

## A BOWEN THEORIST IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

THIS IS A PRESENTATION THAT I'VE ALWAYS INTENDED TO MAKE I HAD INTENDED TO MAKE IT A TWO-PART PRESENTATION, BUT SINCE THIS IS THE LAST MEETING OF THE SEASON, I'LL DO IT IN ONE. I'M PROMPTED TO PRESENT IT NOW BY TWO RECENT EVENTS: THE FIRST WAS A REVIEW OF AN INTERVIEW I GAVE FOR THE BOWEN ARCHIVES IN WHICH I WAS ASKED HOW BOWEN THEORY HELPED ME IN MY WORK; THE SECOND WAS THE RECENT CONFERENCE, "FLOCKS, FAMILIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS," WHICH FOCUSED TO A LARGE EXTENT ON ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS. I CAME AWAY FROM THE CONFERENCE THINKING THAT, WITH ONE IMPORTANT EXCEPTION, MOST OF THE FOCUS WAS ON ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND WAS FROM A CONSULTIVE POSITION RATHER THAN BASED ON AN ACTUAL MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE, ESPECIALLY A LONG-TERM ONE IN A PUBLIC AGENCY. A PUBLIC SERVICE ADMINISTRATOR IS EMBEDDED IN SOCIETAL EMOTIONAL PROCESS, AND BOWEN THEORY IS ABOUT TRYING TO ENHANCE REGULATION OF EMOTIONAL PROCESS BASED ON AN UNDERSTANDING OF NATURAL SYSTEMS. THIS PRESENTS DIFFICULTY. IF IT HAS BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE LITERATURE, I'VE MISSED READING IT. ALSO, WHILE THIS IS MY EXPERIENCE, AND SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT'VE HANDLED THE ISSUES DIFFERENTLY (AND BETTER), I THINK THE BASIC CHALLENGE FOR SOMEONE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TRYING TO IMPLEMENT BOWEN THEORY WOULD BE SIMILAR.

NONPROFIT AGENCIES ARE FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT THAN FOR-PROFIT WORK SYSTEMS IN THAT THERE IS CONFUSION BETWEEN THEIR MISSION AND THEIR SOURCE OF LIVLIHOOD. A FOR-PROFIT COMPANY CLEARLY KNOWS IT MUST PRODUCE A SALEABLE PRODUCT AT A PROFIT THIS IS GENERALLY ABSENT WITH A NONPROFIT WORK SYSTEM. (I HEARD THIS FACT NOTED AT THE RECENT CONFERENCE BY JUST ONE PARTICIPANT, NORDAHL BRUE, AND ONLY IN AN ASIDE.) THIS IS ESPECIALLY THE CASE WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES WHERE THERE IS A BUILT-IN CONFLICT BETWEEN SOURCE OF FUNDING AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES—FUNDING IS MAINLY BASED ON (AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS MAINLY MEASURE) SERVICE VOLUME AND ACTIVITY, NOT QUALITY OUTCOMES. (I HAVE BEEN RETIRED FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS, BUT I WOULD BET THIS HASN'T CHANGED MUCH.) MOREOVER, THE PERSPECTIVE DRIVING ALMOST ALL PUBLIC AGENCIES IS BASED ON A PSYCOANALYTIC VIEW THAT MORE IS GOOD AND LESS IS BAD RATHER THAN, AGAIN, FOCUSING ON IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY THROUGH SELF-REGULATION.

FIRST, A LITTLE BACKGROUND: I SPENT MY ENTIRE PROFESSIONAL CAREER (30 YEARS) AS A MANAGER IN PUBLIC AGENCIES (SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS): THE FIRST 15 YEARS IN A LARGE SUBURBAN COUNTY (PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MD., WHICH HAD THE SECOND LARGEST AGENCY IN THE STATE) WHERE I WAS MAINLY A CASEWORK SUPERVISOR IN CHILD WELFARE, AND THE SECOND 15 AS DIRECTOR OF A SMALL, RURAL COUNTY ON MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE (CAROLINE).

SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS IN MARYLAND ADMINISTER A RANGE OF PROGRAMS: THEY DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR AND DISPENSE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND FOOD STAMPS (NOW A CARD INSTEAD OF ACTUAL COUPONS), DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY FOR MEDICAID; PROVIDE CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES, WHICH INCLUDE TAKING LEGAL ACTION TO DETERMINE PARENTHOOD OF CHILDREN RECEIVING ASSISTANCE, THEN GETTING A COURT ORDER AND COLLECTING A SUPPORT PAYMENT, AS WELL AS COLLECTING SUPPORT FOR NON-RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE, USUALLY SINGLE MOTHERS. (THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM INVOLVED COLLECTING LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY, EVEN FOR A SMALL DEPT.) WE ALSO HAD ALL THE SERVICE PROGRAMS, FROM ADULT IN-HOME CARE TO DAY CARE FOR CHILDREN, TO CHILD WELFARE (ABUSE/NEGLECT INVESTIGATIONS FOSTER CARE, ADOPTION),

AMONG OTHER SERVICES. ALL MARYLAND SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS HAVE THE SAME BASIC PROGRAMS, THOUGH THEY DIFFER GREATLY IN SIZE. ALL THE BASIC PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED BY THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS, AND ALL PROGRAMS ARE MONITORED BY STATE "FIELD WORKERS" FOR POLICY COMPLIANCE. WHEN I WAS A LOCAL DIRECTOR, THE 24 LOCAL DIRECTORS MET AT LEAST ONCE EACH MONTH WITH THE CABINET SECRETARY AND ONCE TOGETHER AMONG THEMSELVES. (THE ABOVE INFORMATION MAY BE DATED, BUT I DOUBT IF IT HAS CHANGED MUCH.)

ALSO, WHEN I WAS A LOCAL DIRECTOR—IT HAS SINCE CHANGED-- ALL 24 LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS (23 COUNTIES AND BALTIMORE CITY) WERE ADMINISTERED IN THE SAME UNUSUAL WAY: NINE-MEMBER BOARDS APPOINTED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAD APPOINTING AUTHORITY OVER THE LOCAL DIRECTOR (AND ONLY THE LOCAL DIRECTOR) WHO WAS A STATE EMPLOYEE AND PAID BY THE STATE. WHILE THE BOARD HAD APPOINTING AUTHORITY OVER THE DIRECTOR, IT BY LAW HAD ONLY AN ADVISORY ROLE IN REGARD TO MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT. A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SAT, EX OFFICIO, ON THE BOARD. (IN MY COUNTY IT WAS ONE OF THREE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS). SO, WHILE PROGRAMS WERE FUNDED, MONITORED AND EVALUATED (MORE FOR EFFICIENCY AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY THAN QUALITY) FROM ONE SOURCE, THE STATE, THE DIRECTOR WAS APPOINTED AND EVALUATED BY THE LOCAL JURISDICTION. WHILE ALL POSITIONS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ARE CONSTRAINED, LOCAL DIRECTORS, SINCE THEY "ANSWERED TO TWO BOSSES" (STATE AND LOCAL), WITH AN APPOINTING AUTHORITY THAT HAD ONLY AN ADVISORY ROLE, AND WERE PERMANENT STATE EMPLOYEES WHO COULD ONLY BE FIRED "FOR CAUSE", ENJOYED MANAGERIAL LATITUDE AVAILABLE TO ONLY A FEW STATE POSITIONS.

#### MANAGEMENT AFTER MY CONTACT WITH BOWEN THEORY

I READ BOWEN'S BASIC PAPER IN FALL, 1971, AND IT'S AN UNDERSTATEMENT TO SAY THAT I WAS IMPRESSED. I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE OPEN WEDNESDAY THEORY MEETINGS IN THE SPRING OF '72 AND BEGAN ATTENDING. AT THE TIME I WAS SUPERVISING A UNIT OF 7 CASEWORKERS IN A LARGE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM (I HAD PREVIOUSLY SPENT OVER A YEAR SUPERVISING CASEWORKERS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE). AT THE TIME THE PROGRAM HAD BETWEEN 8 AND 9-HUNDRED FOSTER CHILDREN. IN THE FALL OF '72, I BEGAN TRACKING ALL THE FOSTER CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM—THE DATE THEY ENTERED CARE, MOVES FROM ONE FOSTER HOME TO ANOTHER, PLACEMENT IN PERMANENT CARE (ADOPTION/PERMANENT FOSTER CARE) ARRANGEMENTS, RETURN TO PARENTS/RELATIVES, INSTITUTIONAL PLACEMENTS, AS WELL AS OTHER INFORMATION. (SINCE I WAS DOING THIS ON MY OWN WITHOUT ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, I HAD TO GET THIS INFORMATION VOLUNTARILY FROM THE OTHER 7 CHILD WELFARE UNITS.) MY AIM WAS TO FOCUS ON SERVICE QUALITY AND, OF COURSE, TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES IN THESE AREAS. AT THE END OF EACH MONTH I WOULD COMPLETE A REPORT OF ALL THESE EVENTS AND DISTRIBUTE IT TO ALL LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT. IN JANUARY, 1973, I BEGAN TO USE THE INFORMATION TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CASEWORKERS I SUPERVISED. I USED THREE CRITERIA: FOSTER CHILDREN RETURNED TO PARENTS/RELATIVES, FOSTER CHILDREN PLACED IN PERMANENT CARE ARRANGEMENTS (ADOPTION/PERMANENT FOSTER CARE), AND FOSTER CHILDREN REPLACED FROM ONE FOSTER HOME TO ANOTHER, FEWER THE BETTER. (IN APPLYING THESE CRITERIA TO PERFORMANCE, I USED THEM TO IDENTIFY SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE RATHER THAN POOR PERFORMANCE AND NEVER TOOK PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AS SERIOUSLY AS PEOPLE THOUGHT I DID. IN GENERAL, I SAW

