelled out in his book, *Rules for Radicals*.⁴ Government responded with a heavy hand. The workshop was cancelled and some of the organizers were fired or forced to resign; but their work was an impetus for the development of municipal government and provided a stimulus to aboriginal self-determination.⁵

Quite quickly these two incidents cast a pall over the whole concept of CD. It projected the wrong image for a government that did not want to be seen as "underdeveloped"--especially in the eyes of the mandarins in Ottawa who held the key to eventual provincial status. So, until quite recently, the term "community development" was rarely uttered, especially in government policies and documents.

⁴ Saul D. Alinski, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer For Realistic Radicals*, Vintage Books, New York, 1989

⁵ For those interested in reading about this incident in detail, see J. Mark Stiles, "The Baker Lake Affair: Case Study Of A Cancelled Workshop" in *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, Vol 2:1, 1982, p. 25-50.

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Today, given the realities of self-government and the desire of government to transfer services, CD seems to have found new acceptance within government. Communities must continue to be aware, however, of the uneasy relationship that has always existed between development at the community level and the concerns of central governments. Government holds the purse strings. It is inherently worried that CD will give rise to unrealistic expectations--unaffordable expectations. It is also concerned that the leadership emerging at the community level will challenge or even try to replace the officially elected leadership that it represents. The response of government to CD initiatives is to try and cooperate--but to try and control. In the vast majority of cases it does not do this through malicious intent, or as part of a control conspiracy. It does it by doing what governments do--by providing services. It links CD to service development. As we shall now see, this presents some real problems.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AS SERVICE DEVELOPMENT: THE FOUR C'S

Since the early 90s, most CD activities in the Northwest Territories have focused upon what I call the 4 C's: Community Empowerment, Community Healing, Community Learning, and Community Economic Development.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT.

In 1992, faced with the increasing problems of fiscal restraint and the desire of communities to have more control over services, the Government of the Northwest Territories announced its intention to decentralize, privatize and transfer services to local communities.⁶ By 1995 this intention had been translated into a full-blown *Community Empowerment Policy*. The GNWT announced its intention to negotiate the transfer of services to municipalities, band councils and/or aboriginal groups. Almost all services were on the table. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) was designated as the lead agency and civil servants (Community Empowerment Coordinators) were instructed to begin negotiations for the transfer of services.

⁶ "Reshaping Northern Government" policy paper of the Government of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife, N.T. February, 1992

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Despite a few initial successes, the policy was not well received by communities. They tended to see community empowerment as a simple downloading of services--a handing over of authority without the required resources. They were concerned about their lack of technical service expertise at the local level, their capacity to develop and train service providers, and the level of policy control they would actually have over services. In addition, the policy of community empowerment was beginning to come into conflict with the self-government initiatives of aboriginal groups. This was a particular problem in regard to the creation of Nunavut. Transferring services could create confusion and jeopardize the development of a new public government in the East.

From the outset, the Community Empowerment Policy ran into a conflict of viewpoints. The GNWT tended to see community empowerment as something it gives to people by handing over services and resources so that they can "become empowered". The aboriginal communities tend to see community empowerment as a reclaiming of rights that emerged out of natural law and/or treaty rights or their status as aboriginal peoples (The Inuit have never signed treaties with the federal government). For centuries aboriginal peoples have ruled themselves and taken care of themselves--and they have done this long before the domination of white society. In addition, many native leaders have long resented the existence of the Government of the Northwest Territories. They see its presence, developed without any consultation with the aboriginal community, as a violation of their treaty or self-government rights and their links to the federal government.

In 1997, recognizing that its community empowerment initiative was not meeting wide acceptance, the GNWT tried another tack. While still maintaining its community empowerment initiative, it switched the emphases of the policy from transfer of services to CD. All of a sudden CD was back "in". But having GNWT employees trying to serve as CD specialists presented some new problems that I will discuss below.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS

One of the dominant characteristics of the settlement era--and one that all aboriginal peoples are deeply concerned about--is the significant increase in social problems. In many communities alcohol abuse,

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family violence, suicide, the residual effects of residential schools, conflicts with the law and dependency upon government are serious problems. This has created a great interest in Community Healing.

In June, 1994, the GNWT sponsored the first territorial-wide Community Wellness Conference. Its intent was to try to shift the emphasis from a medical model of service delivery to a wellness model of service delivery.⁷ But, in terms of service delivery, the strategy has not succeeded.

If one examines the budget for the Department of Health and Social Services over the past few years, one does not see a major shift in dollars--at least when compared with the budget for medical services and critical care. Nor can one find within the ranks of government a large number of specialists who are assigned to the development of wellness-type services. (Given the financial restraints that the GNWT has faced in recent years and the high cost of providing health care in the North, this lack of emphasis is understandable).

Nevertheless, outside of government--at the community level--there has been a great increase in interest in wellness and healing. To a large extent this interest has arisen spontaneously, outside the framework of the health care system. Community residents do not usually turn to local nursing services for "healing assistance". They inevitably provide this assistance to themselves.

In the workshops and group exercises I facilitate in communities and regions, I often ask people to identify and prioritize their major concerns. Unfailingly, regardless of the nature of the conference (education, economic development, self-government, or whatever) the need for healing tops the list. It is especially apparent in CD workshops. There is an instinctive realization that CD starts with healing. Here an illustration may prove helpful.

⁷ The major causes of death and serious illness in the Northwest Territories are accidents, suicides, alcohol and drug abuse, family abuse, smoking, poor nutrition and diseases resulting from environmental conditions such as overcrowded housing. These are not "medical problems" in the classic sense of the term. For the most part--with the possible exception of housing conditions--they are lifestyle problems. The cost of medical services continues to escalate year after year, but the health of northern residents does not improve correspondingly.

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No aboriginal community in recent years has received more national attention than the community of Davis Inlet in Labrador. Thirty years ago the present site of the village was selected by the government official, the priest and the manager of the local store, primarily because its deep-water harbour was convenient for a government wharf. But the site was never suitable and the many promises about better housing, better water, and decent sanitation were never kept.

In the early 1990s the community gained national attention when a house fire killed six children and, in again 1994, when teenagers were filmed sniffing solvents and threatening suicide. Now the community is in the process of moving off their little island to Little Sango Pond on the mainland. The new location will cost Ottawa \$80 million dollars. People within the present community of Davis Inlet will be given jobs and will help build their new community. The exercise is a classic example of traditional CD.

But it will be immediately obvious to most people that, though the new community is very much needed and can improve the quality of life for the inhabitants, the move to the new location will prove fruitless unless the people in the community can address the underlying social problems that have characterized the community in the past. There are some indications that the community itself is beginning to realize this fact.⁸ In a word, the Innu must be able to *build community* while they are building a community. If one doubts that there is a distinction between the two realities, one need but reflect upon some of the affluent, oil-rich reserves in the South where residents enjoy economic prosperity but still experience a range of social problems that are significantly higher than the national average.⁹

⁸See Leonard Zehr, "Davis Inlet Innu Expected To Back Move" the *Globe and Mail*, Saturday October 26, 1996 A5; John Gray, "Nightmare of Davis Inlet Haunting Innu Dream" *The Globe and Mail*, Monday, March 31, pA1 and A6; Canadian Press, "Davis Inlet Natives Ban Solvent Abuse and Alcohol", *Globe and Mail*, Tuesday August 18, 1998, pA-5.

⁹ "The wealthy Stony Reserve west of Calgary is in such grave disarray that the federal Department of Indian Affairs is threatening to strip it of control of its money. The reserve, with its millions of dollars a year in revenue from oil and gas, has been squarely in the public eye for the past four weeks. Judge John Reilly of Alberta's Provincial Court ordered an investigation into social conditions and allegations of political corruption and financial mismanagement there. He said he could not understand why people lived in such dreadful social circumstances on such a wealthy reserve. In particular, Stony residents--from the Wesley, Chiniki and

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COMMUNITY LEARNING.

