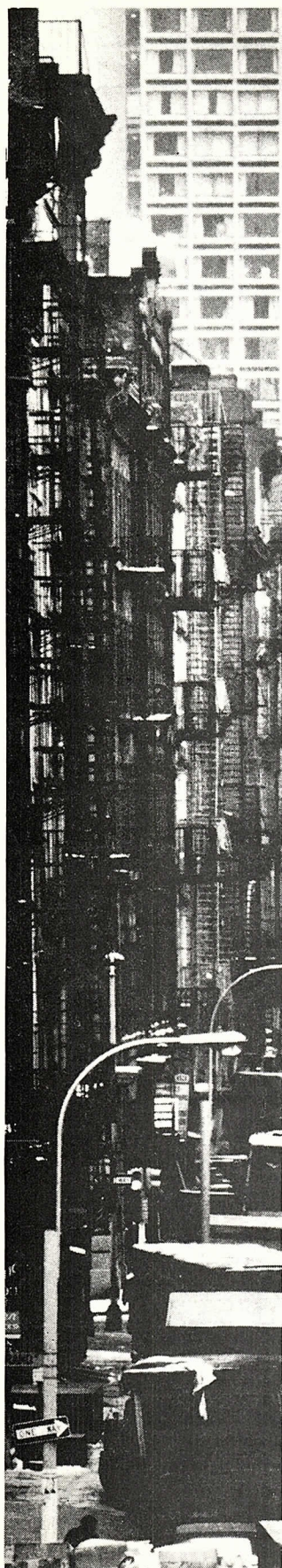


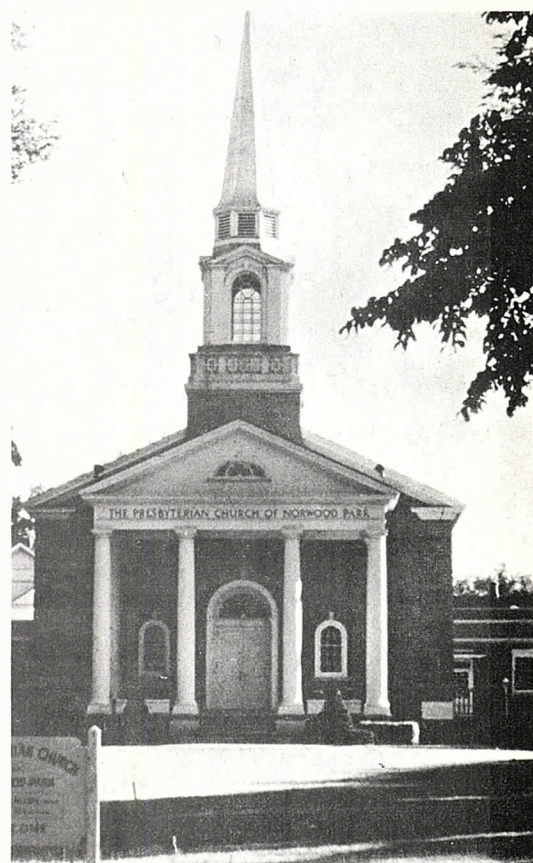