PERFORMANCE RATING IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS NOT VERY EFFECTIVE. BUT THE SYSTEM COULD BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE. )

LATER IN 1973 I HAD MY FIRST SERIOUS ISSUE WITH ADMINISTRATION. EACH YEAR CASEWORK SUPERVISORS AND MIDDLE MANGAGEMENT—IN P.G. COUNTY THIS INVOLVED THE ASST. DIRECTOR AND DEP. DIRECTOR-- GOT TOGETHER AND DISCUSSED STAFF NEEDS BASED ON CASELOAD NUMBERS. I FOUND THAT ADMINISTRATION WAS USING A GROSSLY INACCURATE COUNT OF FOSTER CHILDREN—AROUND 1,200 FOSTER CHILDREN. SINCE I KNEW EVERY CASEWORKER'S CASELOAD COUNT, I KNEW THERE WERE FEWER THAN 900 FOSTER CHILDREN. I BROUGHT THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF MY SUPERIORS WHO IGNORED MY NUMBER AND USED THEIRS. I DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXERCISE. A FEW MONTHS WENT BY (EARLY 1974) BEFORE I WAS "WRITTEN UP" AS UNCOOPERATIVE FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE PROCESS. I DECIDED TO PUSH BACK AND INITIATED A GRIEVANCE PROCESS, LESS ABOUT THE "UNCOOPERATIVE" LABEL, MORE TO CONVEY THE USE OF "BAD NUMBERS" UP THE ORGANIZATIONAL LADDER TO THE STATE OFFICE. (I HANDLED THE GRIEVANCE MYSELF, WITH NO AGENT REPRESENTING ME, IN ORDER TO AVOID DIRECTLY ATTACKING THE ADMINISTRATION.) THE ISSUE WAS MEDIATED TO THE SATISFACTION OF ALL PARTIES AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I FOUND THAT THE STATE ADMINISTRATION WAS INDIFFERENT ABOUT THE USE OF INFLATED CASE COUNTS. NO SERIOUS ISSUES AROSE DURING 1975 AND 1976. IN MID-1976 MY IMMEDIATE BOSS WAS REPLACED BY SOMEONE NEW TO MIDDLE-MANAGEMENT.

1977 PROVED TO BE MY MOST CHALLENGING YEAR IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY. IN EARLY 1977 MY NEW BOSS, WHO IN THE PRECEDING MONTHS HAD EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT MY EVALUATION CRITERIA, PUT IN WRITING (WITH COPIES TO THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND AGENCY DIRECTOR) THAT SHE FOUND MY SUPERVISION—MAINLY MY USE OF THE OUTCOME CRITERIA TO EVALUATE CASEWORK QUALITY—AS "INTIMIDATING AND HARASSING" TO MY STAFF. MY OUTCOMES WERE SEEN AS BEYOND CASEWORKER CONTROL MOREOVER, THEY MIGHT INDUCE A CASEWORKER TO MAKE AN INAPPROPRIATE DECISION (SUCH AS NOT REPLACE A YOUNGSTER WHEN WARRANTED OR RETURN A FOSTER CHILD TO A QUESTIONABLE HOME SITUATION). I WAS DIRECTED TO USE OTHER CRITERIA. THIS WAS A CRITICAL ISSUE FOR ME, FOR GETTING GOOD RESULTS IN THESE AREAS WAS, TO ME, BASIC TO AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM. THIS WAS ALSO THE FIRST TIME—BY THIS TIME I HAD BEEN TRACKING FOSTER CHILDREN AND USING THESE CRITERIA FOR FOUR YEARS—THAT ADMINISTRATION HAD INTERFERED IN MY OPERATION. (THERE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN VERBAL RESERVATIONS, BUT NO INTERFERENCE.)