Community learning refers specifically to a type of learning that happens everywhere throughout the community. In a very special way it is learning from the respected elders--their traditional knowledge--about the land, about values, about how to behave and live with others. It is learning one's culture, language and traditions. It is learning those survival skills that are so essential for people who still travel frequently on the land and spend a good part of their life in camps.¹⁰

Community learning sees the whole community as a learning centre. The life of the community, especially as it wrestles with the important issues arising out of land claims, is part of the new classroom that provides essential knowledge for those who will take their role in the new society.

Community learning is also the type of learning that occurs in schools. Within most aboriginal communities there is sincere desire for formal schooling. Parents are concerned about their children and recognize that they will need a good education to make their way in the modern world. They are also concerned about their schools and the number of children that are dropping out.

Today, in the Northwest Territories, only about 30% of student who enter high school graduate. The large majority drop out along the way. In most southern jurisdictions the opposite is true--only about 30% fail to graduate. One of the encouraging signs is the significant number of students returning to school in their twenties and even

Bears paw Bands--experience high rates of suicide and drug and alcohol addiction. Some speak of the reserve as a "welfare ghetto" and as a "prison without bars" the judge wrote. "Ottawa Scrutinizes Reserves Finances" *The Globe and Mail*, July 24, 1997, A5.

¹⁰ "Traditional Knowledge (TK) is the knowledge that derives from, or is rooted in, the traditional way of life of aboriginal people. Traditional Knowledge is the accumulated knowledge and understanding of the human place in relation to the universe. This encompasses spiritual relationships, relationships with the natural environment and the use of natural resources, relationships between people, and is reflected in language, social organization, values institutions and laws." *Report of the Traditional Knowledge Working Group*, Department of Culture and Communications, GNWT, Yellowknife, N.T. 1991.

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thirties. There are numerous opportunities for upgrading and for various kinds of skill development and training programs sponsored through the two community colleges in Nunavut and the West.

The problems of northern education--particularly Aboriginal education--are complex and far beyond the scope of this discussion.¹¹ Suffice it to say that we have come a long way from the old federal school approach. Today, community residents are in charge of their own schools at the local and regional level--even though most administrators and teachers are not aboriginal. But progress continues to be slow. It is axiomatic that there can be no true community development without community learning.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

One of the very first steps that all aboriginal groups take when they settle their land claims is to establish development corporations. In part this is to invest cash, in part it is to create jobs and business opportunities for beneficiaries.

Having lived for many years dependent upon welfare and government handouts, many aboriginal people are fully aware of what it means to depend upon someone else for one's survival. They realize that without some community economic development there can be no real community development.

Aboriginal people look back with pride to the time when their ancestors, elders, parents and even some of them travelled the land and supported themselves on the land by hunting, fishing and gathering what they needed to survive. And while they recognize that, for most of them, those days are gone forever, they also realize that supporting oneself and one's family--being independent--is essential to human dignity. A healthy community is an independent community.

The Department of Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) is the GNWT department responsible for economic development. It spends large amounts of money trying to assist in the areas of business development and job development. The federal

¹¹ See Di Anne Sue Blesse, above. Also, Cajete, Gregory, *Look To The Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*, Kivaki Press, Durango, 1994

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government has similar programs. To a large extent, both levels of government have been frustrated in their efforts by the endemic problems of the north: small remote populations, the lack of local economies, the isolation and the high cost of transportation, the lack of understanding among many residents about the nature and requirements of business, and so forth. But there is a more serious problem.

The major reason why so many economic development programs have consistently failed is the inability of residents to take advantage of them. Residents lack the education, skills and training they need to secure jobs and start businesses. Unfortunately, the gap between the programs and the people can't be overcome by RWED or its federal counterparts. It is dependent upon someone else--in this case the Department of Education, Culture and Employment--to provide the people with the skills to access the programs. Which leads us to the greater problem of why the service approach to CD won't work.

YOU CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE

There is an old story about a couple of tourists travelling through the Ozark Mountains who stop at a gas station to ask directions. The attendant pauses, looks up the road they are travelling and says, "You can't get there from here".

The story sums up the problem of why we can't get to CD by travelling down the road of service development. The road doesn't lead there. As we will now see, the things that make service delivery effective and efficient are the very things that work against a CD approach. A brief comment before proceeding. Nowhere in this essay or in what follows am I trying to argue that people don't need services. They do. I need services, my family needs services and we expect government to provide us with effective and cost-efficient services delivered by competent, caring professionals. The point I am making is that if our aim is to help communities develop themselves, to reach that stage of development where they can take full advantage of the services offered to them, we can't do it by providing services--no matter how effectively and efficiently we provide them.

**GOVERNMENT IS A SERVICE PROVIDER, NOT A
COMMUNITY DEVELOPER**

What government does, and what it does best, is provide services. Its whole political and administrative structure, budgeting systems, policies and procedures are designed for that single end. During the Settlement Era, Government departments like MACA and Public Works saw themselves as community developers. But their focus was on developing infrastructure, municipal councils and municipal services, not developing communities--in the sense we have described CD in this paper. The problem is that the service philosophy and methodology of service delivery can actually work against community development.

As a service provider, government is guided by the principles of universality, equity and fairness. All communities and residents must have access to the same kinds of services and there must be a fair distribution of resources--relatively speaking. Thus, all communities of similar sizes tend to be treated the same--regardless of their level of development, their capacity for development, the skills of their people, the kinds of social problems they are encountering, etc. This makes it difficult to relate the nature and kinds of services to the specific development requirements of the community.

This lack of flexibility becomes more complex at the delivery level. Here an illustration may prove helpful.

The GNWT has assigned lead agencies to develop services around the 4 C's. It is quite clear to everyone working with government as well as to community residents that: MACA is responsible for Community Empowerment, RWED is responsible for Economic Development, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is responsible for Community Learning, and the Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for Community Wellness.

During CD workshops that I facilitate, I usually ask participants to describe the various elements contained in each one of the "C's. They usually come up with the something like this.

FOUR CS: A COMPARISON

<p>Quadrant #1 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Governance ● Community control ● Organizational structures ● Representation ● Resources ● Systems ● Programs and services ● Policy frameworks ● Links with other organizations 	<p>Quadrant #2 COMM. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jobs and job development ● Businesses ● Investments ● CED strategies ● Models ● Partnerships ● Support mechanisms
<p>Quadrant #3 COMMUNITY WELLNESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical, mental, social and spiritual health ● Self-identify through tradition and culture ● Healing ● Prevention ● Strong families ● Supportive relationships ● Links between personal and family needs and health care services 	<p>Quadrant #4 COMMUNITY LEARNING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The community as a classroom ● The land as a classroom ● Acquiring wisdom from elders ● Schooling ● Individual and group learning ● Literacy and Adult Basic Education ● Skill development and training

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I then ask the participants to analyze the relationship among the elements in the quadrants and prioritize them. The results are interesting. They recognize that the quadrants are inter-related, but in terms of priorities, the two on the bottom--Community Wellness and Community Learning--must be given priority. Without Community Wellness and Community Learning there can be no Community Empowerment and Community Economic Development.