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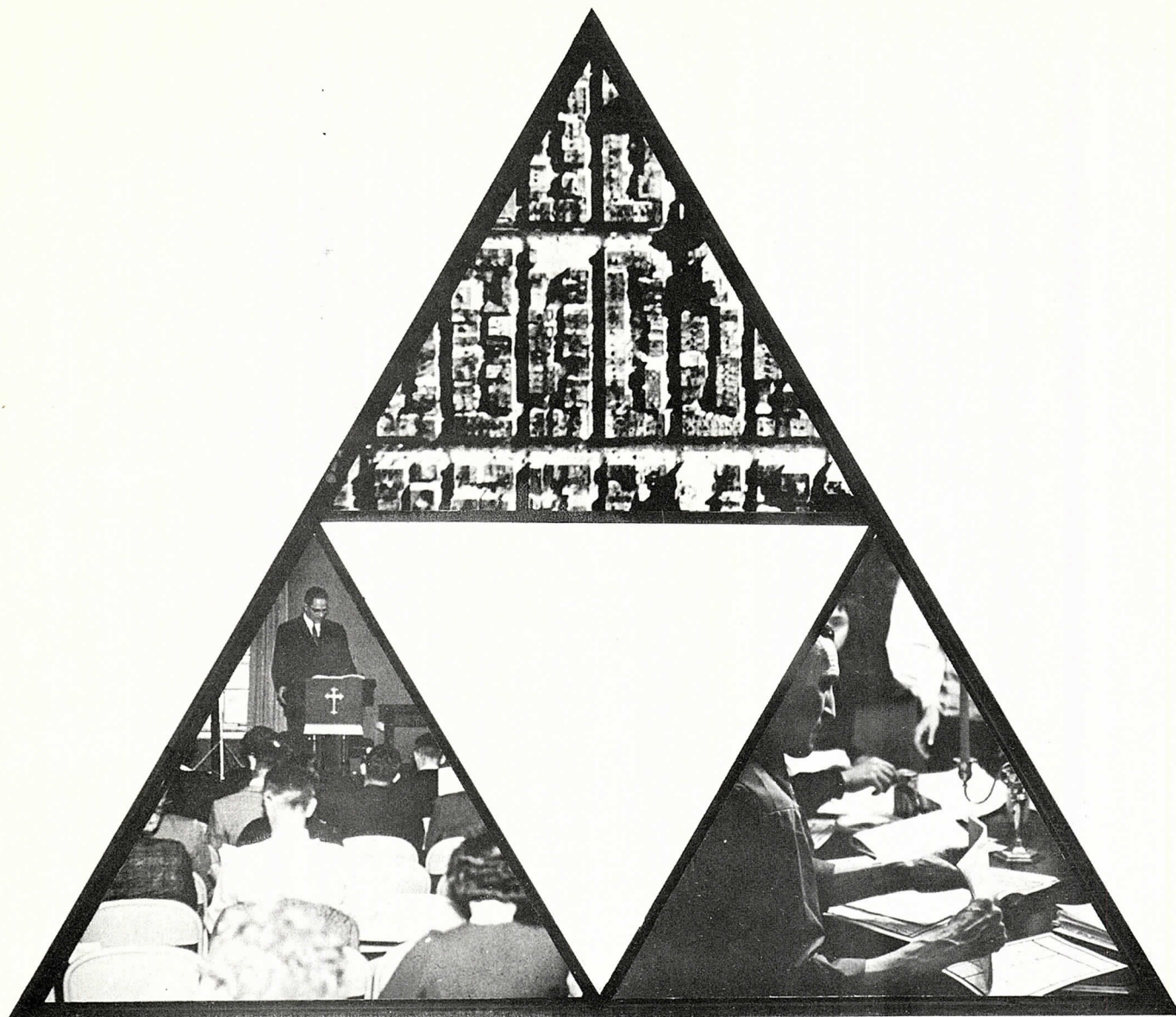