I PRESENTED MY SITUATION AT A WEDNESDAY THEORY MEETING. THERE WAS A FAIR AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION, BUT I CAN ONLY RECALL DR. BOWEN'S OBSERVATION AT THE END: HE SAID THAT I HAD TO FIND A WAY TO COMPLY WITH THE DIRECTIVE TO USE OTHER CRITERIA YET GET ACROSS A DIFFERENT MEANING TO MY SUBORDINATES THAN TO MY SUPERIORS—THE SAME MESSAGE TO EACH, BUT WITH A DIFFERENT MEANING TO EACH. I GAVE IT SOME THOUGHT AND CAME UP WITH TEN CRITERIA (WITH MY THREE CRITERIA AMONG THEM), WHICH I SENT TO MY BOSS, COPYING ALL LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION AS WELL AS MY STAFF. THIS SATISFIED MY SUPERIORS, AND I KNEW I HAD SUCCEEDED WITH MY SUBORINATES WHEN ONE OF THE MORE VOCAL CASEWORKERS SAID, "YEAH, WE KNOW WHICH CRITERIA YOU'RE REALLY GONG TO USE."

THIS STOPPED DIRECT ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFERENCE IN MY EFFORT, BUT MY BOSS CONTINUED TO SEE MY SUPERVISION AS UNSATISFACTORY. A MONTH OR SO LATER THE CHILD WELFARE

PSYCHOLOGIST (UNDER CONTRACT MAINLY TO EVALUATE FOSTER CHILDREN) WAS DIRECTED, WITH ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL, TO OBSERVE MY CASEWORKER SUPERVISION AND MY BIMONTHLY UNIT MEETINGS. HE DID THIS FOR TWO MONTHS AND CONCLUDED THAT I WAS UNSUITED FOR CASEWORK SUPERVISION AND TOO RIGID TO CHANGE. HE RECOMMENDED THAT I BE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER POSITION. THIS MEMO WAS SENT TO ALL LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION. A NUMBER OF OTHER INCIDENTS WITH NEGATIVE MEMOS TO ALL LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION OCCURRED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. BUT DESPITE ONGOING CRITICISM OF MY SUPERVISION, THERE WAS NO DIRECT ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFERENCE IN MY EFFORT (I.E., I WAS NOT TOLD TO STOP.) I CONTINUED TO GET VOLUNTARY COOPERATION FROM THE OTHER SEVEN SUPERVISORY UNITS, CONTINUED TO COMPLETE MONTHLY REPORTS ON FOSTER CHILDREN WHICH WERE DISTRIBUTED TO ALL LEVELS OF ADMINISTRATION. AROUND THE END OF 1977, MY BOSS WENT ON MATERNITY LEAVE. DESPITE ALL THE CRITICISM FROM MANY DIFFERENT SOURCES DURING THE YEAR, MY PERFORMANCE FOR YEAR WAS FOUND TO BE "SATISFACTORY".

THE YEAR 1978 PROVED TO BE RELATIVELY UNEVENTFUL. THERE WAS NO ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, BUT NO INTERFERENCE AND NO WRITTEN STATEMENTS CRITICISING MY SUPERVISION. ALSO, BY THIS TIME MY SYSTEM HAD BEEN OPERATING FOR FIVE YEARS—I HAD FIVE YEARS OF FACTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT MY UNIT'S PERFORMANCE AS WELL AS THE OVERALL FOSTER CARE PROGRAM PERFORMANCE. UP TO THIS POINT I HAD NOT DISCLOSED THIS INFORMATION (I.E., DATA ABOUT MY UNIT'S PERFORMANCE COMPARED TO THE OVERALL PROGRAM), BUT I THINK ADMINISTRATION CLEARLY PERCEIVED THAT MY UNIT WAS DOING WELL. ALSO, I SPENT MUCH OF 1978 WRITING UP MY EVALUATION SYSTEM AND ITS RESULTS FOR PUBLICATION IN A NATIONAL JOURNAL. IN THE FALL OF 1978 IT WAS ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION IN CHILDREN TODAY, THOUGH IT WOULD BE MANY MONTHS BEFORE IT WAS PUBLISHED (MAY-JUNE, 1979). I DID NOT TELL ANYONE ABOUT THE ARTICLE.