I have discovered that government departments have a very difficult time adapting to this reality. Each department has its own mandate for service delivery, and it jealously guards that mandate. Rather than starting with where the community is at, departments start with where they are. They tend to identify the community as in need of four distinct kinds of services, and each department jealously defends its right and mandate to provide those services. RWED doesn't get into Wellness, Health and Social services doesn't get into Community Learning, and so forth. Thus, if staff from one or other service delivery area tries to carry out CD activities and the community has needs not within their particular area of expertise, they have to call in someone from another department. Because CD activities are based upon establishing relationships, this doesn't work very well. Communities find themselves bouncing from one group of service providers to another. Governments recognize they are organized into separate "stove-pipes" and they try to compensate for the lack of coordination by what they call *integration of services*.

THE MYTH OF INTEGRATION OF SERVICES

In recent years government has tried to accommodate the needs of its clients by combining different service areas into single departments. Thus, the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services have become the Department of Health and Social Services, the former departments of Wildlife, Economic Development, and the services concerned with mining have been cobbled together to become the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development--and so forth. Though these initiatives may have reduced the size of departments, they have not really changed the nature of the service delivery system or led to true integration. Even though the departments have a new and extended name, the services in the old departmental structures tend to be clustered together in their own respective divisions in the new structures. The real problem, however, is at the community level.

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As I noted above, there is a gap between the services being provided and the ability of community residents to access those services. Why? Because of the integration problem, RWED is dependent upon the department of Education, Culture and Employment to develop skills within its clients that will help them take advantage of its programs. ECE is dependent upon Health and Social Services to handle many of the social problems confronting families, children, and adult learners. Health and Social Services is dependant upon the Housing Corporation to overcome the chronic overcrowding problems and on the Department of Justice to deal with the problems of young offenders, and so forth. Like the medical profession with its focus on "presenting problems," government service providers are focused on defining specific service needs and determining eligibility criteria. There is a firmly established code that departmental staff are not supposed to move out beyond the boundaries of their own department and get involved in someone else's turf--something I discovered personally many years ago.

In the early 1980's, when I was Superintendent of Social Services in the Baffin Region, I helped start a home for profoundly handicapped children. When I tried to get schooling for the children in the local school, I realised that they would need a teacher with special skills and that the school would also have to put in a ramp to make the school building wheelchair accessible. When I approached my counterpart in the Department of Education, he informed me that he didn't have the budget to hire the teacher or put a ramp on the school. So I did it. For a number of years thereafter I was known within the department as "the maverick Superintendent who used our budget to provide someone else's services."¹²

¹²A more recent example occurred in a small Dene community in the Western Arctic. Community residents were concerned about the young children from a number of families where the parents had alcohol abuse problems. So, they decided to start a playschool and applied for funding through the government's alcohol abuse program. The playschool was a success--so much so that other parents in the community wanted to place their children in the program. When the program accepted these children, the alcohol abuse program announced it would cut off their funding because the children were not from families with abuse problems. Community residents applied to the Department of Education for funding but it couldn't help because the children were of a pre-school age. There was a great deal of turmoil until, fortunately, a solution was worked out.

THE LACK OF A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The major reason why government has so much difficulty supporting CD at the local level is that it lacks a community development strategy. What it does have is a significant number of department strategies all devoted to service development. In recent years most departments have developed their own strategic plans, sometimes at great expense. Each strategic plan contains a vision, mission statement, strategic objectives and so forth. But most of these plans have been developed in complete isolation from communities and with very little input from other departments.

The lack of a coherent strategy and policy framework is especially difficult for government employees working at the regional and community level who are now being told that they are to assist communities in their CD activities. They are expected to be, at one and the same time, CD specialists and departmental resource persons. But this all takes place within a service delivery framework. They find themselves facilitating groups of community residents in the morning--helping them develop visions for their communities and establish strategic priorities. But in the afternoon they have to put on their departmental hats and try to explain to the communities that, because of financial, legislative, or policy constraints, the communities can't do the things they need to do to achieve their priorities and make their visions a reality.

In fairness to the GNWT, this is a time of great upheaval. It is in the midst of trying to establish two new governments, one in Nunavut the other in the West. There is a major reallocation of resources. Some departments have been through two or three major reorganizations in four years. There is a continual turnover and re-assignment of staff. The institutional framework is highly unstable. But it is not going to get any better.

As they move into the new millennium, governments are going to have to spend more and more time responding to the needs of aboriginal groups and their self-government interests. But these groups do not approach the problem of community development from a service delivery perspective. They inevitably adopt a CD perspective. Their concern is establishing or re-establishing the primary relationships that will give voice to their inherent rights, culture and traditions. It is time

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for government and aboriginal groups to establish a common ground needed to formulate a CD strategy.

MAKING THE TRANSITION

I can think of no better way of summarizing this discussion of the Power Paradigm and moving on to the Spirit Paradigm, than to quote the words of three individual who have spent much of their lives wrestling with the problems discussed in this essay--John McKnight, Thomas Berger, and E. F. Schumacher.

John McKnight, an American professor at Northwestern University in Illinois, has spent many years helping communities develop themselves. He has continually warned against the *iatrogenic* effects of service development.¹³ Here are his comments on the limitations of trying to develop communities through a service delivery approach.

- The services are expensive, costly to maintain and require special expertise to deliver.
- They are often weighted down with rules, regulations and policies that make no sense to the community but “come with the package”.
- They provide a few jobs for a few individuals--and often higher paying jobs to outsiders--but they often fail to address the poverty in the community.
- They focus on the problems in the community rather than the strengths of the community.
- They categorize problems up into “presenting problems” to be dealt with by various specialists--the social worker, the nurse, the alcohol counsellor, the employment counsellor, the adult educator, the social assistance worker--but they don’t deal with all the problems in the community on a community-wide basis. They usually depend upon a referral mechanism that often doesn’t work.

¹³ The term "iatrogenic" means "caused by medical treatment" and refers, in particular to the problem of side-effects. McKnight's point is that, in terms of community development, service development presents significant problems. See "Community and Its Counterfeits," a discussion between John McKnight and David Cayley, *Ideas*, January 3, 10, 17, 1997--transcripts published by CBC Radio Works--partim.

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- They are often not effective.

I would add to McKnight's list the comment that services are often not culturally responsive.

In 1983, Thomas Berger was appointed by the Inuit Circumpolar Conference to conduct a review of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. He visited sixty Eskimo, Indian and Aleut Villages to determine the extent to which they had benefited from the billion dollars that came with the ANCSA. His particular focus was on the village and regional corporations.

Berger noted that, after spending large amounts of money at the local and regional level over more than a decade, the economic development strategy was a failure. Most of the money was siphoned off in legal fees and aboriginal administration. There were almost no tangible benefits to local residents in terms of new jobs and businesses--nor the development of viable local economies. Berger concluded that the major flaw was in the development process itself. "The imposition of a settlement of land claims that is based on corporate structures was an inappropriate choice given the realities of native life in Alaska."¹⁴

Despite the failure of ANCSA, Berger noted some signs of hope and the possibility of developing a new approach to community development.

" Nevertheless, respect for the wisdom of the elders, a special relationship with the land, an ethic of sharing, the concept of extended family and other traditional values persist in one form or another...Perhaps development should be redefined. Consideration should be given to native ideas of development and to strengthen the native subsistence economy. Subsistence can be a means of development, of enabling a people to be self-sufficient, of strengthening family and community life. It entails enhancement of an existing economic model. Now that ANCSA has failed Alaska natives, it is not surprising that they

¹⁴ Thomas R. Berger, *Village Journey*, Hill and Want, New York, 1985 p 43.

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have begun to look for new ways of strengthening the subsistence economy and the Village way of life.¹⁵

The final word goes to E F. Schumacher. In 1989 I traveled to communities throughout the Northwest Territories as a Project Coordinator for the Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on the Northern Economy. I authored the final report, *The SCONE Report*. In the preface of the report I included these words from Schumacher. They seem even more relevant now than they did then--and they point the way to the second part of this essay.

“Among the causes of poverty, I am sure, the material factors are entirely secondary, such things as lack of capital, or an insufficiency of infrastructure. The primary causes of extreme poverty are immaterial; they lie in certain deficiencies in education, organization and discipline. Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped potential. There are prosperous societies with but the scantiest basis of natural wealth, and we have had plenty of opportunity to observe the primacy of the invisible factors after the War (World War II). Every country, no matter how devastated, which had a high level of education, organization and discipline produced an “economic miracle.” In fact these were miracles only for people whose attention is focused on the tip of the iceberg. The tip had been smashed to pieces, but the base, which is education, organization and discipline was still there.

Here then lies the central problem of development. If the primary causes of poverty are deficiencies in these three respects, the alleviation of poverty depends primarily on the removal of these three deficiencies. Here lies the reason why development cannot be an act of creation, why it cannot be ordered, bought, comprehensively planned: why it requires a process of evolution. Education does not “jump”; it must gradually evolve to fit changing circumstances. And much the same goes for discipline. All three must evolve step by step and the foremost task of development policy must be to speed

¹⁵ Berger, p 43 and 47.

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this evolution. All three must become the property not merely of a tiny minority, but of the whole society.¹⁶

¹⁶ E.F.Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered*, Harper and Row, New york, 1973 p 178-179.

PART TWO

THE SPIRIT PARADIGM

In the following pages I will lay out a new framework for CD in the North--a framework I call the Spirit Paradigm.

The elements of this paradigm have emerged out of my own CD experience, working with communities in American inner cities, in resource towns in Northern British Columbia, in Nunavut and in the Western Arctic. I am also indebted to the insights of various specialists in the field of community development, most of whom have already been introduced in the preceding pages.

Though I strongly believe in the validity and relevance of the approach I am about to outline, I do not wish to be prescriptive. Every community must make its own decisions about what will work and what will not work.

Part Two begins with some basic assumptions and describes the concept of Spirit Paradigm. It contrasts Spirit Paradigm with Power Paradigm. It moves on from there to present some basic principles of this new Spirit Paradigm.

SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The following discussion is based upon these four assumptions.

1. Aboriginal communities want to develop their communities in a way that is consistent with and reflects their inherent right to self government, their culture, their values and their traditions.
2. Governments--the federal government, the Nunavut Government and the new government in the West--wish to support aboriginal initiatives to develop their communities.

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3. Government and community leaders need one another. They are willing to work together to find a common ground that will respond to their respective needs: the need for viable CD on the one hand, and the need for public government on the other.
4. The starting point for CD is the development of a new paradigm that will provide opportunities to think through the major CD issues and suggest viable CD approaches.

SOME DEFINITIONS

As I noted in the first part of this essay, I define **community** in the aboriginal sense as "*the intimate relationships with all living things both animate and inanimate*". Though this definition may seem to contain contradictions (How can one have intimate relations with living things that are *inanimate*?), the problem is one of conflicting perspectives. The traditional aboriginal perspective sees the land as "living". This perspective is quite consistent with some of the insights of the New Science (for example, the "Gaia Hypothesis") that also sees the universe as a living system or entity.

Community development is a process that helps a community become healthy through the strengthening or restoration of primary relationships. It does this by building the community's capacity to recognize and build upon its strengths, plan for its future and deal with its problems.

The goal of the community development process is healthy communities. The means of ensuring the on-going health of the community is the maintenance or restoration of primary relationships. The primary relationships are:

- the relationship of individuals and groups with their land and with the universe as a whole;
- the relationship of the individual with his or her inner Spirit, aspirations and desires;

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- the relationship with one's family, extended family, members of a First Nation, or the relationship with those who live together in one place;
- the relationship with one's organizations and institutions.

"Building the community's capacity" indicates that, to succeed, the community must develop the abilities of individuals and groups to recognize strengths, develop and pursue a vision, and deal with those problems and issues that impede the achievement of the vision.

The concept of a **Spirit Paradigm** flows from the definition of community. The word "Spirit" has a two-fold interpretation. On the one hand it suggests a bringing forth into the challenge of developing communities those elements of a peoples' past history--their culture, values, traditions institutions and decision-making mechanisms --in a manner that will enable them to retain and strengthen their sense of self identify. On the other hand the term "Spirit" suggests that the task of building community must focus on establishing or re-establishing relationships which are, by their very nature, spiritual (or non-material).¹⁷

One of the ways we can understand the nature of the Spirit Paradigm is to contrast it with the dominant paradigm of the Settlement Era--the Power Paradigm.

THE POWER PARADIGM AND THE SPIRIT PARADIGM: A COMPARISON

As we have seen in the first part of this essay, the Power Paradigm is concerned with acquiring power. Power essentially means economic power. In most communities that lack an economic base, economic power means the jobs and resources that come with the control of services.

In the context of the Power Paradigm, a developed community is one that has jobs, businesses, and community-controlled services. If a

¹⁷ For a more detailed discussion of the concept of Spirit Paradigm, see Mike Bell, *An Ecology of Spirit: The New Paradigm for Community and Organizational Development*, 1998. Unpublished manuscript.

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community lacks these things, it is seen--and labelled--as under-developed. Most northern communities--given their small populations, their isolation, the lack of local economies, and the cyclical boom-bust nature of resource projects--will likely remain "under-developed" for the foreseeable future. If this is the case, there really doesn't seem to be much reason to help communities develop themselves. They are not going to be successful anyway--if we define developed communities as *economically developed* communities.

Part of the problem with the Power paradigm is that it fails to deal with the underlying social issues that impede development, and it does not see its role as one of building the capacity of communities to develop themselves. Coming to grips with this reality has been a particular problem for "outsiders"--many civil servant and consultants like myself who parachute into communities for brief periods of time to try and help with various projects.

Most of us carry with us a lot of knowledge and experience. We have achieved certain education levels and we are often quite confident about our CD skills. We want to make a contribution. But we often become frustrated when aboriginal peoples do not respond immediately to our advice or don't follow through on it. At times we are so sure about our southern-based models for success--what is required, for example, to set up a successful business--that we do not understand the unwillingness of communities to follow our lead.

We are aware, of course, even without the obligatory course in aboriginal culture, that we are working in the midst of different cultures, where people speak different languages, think in different ways, and lead different lifestyles. We know that their world is often difficult for us to understand. We also know that deep within the community culture are conflicts, the wounds of residential schools, the manifestations of addictions, the lack of schooling, and need for healing. But this world is one that we can only remotely comprehend. So, rather than dwelling upon it, we do our best, hoping that folks at the community level will eventually pull things together and take our advice, recognize the wisdom of what we are trying to teach them and adapt their cultures accordingly. After all, we reason, if aboriginal peoples have adopted the tools of the White Man's culture--the snow machine and the rifle for hunting, the power tools for carving, the wooden houses to live in--why shouldn't they be able to adopt our

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service delivery models, our financial systems, and our output-oriented management systems.

The Spirit Paradigm starts with a different set of assumptions. Unlike the Power Paradigm with its emphasis upon acquiring power, the Spirit Paradigm is based upon establishing relationships. It sees a developed community as a *healthy community*. A healthy community is one in which community residents have a strong sense of their identity and culture. The vitality and strength of community members is reflected in their primary relationships. They have a strong link to their land. They have healthy families and live in harmony with their neighbours. Individuals have a strong sense of their personal identity through their culture and heritage--and they have confidence in their ability to grow and develop. Community residents are strongly committed to their organizations and institutions and work to maintain positive working relationships within them.