IN JANUARY, 1979, I INTERVIEWED FOR THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF THE CAROLINE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WAS ACCEPTED. I BEGAN AS DIRECTOR IN EARLY FEBRUARY, 1979.

#### THOUGHTS ABOUT MY PRINCE GEORGE'S CO. EXPERIENCE

THERE WAS A TEMPORAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MY INVOLVEMENT WITH BOWEN THEORY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MY INFORMATION SYSTEM. I THINK IT REFLECTED A FUNCTIONAL SHIFT RELATED TO USE OF THE THEORY IN MY FAMILY OF ORIGIN.

THE GOALS I WAS TRYING TO ACHIEVE WERE SEEN AS CONSISTENT WITH THE BASIC PROGRAM GOALS, WHICH I SEE AS A MAIN FACTOR IN ADMINISTRATION NEVER STOPPING MY EFFORT.

DESPITE THE CONFLICT WITH MY SUPERIORS, I HAD KNOWN THEM FOR FIVE YEARS OR MORE AND GOT ALONG WITH THEM REASONABLY WELL WHEN WORK ISSUES WERE NOT DISCUSSED. (THIS INCLUDED THE PERSON WHO BECAME MY BOSS IN 1977, WHO I KNEW AS A FRIENDLY COLLEAGUE BEFORE HER PROMOTION TO BEING MY BOSS.) THIS ENABLED ME TO MORE EASILY STAY IN CONTACT AND, PERHAPS, REDUCED THEIR REACTIVITY.

I KNEW THIS WORK SYSTEM—E.G., I KNEW THE SIBLING POSITION OF ALMOST EVERYONE IN IT.

1977 WAS MY MOST DIFFICULT YEAR PERSONALLY, YET WHEN THE YEAR WAS OVER I FOUND THAT THE CASEWORKERS IN MY UNIT HAD GOTTEN THEIR BEST RESULTS. THIS REINFORCED THE

UNDERSTANDING THAT FEELINGS ARE NOT NECESSARILY A GOOD GUIDE TO RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM PERFORMANCE. (THIIS WAS HELPFUL TO ME LATER WHEN I BECAME AN AGENCY DIRECTOR.)

THE FOSTER CARE INFORMANTION SYSTEM ENDED AFTER I LEFT THE DEPARTMENT.

THERE'S NO WAY I COULD'VE DONE THIS WITHOUT SOME UNDERSTANDING OF BOWEN THEORY.

#### MY CAROLINE COUNTY EXPERIENCE

I BEGAN AS DIRECTOR OF THE CAROLINE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN EARLY FEBRUARY, 1979. ANYONE FAMILIAR WITH MY PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY HISTORY MIGHT REASONABLY WONDER HOW I, WITH A PERSONEL FILE FILLED WITH NEGATIVE STATEMENTS (SOME QUESTIONING MY APTITUDE AS A SOCIAL WORKER), WOULD BE SELECTED FOR WHAT I CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BEST SOCIAL WORK ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS IN THE STATE. THESE ARE SOME OF THE FACTORS THAT I BELIEVE WERE IMPORTANT IN MY SELECTION: IN SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES WHAT GOES ON IN LOCAL DEPARTMENTS IS RELATIVELY KNOWN (E.G., THE SPOUSE OF THE EDITOR OF A LOCAL NEWSPAPER WITH A POPULIST SLANT WAS A CASEWORKER IN THE DEPT.). THE MANAGEMENT OF THE AGENCY, PARTICULARLY THE FISCAL DEPARTMENT, WAS PERCIEVED TO BE IN DISARRAY. THE PREVIOUS DIRECTOR (WHO HAD MOVED TO A BIGGER DEPT.) WAS SKILLFUL AT CREATING NEW PROGRAMS AND IDENTIFYING NEW COMMUNITY NEEDS—HE HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH HIS BOARD CHAIRMAN ON THE LATTER—AND HAD GREATLY EXPANDED THE AGENCY, WHICH WAS SEEN AS A FACTOR IN THE PERCEIVED POOR MANAGEMENT. IN THE PREVIOUS MONTHS THREE NEW COUNTY COMMISIONERS HAD BEEN ELECTED AND FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS WERE APPOINTED TO WHAT WAS NOW SEEN, IN MY OPINION, AS A “REFORM BOARD”. ALSO, MY FUNCTIONING WAS ELEVATED—I HAD JUST COMPLETED A SIX-YEAR PROJECT IN THE FACE OF WORK SYSTEM RESISTANCE THAT WAS GOING TO BE PUBLISHED IN A NATIONAL JOURNAL. THE BOARD SAW ME AS JUST THE PERSON THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.

IN THE FIRST SEVERAL MONTHS AS DIRECTOR I CURTAILED AGENCY PHYSICAL EXPANSION PLANS (BY TERMINATING A LEASE-OPTION FOR ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT SPACE), DEFINED MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES, SET UP SYSTEMS TO MONITOR PROGRAM PERFORMANCE (WHICH REQUIRED DEFINING PROGRAM GOALS), HIRED A NEW FISCAL OFFICER AND INFORMED THE BOARD CHAIRMAN THAT IF SHE WANTED PROGRAM DATA TO USE TO IDENTIFY COMMUNITY NEED, SHE WOULD REQUEST IT FROM ME RATHER THAN DEALING DIRECTLY WITH STAFF, AS HAD BEEN THE PRACTICE WITH THE PREVIOUS DIRECTOR. (THE BOARD SUPPORTED THESE MOVES, SOMETIMES OVER THE BOARD CHAIRMAN'S OPPOSITION.)

BOARD MEETINGS FOR MOST OF 1979 WERE SOMEWHAT CONTENTIOUS, SOMETIMES WITH ONE OR ENEN TWO REPORTERS FROM TWO LOCAL NEWSPAPERS . AFTER THE FIRST YEAR OR TWO MOST OF THE BOARD MEMBERS WHO HAD BEEN ACTIVE IN HIRING ME AND SUPPORTING MY EFFORT LEFT THE BOARD EITHER BECAUSE OF THE END OF THEIR TERMS OR THEIR FAILURE TO ATTEND BOARD MEETINGS. HOWEVER, BEFORE THIS OCCURRED, THE BOARD HIRED ME PERMANENTLY (OVER THE OBJECTIONS OF THE BOARD CHAIRMAN), MAKING ME A “PERMANENT” STATE EMPLOYEE. (THEIR DECISION WAS BASED NOT ONLY ON WHAT THEY KNEW OF DEPARTMENT FUNCIONING, BUT, ALSO, THE ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM PERFORMANCE BY THE STATE FIELD MONITORS). THE NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED WERE MAINLY MEMBERS OF HELPING PROFESSIONS AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE BOARD CHAIRMAN'S VIEWS OF EXPANDING SERVICES. SO, BY THE END OF MY THIRD YEAR, 1982, I HAD A

BOARD COMPRISED OF MEMBERS WHO SAW MY PERFORMANCE AS EMPHASIZING MANAGEMENT OVER SERVICES AND REFLECTING QUESTIONABLE VALUES.

THE BOARD NOW (1982) WANTED ME TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN EXPANDING SERVICES BY IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY NEED AND "EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY" AS TO AVAILABLE SERVICES IN ORDER TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION. I SPENT MORE TIME THAN I WOULD'VE PREFERRED TALKING TO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, AND MY LACK OF ENTHUSIASM CAME THROUGH IN MY EFFORT. IN GENERAL, THE BOARD ACCURATELY PERCEIVED MY OPPOSITION TO TRYING TO INDUCE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN AGENCY PROGRAMS. (NEITHER DID I DO ANYTHING TO DETER PARTICIPATION. I SIMPLY STAYED OUT OF THE PROCESS. THE NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVING SERVICE FROM THE DEPT. ACTUALLY INCREASED YEARLY.)

THE BOARD'S MAIN OBJECTION TO MY PERFORMANCE WAS MY "ATTITUDE", WHICH WAS SEEN AS ANTITHETICAL TO SOCIAL SERVICE. ( THE STATE PROGRAM FIELD MONITORS SAW THE AGENCY AS PERFORMING AT LEAST SATISFACTORILY.) THE BOARD EXPRESSED ITS RESERVATIONS ABOUT MY PERFORMANCE FOR 1982. IN EARLY 1984, EVALUATING MY PERFORMACE FOR 1983, THE BOARD FOUND MY PERFORMANCE UNSATISFACTORY AND SAID THEY WANTED ME TO RESIGN. I CHALLENGED THE BOAD'S PERFORMANCE RATING. (I REPRESENTED MYSELF IN A GRIEVANCE PROCESS IN ORDER MINIMIZE ATTACKING THE BOARD.) THE BOARD'S DECISION WAS REVERSEED, BUT THE HEARING OFFICER STATED THAT MY ATTITUDE WAS QUESTIONABLE AND THAT I SHOULD MAKE MORE OF AN EFFORT TO GET ALONG WITH MY BOARD.