While the Spirit Paradigm recognizes the importance and benefits of jobs, businesses and services, it does not define the development in terms of them. It defines development in terms of healthy relationships. Where the Power Paradigm tends to see the development of people as a positive by-product on the way to achieving the end product (jobs, businesses and services), the Spirit Paradigm sees the development of people and the strengthening of their fundamental relationships as the end product. It is the jobs, businesses and services that are the by-product.

There are undoubtedly some that will see this paradigm shift as idealistic and dangerous--because, by taking the emphasis off economic development, it seems to relegate the smaller communities to a life of poverty. I can only offer the following comments.

As long as we define a developed community as one with a viable economic base, our CD efforts are doomed to failure. We know this from years of experience. But the Spirit Paradigm does not relegate communities to poverty. It allows them to make choices. Some of the older members of the community will continue to choose to live in their communities and adopt a traditional lifestyle dependant upon the domestic community (a combination of hunting, fishing, arts and crafts, seasonal employment and periodic government assistance). Many of the younger members of the community will continue to do what they are already doing--move to the larger regional centres where

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there are better opportunities for jobs and training. As Ken Harper, one of the leaders of Nunavut noted on a CBC broadcast a while back: "We are seeing 50 children a year born in Arviat. But we aren't creating 50 jobs a year in Arviat--and we never will"

The Spirit Paradigm deals with those things that the Power Paradigm neglected or didn't know how to deal with. It shifts the emphasis from building communities to building community; from developing services and businesses to developing the relationships and skills that must be the foundation for services and businesses; from developing programs to developing people. In a word, the Spirit Paradigm is all about "building capacity"--so that people can develop their own communities. It spends its energies developing the essential capacities of visioning, leadership, learning and healing. It links the development of the community to pride in its past, recognition and respect for its present capacities, and a realistic hope in its future.

**THE POWER PARADIGM & THE SPIRIT PARADIGM
A COMPARISON**

Category	POWER PARADIGM	SPIRIT PARADIGM
Community	A place	A relationship
A developed community	An economically developed community:	A healthy community:
Characteristics of a developed community	jobs, businesses, infrastructure, services, control of services, economic opportunities	strong primary relationships in balance: relations with the land, one's individual Spirit, the family and extended family, organizations (including workplaces)
Obstacles to Development	Lack of resources and control over resources	social conflict, illness, addictions, loss of identity, loss of culture and spirituality, inadequate knowledge and learning
Objectives	Acquire power and resources to develop jobs and businesses; control of service sector	renew Spirit and strengthen primary relationships through healing, learning and personal development
Strategy	Identify problems and work out solutions	Identify assets and build capacity
Organizational Structures	Determined by the requirements of government or corporate systems--Form follows Function	Ideally, determined or at least strongly influenced by the requirements of culture and tradition --Form follows Spirit
Prerequisites for success	Education and Training	Knowledge and Learning

PRINCIPLES THAT MUST GUIDE DEVELOPMENT

1. COMMUNITIES MUST DEVELOP THEMSELVES FROM WITHIN, NOT BE DEVELOPED FROM THE OUTSIDE

Community residents must set the agenda--determine what is to be developed, in what order and how. They must determine the pace of development. And they must use their own people to do the developing, to the extent that this is possible.

As we have seen in the discussion of CD during the Settlement Era, communities were developed by people or institutions located outside the community. This has left a legacy of doubt about capabilities. As the emphasis on services shifted from a relationship base (looking after one another) to a commodity base (purchasing services or hiring people with special skills to provide them), many people began to doubt their own abilities to develop themselves. This de-skilling seems to have become emphasized with the increase in the use of technology. (Now I have to know how to use a computer.) In many communities the de-skilling manifests itself in a sense of helplessness or apathy.

The concept of community self-development requires a growing awareness within community members that: 1) they have the ability to develop their communities and 2) they have, or can acquire the skills and resources they need to develop their communities. They must also have confidence that they can access special expertise from the outside when they need it. The starting point for any CD initiatives is the realization that "we can do it ourselves".

If one asks the question, "How long will it take for a community to develop itself?" The answer is, "As long as it takes". Self-development--the strengthening of relationships and the building of capacity--is very much an on-going process.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY MUST PROCEED FROM A COMMUNITY VISION

If a community wants to develop itself, it must have a community vision --and know what a community vision is.¹⁸ The vision begins with a sense of its past, including an awareness of its culture and traditions. The community documents its past. Then it must develop a realistic awareness of its present strengths and weaknesses--including a sense of how it is going to address these weaknesses as it moves into the future. Finally, the community must formulate a vision and a strategy that embraces all the major objectives of the community. In many communities the vision must include a clear picture of what a healthy community looks like.¹⁹

Most of us who have grown up in urban centres know very little about community visions and have very little sense of "community. (This is not true, it seems, for others of us who have grown up in small farming communities). We may have a sense of neighbourhood--but even this seems rare for most of us. We grew up living in one place, going to school in another, and often working in another. For the most part, we urban folk lack a sense of community. If we are concerned at all about the future of our community, we usually address our concerns in the voting booth at election time.

In small isolated northern communities people have a much stronger sense of community. They live together, work together, travel on the land together, learn together, serve on the same committees, share the same concerns and problems. But often, especially if the community is struggling with serious social problems, residents lack a common vision for their community.²⁰

¹⁸On one occasion I was invited into a community to help residents develop a community vision. During my meeting with the mayor, he asked me, "Why do we need a community vision? We have a five-year capital plan."

¹⁹There are several visioning techniques that can deal with large groups of people. I recommend the use of Future Search Conferences and Open Space Conferences. Those wishing to know more about these techniques should consult: Marvin R. Weisbord & Sandra Janoff, *Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground in Organizations and Communities*, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 1995; Harrison Owen, *Open Space Technology: A Users Guide*, Abbott Publishing, Potomac, Maryland, 1993.

²⁰ I once flew into a small Baffin Island community and had extensive conversations with three different committees, all established by the Department of Social

Even if the community is healthy, people find their lives divided into little pieces, depending upon which committees they serve on and the issues they are concerned about. During the settlement era government departments exacerbated this problem. Each department established its own committees to provide input into service delivery. Today, most communities have a large number of committees often dealing with the same problems, and often working at cross purposes.

There is nothing wrong with committees if they share a common vision of the community. But often they don't. I believe that any productive CD initiative must be based upon a common vision developed by the community with input from all the interest groups and stakeholders.

3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MUST BUILD UPON PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS, NOT UPON THE COMMUNITY'S WEAKNESSES AND PROBLEMS.

John McKnight has spent a lifetime promoting the concept of asset-based CD. His point is straightforward. Most CD efforts focus on the community's problems not its strengths. We spend an inordinate amount of time documenting and discussing the community's needs and problems and very little time documenting and discussing its strengths and capacities. As a result, we continually convince the community that it is weak and dysfunctional. And, when people hear these things day after day, they begin to believe them. According to McKnight, successful CD begins by focusing on the strengths of the community--its assets-- and doing all in our power to build upon these strengths. CD is all about capacity building.

Capacity building is essentially the building of relationships. To quote McKnight:

"If a community development process is to be asset-based and internally focused, then it will be in very important ways "relationship driven." Thus, one of the central challenges for asset-based community developers is *to constantly build and*

Services, to try and address a solvent abuse problem among the youth of the community. But the committees had had no conversations with one another.

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rebuild relationships between and among local residents, local associations and local institutions." (Italics mine).²¹

In the CD workshops I facilitate, I usually begin by asking participants to identify successful CD projects in their communities--and explain why they have been successful. They have no difficulty doing this. They usually point to projects that have a strong relationship base: the development of youth-elder programs, healing circles, safe houses for women, cultural centres, and so forth. Their most frequently mentioned reasons for the success of these projects: strong community support, good organizing skills within the community, and a strong sense of commitment.