DURING THESE YEARS THE COUNTY COMMISSIONER SITTING ON THE BOARD NEVER ACTIVELY SUPPORTED THE BOARD, BUT NEITHER DID HE OPPOSE THEIR EFFORT. HE WOULD OCCASIONALLY EXPRESS HIS SYMPATYHY TO ME PRIVATELY. THE COMMISSIONER WHO WAS ON THE BOARD THAT HIRED ME CHOSE NOT TO RUN FOR RE-ELECTION, SO BY 1984 I HAD A NEW COMMISSIONER ON MY BOARD. THE NEW COMMISSIONER, WHO ALSO EXPRESSED SYMPATHY TO ME PRIVATELY, ALSO STAYED OUT OF THE PROCESS.

DURING THE FIVE YEARS I HAD BEEN DIRECTOR THE BOARD, WHILE BECOMING INCREASINGLY CRITICAL, HAD NEVER INTERFERED IN AGENCY MANAGEMENT. WHILE SOME EMPLOYESS MIGHT HAVE HAD A SENSE THAT THERE WAS FRICTION BETWEEN ME AND THE BOARD, I AM REASONABLY CONFIDENT THEY HAD NO IDEA OF THE DEGREE OF DIFFERENCE THAT EXISTED. (I NEVER MENTIONED ANY BOARD ISSUE WITH ANY STAFF PERSON.) NOW THE BOARD WANTED TO COME INTO THE DEPARTMENT AND MONITOR MY STAFF MEETINGS. I REFUSED THEIR REQUEST, NOTING THAT LEGALLY THEY HAD ONLY AN ADVISORY ROLE. BECAUSE OF MY REFUSAL, THE BOARD TOOK THE RARE ACTION (AFTER CONTACTING THE STATE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT AND SEEING IF THEY HAD THE AUTHORITY) OF SUSPENDING ME FOR ONE DAY WITHOUT PAY.

FOLLOWING THE GRIEVANCE HEARING I WROTE A LETTER TO THE THREE COMMISSIONERS—I TYPED THE LETTER MYSELF AND HAND-DELIVERED IT TO THE COMMISSIONERS IN ORDER TO KEEP IT OUT OF MY DEPT. AND THE COURT HOUSE WORK SYSTEMS—STATING THAT I HAD COME OVER TO THEIR COUNTY AND DONE A GOOD JOB STAIGHTENING THEIR DEPARTMENT OUT, DOING THE JOB THEY PUBLICLY SAID THEY WANTED, AND NOW I FACED A BOARD THAT WAS ACTIVELY HOSTILE TO MY EFFORT AND WANTED ME OUT. I STATED THAT IF THIS WAS THEIR (THE COMMISSIONER'S) WISH, THEN I WOULD GO QUIETLY. BUT IF THEY WANTED ME TO STAY, THEY NEEDED TO GO GET SOME BOARD MEMBERS WHO WOULD SUPPORT MY EFFORT. IN A CLOSED SESSION MEETING BETWEEN JUST ME

AND THEM, THEY SAID THEY WANTED ME TO STAY. (IN FACT, THEY WROTE A LETTER TO THE STATE SECRETARY STATING THEIR SUPPORT.) THEY BEGAN THE GRADUAL PROCESS OF FILLING THE BOARD WITH BOARD MEMBERS OF THEIR CHOOSING.

1984 WAS A CHALLENGING YEAR, BUT BY THE END OF 1985 THE BOARD HAD ENOUGH NEW MEMBERS THAT MY PERFORMANCE WAS NO LONGER AN ISSUE. DURING THESE YEARS I HAD CONTINUED TO MONITOR PROGRAM PERFORMANCE, AND THOUGHT THE DEPT. WAS DOING WELL. BY EARLY 1986 I THOUGHT I'D TURNED A CORNER, WEATHERED A DIFFICULT PERIOD SUCCESSFULLY. THEN DURING A ROUTINE AUDIT I DISCOVERED THAT MY FINANCE OFFICER HAD BEEN EMBEZZLING MONEY SINCE 1984, AND THE AMOUNT WAS SUBSTANTIAL, OVER 100 THOUSAND DOLLARS. (DURING THIS PERIOD HE WAS ALSO TREASURER OF THE LOCAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT. , FROM WHICH HE EMBEZZLED OVER 50 THOUSAND DOLLARS.)