4. CD MUST FOCUS ON THE ESSENTIALS

In my experience, many CD initiatives miss the mark because they do not focus on the essentials. By "the essentials" I mean those areas or work that are strategic and...

- focus on the development of people and their relationships, and
- have long term benefits for the community.

Instead, these activities fritter away human and financial resources on projects that are--in terms of the development of the community--either cosmetic or simply a waste of resources.

On one occasion I was invited to run a regional community development workshop in a small Arctic community. During the workshop I heard a litany of concerns about the problems confronting the local community where we were holding the workshop. The community was facing serious alcohol and drug abuse problems, high incidents of family violence, suicides among young people, severely overcrowded housing, a significant school drop-out rate, concerns about the number of children in the school suffering from fetal alcohol syndrome/ fetal alcohol effects, and so forth. In all these situations, the community was concerned about the lack of financial resources to address the problems.

²¹ John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities From The Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, Acta Publications, Chicago, 1993, p.9.

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On the last day of the workshop, as I was preparing to leave the community, there was a large influx of politicians, aboriginal leaders and dignitaries. They had come to dedicate a new community facility--a \$4.5 million recreation complex complete with an olympic-sized skating rink. The contract to build the facility had been given to a southern contractor who, as far as I could tell by looking at the crew rushing around to get things ready for the opening, had only used imported southern labour.

There is no doubt that recreational facilities are important to northern residents and they bring tangible benefits. But on the grand scale of things--when compared to issues that many communities are facing -- they are not strategic. In terms of CD they don't build capacity, strengthen relationships or have long term benefits. (If one doubts the lack of long-term benefits to facility development, one need only reflect on a growing problem across the North--arson. GNWT insurance rates in recent years have been climbing rapidly.)

Focusing on the essentials means recognizing the importance of "alternative opportunity costs". Human energy and money are both finite resources: there is only so much to go around. When a community decides to build an expensive recreation centre, it also decides not to spend that money on "alternative opportunities": improving support to special need children in the classroom, dealing with the alcohol and drug abuse problems, improving day-care centres or creating "head start programs".

5. TO SUCCEED, CD MUST ESTABLISH COMMON GROUND AMONG THE VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEREST GROUPS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.

As we noted above, one of the characteristics of the settlement era was the development of various interest groups, elites and factions at the community level. Some of this was simply the result of natural processes. The families that were dominant when people lived on the land tended to become the dominant families when people moved into settlements: their members filled the key leadership positions on the various boards and agencies. In recent years it was not uncommon for a dominant family to occupy almost all key positions in the community--to be replaced, in time--and by consensus-- by the members of another dominant family.

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One of the most noticeable interest groups to emerge during the settlement era was the “professional class”--the school teachers, clergy, nurses, RCMP officers, Co-op or Bay Manager, municipal administrators --as well as key members of government departments. The members of the professional class were better educated than the rest of the community, had the best jobs, the best houses and were, for the most part, non-aboriginal.

In some communities the members of this group are well integrated into the community. In other communities they remain quite apart. But regardless of their relationship with the community, the needs of this group must be addressed. There is a perception that, as aboriginal peoples become better educated, they will take over these professional positions. This is already happening in some cases (especially in the development of local municipal administrators and teachers) and will undoubtedly become more common in the future. But for some years to come, communities will still depend upon non-aboriginal people to provide services and carry out specific functions. In the meantime the interests of the professional class and those of the various other stakeholder groups will have to be recognized at the community level. (Just as, in the same manner, the interests of aboriginal groups will have to be recognized in the larger urban centres such as Yellowknife).

To be effective, CD must succeed in establishing a common ground among the various factions and interest groups within the community. But this common ground must be more than the temporary forming of coalitions where disparate groups come together around common issues and then disband once the issue has been addressed. Establishing common ground in the community means forging more permanent longer-term relationships. It means building a sense of community. In some cases this will require healing and mediation processes to build trust and repair splits in the community that have existed for a number of years. In other cases this will mean reducing the number of committees and taking a more holistic approach to community problem solving. In still other cases--particularly in an age of self-government--it will mean discovering new organizational models that will ensure representation for a broader range of interest groups in the community.

Most of all, it will require something that is too often missing in the community and in our society in general: an honest dialogue among different stakeholder groups to explore diverse interests in a spirit of

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openness and trust. This is what we mean by establishing common ground. It is a common ground based upon communication and relationships. This common ground must be developed on an on-going basis, sometimes over extended periods of time--and the community must resist all temptations to be stampeded into various activities before the foundation is established.

6. IN TERMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, FORM MUST FOLLOW SPIRIT

Two thousand years ago, the Latin poet Horace noted that, although the Roman armies had conquered Greece by force of arms, the Greeks had actually conquered the Romans by the force of their culture.²² Something similar seems to be happening today with the settlement of land claims and the transfer of services.

Often, in settling their land claims, aboriginal groups will establish a series of separate land claims organizations to manage the same land quantum. This occurs even in cases where there are only several thousand beneficiaries. Typically, one will find a Land and Water Board, An Impact Review Board, A Land-Use Planning Board, and a Wildlife Management Board, each one established as a separate entity under the Societies Act, each one with its own board of directors and staff. The various boards spend a great deal of time trying to integrate their services and functions--and explain their roles to local communities.

There are a number of reasons for this practice--not the least of which is the desire of the federal government to ensure that claims organizations will "fit into" the already existing regulatory regimes. The federal government argues that "form follows function". Since the claimant groups must carry out specific land administration functions, they must have distinct organizations that will enable them to do this. The practice results in over-bureaucratization, duplication and a waste of energy and resources.

²² *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresta Latio.* Greece, once overcome, overcame her wild conqueror, and brought the arts into Latium. *Ars Poetica* 11.i.156

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More to the point--but not quite as obvious--is the impact the practice has on aboriginal cultures. Though aboriginal groups may believe that, by settling their land claims they have "conquered the federal bureaucracy, " the adoption of federally promoted organizational models can have a significant impact upon aboriginal culture.

It is the Greek-Roman thing all over again. By their very nature, organizational models are not culturally neutral. They are *culturally charged*. They are a Trojan Horse. They impose certain value systems, decision-making mechanisms, specializations and processes--and they change the way people live and work together in community. Importing "alien" models from one culture to another--without very careful consideration--will only serve to further alienate the members of that culture.²³

Some will argue that this type of change is inevitable. Aboriginal communities must adopt the organizational models that are characteristic of the dominant non-aboriginal culture. But there is another approach: creating new models that truly reflect the culture and values of aboriginal peoples. There is a saying among some of the elders. "Our culture will be strong if our organizations are strong; and our organizations will be strong if our culture is strong." The saying suggests that form must follow Spirit. To the fullest extent possible, organizations must incorporate the culture, and reflect its values, its decision-making processes and its relationships. If they don't, neither the organizations nor the culture will survive.

7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SKILLS MUST EMERGE FROM FROM *PRAXIS*

Praxis--or learning through practice--is, in my opinion, the only way to learn CD skills. Trying to learn skills in the abstract, say in a classroom, and then going into the community to practice CD, is not an effective way to learn. The reason: the classroom instruction is too

²³ Berger has noted how the imposition of a corporate model has affected the culture of native peoples in Alaska. "The serious changes that ANCSA has introduced are becoming every more apparent with the passage of time. ANCSA has affected everything: family relations, traditional patterns of leadership and decision-making, customs of sharing, subsistence activities, the entire native way of life. The village has lost its political and local autonomy. " Berger p43.

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far removed from the day to day practice in the community environment.

Almost thirty years ago the Brazilian educator Paulo Friere developed an approach to learning that was based upon *praxis* and used effectively for CD projects in Latin America and in other parts of the world. Here is my summary of Friere's key principles of education.

1. No education is neutral; it is either designed to maintain the existing situation or to liberate people. Real learning and change takes place when people are dissatisfied with some aspects of their present life.
2. Change is a dynamic process in which education and development are interwoven; it is not an academic, individualistic exercise.
3. People will act on issues they feel strongly about; education and development projects should start by identifying some issues which people speak about with excitement, hope, fear, anxiety or anger.
4. Education and development is a common search for solutions to problems; education is not a transmission of information from teacher to pupil. It must be a mutual learning process between all people; everyone needs to be both a learner and a teacher.²⁴

As one reviews the principles, it is difficult to tell whether Friere is talking about education or development--they are so intertwined. This

²⁴ Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum Publishing Company, New York, 1970.

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of course is the point. To quote the aboriginal proverb, in terms of CD, "We make the path by walking it".

8. TO SUCCEED, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES REQUIRE A SUPPORT SYSTEM.

There are three things that community development projects need to be successful:

1. A group of community residents who are committed to development in their community and are willing to work together and support one another.
2. Access to resources--funding, equipment, facilities, and expertise. Some of these will be available within the community, others must be accessed from outside the community.
3. **A support system** or mechanism that can provide technical expertise, channel resources into the community from the outside, and back up the community's efforts on an on-going basis.

The support system is essential if any real development is to occur--but it is very rarely ever put into place. I'll illustrate with an example.

On one occasion I facilitated a conference for a group of about forty members of a Tribal Council who wanted to develop a policy framework for the administration of their lands. During the conference the participants assigned the responsibility for the actual writing of the policies to a young man who was the lands administrator. He was working out of a more remote community, was already having some difficulties with his job, and it was apparent that he lacked the skills or experience needed to handle the job. So what to do?

The Tribal Council could forget that it needed a set of policies and have another conference in two years to discuss the problem again. (Unfortunately this happens all too often.) It could hire an outside consultant to develop the policies, but this would be quite expensive and would not build any capacity into the organization. It could send

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the young man out for training. But there was no one with the required skills who could fill in when he was away--and he would likely need a good deal of training. There was also the problem of finding the right kinds of education and training courses, and having to pay for the education and training.

A final alternative. The tribal council could try and build a support system around the young man--a small team of people with the required skills, or access to the required skills, who could mentor him, travel into the community from time to time to do some hands on training and review his work, and so forth. Once in place the team could help this project and a number of other CD projects at the same time.

In my opinion, this last option is the only viable option. But it is almost never tried. What often happens instead is that all the other options are tried, or the young man is left alone to try and fend for himself. Eventually, when it becomes apparent that he can't do the job, he either quits or is removed.

The lack of on-going support is a continual problem. Consultants like myself, or government resource people, fly into remote communities, run workshops and leave again with the expectation that "the community can take it from here". But often they can't "take it from here". In many cases, if not most cases, the community lacks the capacity or capabilities to follow through on what has to be done, and the projects don't even get off the ground.²⁵ This kind of failure happens every day--and the lack of a support system is one of the major reasons for failure.

One of the great advantages of the service delivery system is that there is not a great deal of personal development required. We hire qualified nurses, teachers, accountants and RCMP officers. They come to the community with the required skills; they don't have to learn on the job. They work in already developed systems. They have

²⁵ On another occasion I spent a four days out on the land with a new band council to help them develop a strategic plan. When I asked the council members if they had ever done any strategic planning before, they dumped four consultants' reports on the table. They had been developed over the previous six years. But nothing had been implemented. It is not uncommon in most communities to find various kinds of consultants' reports sitting on a shelf somewhere gathering dust.

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supervisors and resources available to them at the regional level. Not so with CD. Communities are often on their own, starting projects from scratch, with no help from the outside, and no real awareness of how to proceed. This is why a support system is required.

SUMMARY:

I began this section with some basic assumptions, then provided some definitions and concluded with some specific principles. Taken together these assumptions, definitions and principles constitute a framework or paradigm for community development--the Spirit Paradigm.

The final challenge--and the one that this essay leads to --is moving from the Power Paradigm to the Spirit Paradigm. I conclude this essay with some suggestions on how communities, aboriginal organizations and government departments might make the paradigm shift.

PART THREE:

MAKING THE PARADIGM SHIFT

Making a paradigm shift is not a simple matter of abandoning the old paradigm and adopting the new one. There is need to work one's way through a period of confusion, to maintain what is useable or adaptable from the old paradigm and to gradually piece together the elements of the new paradigm. Thomas Kuhn, the master in this area, has discussed some of the psychological and emotional difficulties and the challenges that inevitably come with efforts to make the transition.

"When a new candidate for paradigm is first proposed, it has seldom solved more than a few of the problems that confront it, and most of those solutions are still far from perfect...Usually the opponents of a new paradigm can legitimately claim that even in the area of crisis it is little superior to its traditional rival. Of course it handles some problems better, has disclosed some new regularities. But the older paradigm can presumably be articulated to meet these challenges as it has met others before...The man who embraces a new paradigm at an early

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stage must often do so in defiance of the evidence provided by problem-solving. He must, that is, have faith that the new paradigm will succeed with the many large problems that confront it, knowing only that the older paradigm has failed with a few. A decision of that kind can only be made on faith.

...At the start a new candidate for paradigm may have few supporters, and on occasions the supporters' motives may be suspect. Nevertheless, if they are competent, they will improve it, explore its possibilities, and show what it would be like to belong to the community guided by it."²⁶

It is clear from Kuhn's comments that there is no road map, no blueprint to help us make the transition from the Power Paradigm to the Spirit Paradigm. But there are some starting points, and those are what we will explore in the final part of this essay.

THE STARTING POINTS

PROBING THE BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CD

For the past dozen years I have spent most of my time working as a group *animator*--a term that our colleagues in French-Canada use and one I much prefer to the more commonly used English term, *facilitator*.²⁷ Much of my work occurs in cross-cultural situations and almost all of it is with groups or organizations that want to--or have to--change.

In my opinion, the successful starting point for any successful animation is to help the group understand where it is at the present time--the paradigm within which it is presently operating--and where it wants to go--the paradigm it may want to adopt. The way to do this is to help the group discover its commonly held assumptions--to make these assumptions visible, and hold them up to the group so that they

²⁶ Kuhn, P156-159

²⁷ The term "facilitator" comes from the Latin "*facilis*" and means "to make easy". I don't think there is very much that is easy about what most organizations are having to deal with today. The term "animator" comes from the latin "*anima*" which means "soul" or "spirit". The group animator, then, is one who tries to help the group manifest its Spirit--its most deeply held beliefs and values. The term is dynamic and also has the meaning of one "who draws the progressive changes in movement".

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can explore them in detail. It is only when the group has a good understanding of where it is at the present time, and some idea of where it might want to go and how it might get there, that it will be willing to make the journey.

The technique I use to explore the paradigms is the *probe*--a series of questions, developed ahead of time in a planning session with my client, that will help them explore the assumptions they are making about the present situation and their future. It is important that these questions get deep enough into the fabric of the organization or its practices so that something useful will come of the exercise.

The challenge of making the paradigm shift from the Power Paradigm to the Spirit Paradigm might begin with a series of dialogues among the major stakeholders--governments, aboriginal groups, and communities--involved in CD in the North. Here is an example of some of the probing-type questions, suggested by this essay that might serve as the agenda for these discussions.