THIS WAS AN EMPLOYEE THAT I'D HIRED SIX YEARS EARLIER, WHO I APPRECIATED FOR DOING WHAT I THOUGHT WAS A VERY GOOD JOB WITH THE DIFFICULT TASK OF GETTING THE AGENCY FISCAL DEPT. ON A SOUND FOOTING AND WHO WAS LIKED BY STAFF AND VALUED IN THE COMMUNITY. I WAS STUNNED, AS WELL AS BEING FACED WITH SOME CHALLENGING MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS: I HAD FRAUD AUDITORS IN MY DEPT. FOR ABOUT FIVE MONTHS; I HAD TWO TRIALS, CRIMINAL AND CIVIL, TO GET THROUGH; AND I HAD TO FIND A GOOD FISCAL OFFICER TO COME INTO THIS ENVIRONMENT. (SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS HAD LOTS OF MONEY MOVING AROUND THAT HAD TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR, AND THIS COULD NOT BE POSTPONED.) I HAD ACCOMPLISHED THESE THINGS BY THE FALL OF 1986, BUT THE YEAR PROVED TO BE MY MOST CHALLENGING. THE STATE DID NOT FAULT ME FOR THIS INCIDENT, NOR DID THE COMMUNITY TO ANY DEGREE, BUT I SAW IT AS MY MOST SERIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE MISTAKE. FOR I HAD HIRED THIS EMPLOYEE, WHO HAD BEEN UNDER MY DIRECT SUPERVISION.

MY FINAL 6 YEARS WERE UNEVENTFUL. I HAD A DIFFERENT BOARD WITH A DIFFERENT BOARD CHAIRMAN. AROUND 1990 THE STATE DEVELOPED A MONTHLY EVALUATION REPORT OF LOCAL DEPARTMENTS (I HAD CONTRIBUTED TO ITS DEVELOPMENT) THAT, WHILE MANILY MANAGEMENT FOCUSED, WAS A STEP FORWARD IN GETTING A READING ON LOCAL DEPT. PERFORMANCE. THESE MONTHLY REPORTS SHOWED THE AGENCY PERFORMING WELL, SO, WHILE THERE WERE OCCASIONAL ISSUES WITH THE STATE ADMINISTRATION, THERE WAS NOTHING LIKE THE PRESURE OF THE EARLY YEARS. MY LAST DAY AS DIRECTOR WAS 6/30/93. WHEN I RETIRED THE AGENCY HAD ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER OF EMPLOYES AS IT HAD WHEN I BEGAN AS DIRECTOR.

#### SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT MY CAROLINE COUNTY EXPERIENCE

THE SITUATION IN CAROLINE COUNTY WITH THE BOARD CHAIRMAN AND PREVIOUS DIRECTOR WAS A COMMON ONE IN THE STATE: THE BOARD AND DIRECTORS WORK TOGETHER IN DEVELOPING NEW WAYS TO HELP WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT ALL HELPING EFFORTS ARE BENEFICIAL, MORE THE BETTER. (THERE WAS NO APPRECIATION WHATSOEVER OF BOWEN'S CONCEPT OF SOCIETAL PROJECTION PROCESS.) THOSE IN OPPOSITION, SUCH AS SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD THAT HIRED ME, USUALLY CRITICISE FROM THE POSITION OF CREATING DEPENDENCY OR IRRESPONSIBLE SPENDING AND FIND THEMSELVES DEFINED AS "MEAN" AND/OR "UNCARING". DEALING WITH THIS IS CONFLICTUAL AND NOT PLEASANT. THE TENDENCY TO DISTANCE FROM THIS PROCESS IS STRONG, AND I SEE THE BOARD MEMBERS LEAVING THE BOARD AND THE COMMISSIONERS LACK OF INVOLVEMENT IN

THE EARLY YEARS AS DOING THIS—SIMILAR TO A FATHER DISTANCING FROM A MOTHER-CHILD INTENSITY.

FINALLY, I COULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT SOME KNOWLEDGE OF BOWEN THEORY.