- What is a community?
- What does a healthy community look like?
- What is community development?
- What is the purpose of community development?
- What is the relationship between community development and service development?
- What is the relationship between community development and economic development?
- What is the relationship between community development and self-government?
- What will a "self-governed community" look like?
- What have we learned from our past about how to, or how not to, try to develop communities?
- Why have previous CD projects succeeded? Why have they failed?
- What does the research tell us?
- Do we have to change our approach to CD? If so, why?
- What are the requirements for successful CD initiatives?
- What are the major obstacles and issues we have to address?

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- What kinds of changes will we have to introduce to our present practices?
- What are the benefits and risks in making these changes?
- Etc. Etc.

As the dialogue continues, issues, answers, suggestions and options begin to emerge. These in turn are consolidated and provide a platform for deeper and more specific questions. Eventually, if the process is successful, a consensus among the stakeholders begins to emerge. They begin to discover new possibilities--perhaps even develop a shared vision of a new approach to community development.

Some people will feel that extensive discussions among stakeholders are a waste of time--especially when there are so many pressing problems to deal with. They want to see more action. I disagree. As I have tried to show in this essay, the stakes are very high. Present practices are deep rooted: the Power paradigm has been with us for four decades. If we do not take the time to reflect on what we are doing, and discover new ways of doing things, we will have no option but to remain in the existing paradigm. We will find ourselves "locked in," for years to come, to techniques and practices which don't develop communities, become increasingly dysfunctional and waste significant human and material resources.

CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the inevitable consequences to come out of the types of discussions I am recommending is the need to clarify roles and responsibilities. What would be the roles and responsibilities of governments and aboriginal groups in the new Spirit Paradigm? At present we don't have the answers. But we can ask more specific questions that might further the discussion and help lead to answers.

The Federal Government, the new government in Nunavut and the new government in the West will have to ask themselves the following questions.

How can we, as public governments, maintain the kind of service delivery system expected of public governments while

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at the same time supporting and participating in community development initiatives?

How can we ensure that our service delivery system supports the development of communities--and doesn't work against it? What kinds of changes do we have to introduce to ensure compatibility between service delivery and community development?

Where is the common ground between service delivery and self-government and what should our role be? How can we best work with aboriginal groups and communities?

These questions go to the heart of what public government is all about in the Era of Community.

For aboriginal organizations the questions are just as significant:

How can we develop our communities in a way that reflects our traditions and culture yet meets the development and service needs of our people?

How can we ensure that our self-government models reflect our tradition and cultures and are not simply an adoption of alien models that will harm our tradition and culture?

Where is the common ground between ourselves and public governments? How do we enter into positive, mutually supportive working relationships?

ESTABLISHING COMMON GROUND

As stakeholders begin, through dialogue, to explore the possibilities of the Spirit Paradigm, they begin to learn more and more about one another within this paradigm. If the dialogue is open and honest, they move beyond their individual positions to explore one another's areas of interest. This, in turn, leads to the discovery of common ground for action.

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It is impossible to predict in advance how this dialogue will proceed and what kinds of action would prove beneficial. But there are some obvious areas that should be explored.

Development of a Common CD Strategy. As we have noted in this essay, neither the various governments nor the aboriginal organizations have articulated a CD strategy for northern development. But a strategy--written in plain language--is very much needed. Without it, government departments and aboriginal organizations will lack a common focus and will continue to work at cross-purposes. The strategy must contain a philosophy of CD, a policy framework and guiding principles, strategic objectives, use of resources. It should also outline possible courses of action. And, it must be based upon clearly articulated working agreements.

Working Agreements between stakeholders should be established to serve as "Letters of Intent". They should spell out how the stakeholders intend to work together to develop communities. These agreements should contain a terms of reference outlining the scope of CD initiatives, the manner in which they are to be pursued, the requirements for work plans, the resource requirements and the specific responsibilities of various participants. One area that should be explored in detail is the development of support systems. This area would be of particular relevance to Nunavut Arctic College in the East and Aurora College in the West.

Acquisition and Use of Resources. As John McKnight has indicated, we have to begin any discussion of resources with the identification of assets that are already available within communities and regions. We have to use the same approach when thinking about government resources. While I recognize that governments are going through a period of fiscal restraint, they have a large quantity of potential resources that, at present, are not perceived by communities as assets. They are divided up and locked into the requirements of departments. Some of these resources could be diverted to CD initiatives, others might be shared with communities.

Establishing Priorities. While individual communities would establish their own priorities for individual projects, a broad-based consensus could be established on overall priorities. In the past few years I have worked with dozens of organizations and community groups to identify their priorities for development. Inevitably--regardless of the

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nature of the specific conference or activity-- these four priorities rise to the top of the list:

- leadership development,
- healing,
- education and training, and
- a concern for youth.

If we are looking for starting points for discussion and action, these four areas might be a logical place to start.

In summary, making the transition from the Power Paradigm to the Spirit Paradigm begins with exploring the basic assumptions of each paradigm, redefining roles among major stakeholders and deciding upon some starting points

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From the Power Paradigm to the Spirit Paradigm

CONCLUSION

We've come a long way in our discussion of community development in the North. We began by discussing the three eras of development in the North: Life on the Land, Life in Settlements, and the new era, Life in Community. As we looked at the history of CD in the North, we saw that the Power Paradigm, emerging out of the Settlement Era has been the dominant approach to CD.

But the new, post-claims Era of Community is presenting totally new challenges to aboriginal groups and governments alike. There is need for a new paradigm--the Spirit Paradigm--that is much more responsive to the political, social and economic environment that now surrounds us.

In the second part of this paper we described the Spirit Paradigm and set out some guiding principles. As we have seen, this new paradigm sees the development of healthy communities--not the development of economically viable communities--as the ultimate end of community development. It focuses in on the maintenance or re-establishment of primary relationships as the focus of CD activities.

With the division of the Northwest Territories, we have come to the fork in the road. The decisions we make within the next few years will determine the future of community development in the North for generations to come. This is a time for mold-breaking, for letting go, for creating new possibilities, for building new trust relationships in both the East and the West, for making paradigm shifts. We must be willing to accept the reality of chaos and confusion, tap into our inner Spirit and have the courage to make the path by walking it.

The Changing Face of Community Development in the North
From the Power Paradigm to the Spirit Paradigm

About The Author

Mike Bell is a management consultant working out of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. His interest in community development in cross-cultural contexts extends over four decades.

Mike began his career as a Roman Catholic priest. During his years of training he worked as a volunteer in poverty programs in the inner cities of New York and other American cities in the Eastern United States. From 1967-69 he served as a student chaplain at the International Cite de Paris, a large international student campus with students from forty different nations. During the student riots that broke out in May of 1968, he helped students develop emergency programs to respond to the upheavals in French society.

In the early 70s, after leaving the priesthood, he worked for a number of years as a street-worker and community organizer in Milwaukee's East Side counter culture community. Most of his work was directed toward helping community groups establish street-level programs related to the drug culture. In 1975 Mike and his family moved to Northern British Columbia where he assisted residents in the resource communities of Houston and Granisle develop and run community health centres.

From 1980-1983, Mike served as the Superintendent of Social Services on Baffin Island in the Northwest Territories. Much of his work involved the training of Inuit social workers and assisting community residents to develop service committees. In the mid-1980s he moved to Yellowknife and held several senior management positions with The Department of Social Services and with the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

In 1986, Mike established his consulting firm, **Inukshuk Management Consultants**. Over the past dozen years he has been involved in a wide variety of community development projects both in Nunavut and in the Western Arctic. Most of his work is with aboriginal organizations, community groups and government departments.

Mike has a Masters Degree in Theology from St. Paul's University in Ottawa and Masters Degree in Communications from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is presently writing a book on community and organizational development.

Mike welcomes any comments readers might have on this essay.