The crisis of the church today is apparent to everyone. In a time when bold, new thinking is evidenced everywhere, the church has found itself caught in a form of intellectual rigidity, defending doctrinal positions as they were stated in a previous century. In a time when most institutions are driven to thoroughgoing reorganization, the church has clutched the structures of the past. And beneath this the life of the church has been characterized by a certain spiritual aridity which is seen in a drying up of the wellsprings of joy and passion which in previous periods have enlivened the life of the historical church.

To say this is *not* to tell the whole story. Its not even to tell the important part of the story. For the twentieth century has also witnessed numerous signs of a transformation in the church's life; indeed, history shall judge the twentieth century as an age of renewal. One could point to the ministry of Dr. John R. Mott, who perhaps more than any other layman in the twentieth century, symbolizes the reawakening of the laity. In every corner of the globe laymen have begun to stand up and demand to be counted as crucial members of the people of God. At the same time, a struggle has gone on to restate Christian theology in the thought forms and patterns of twentieth century man. The excitement generated by the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer for example has permeated every denomination. Beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century, the lay movement and the theological revolution, as well as the pressure of work in missionary areas, led to the beginning of a new unity among the traditions of the church. This has been dramatically illustrated by the history

The Future of the Church: Parish Congregation Cadre



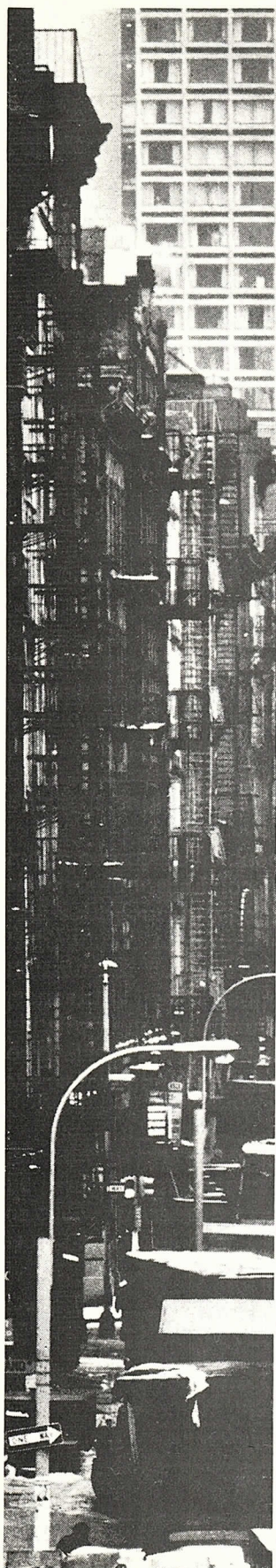


of the councils of churches movement from its beginning in 1910 through to the present day.

In every period in the church's history from the very beginning, the movement for renewal has been a recurring phenomenon. Whenever the life of the church became out of touch with human events, a new demand arose for renewal and a recovery of the basic message of the gospel. One could point to such figures as St. Francis of Assisi and John Wesley as men who, in their times, responded to the cry for renewal and were instrumental in reforming the life of the church. The twentieth century has also witnessed this movemental dynamic, illustrated by single experiments such as the Church of the Savior in Washington, as well as global happenings such as the Second Vatican Council. Every congregation today contains

people who have been motivated anew by a compelling vision of the possibilities of the future and who have given their lives to struggle within that congregation to realize this vision.

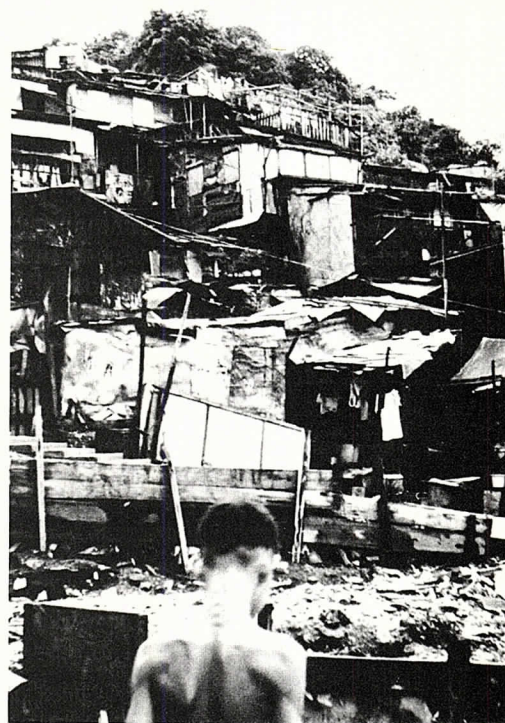
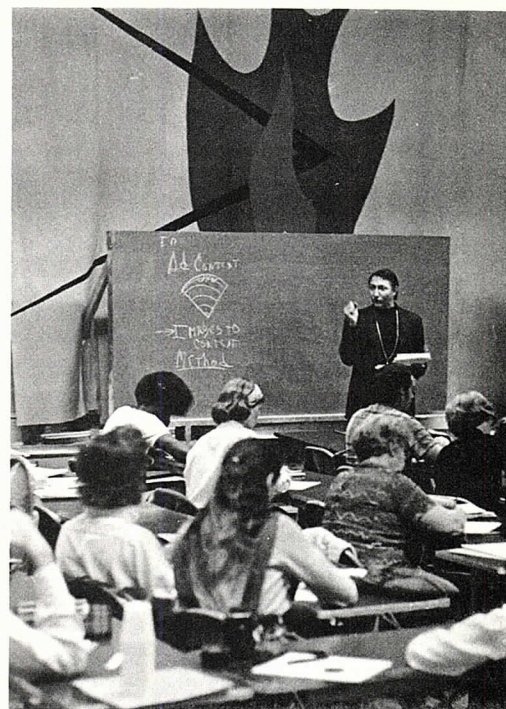
Out of the midst of these currents of the twentieth century was birthed the life and work of The Ecumenical Institute, a research, training, and demonstration center on behalf of the whole church. The Institute experiments with new forms of thinking, organization, and action and then makes the results of these experiments available to the church at large. Its work is thoroughly ecumenical, both in the sense that it is concerned for the total life of the total church across the world and in the sense that its faculty and participants are drawn from virtually every major Christian tradition. The work of the Institute is carried on under the image



of the layman, although many of the faculty members are ordained clergy. This means that the focus is always upon the grassroots level and upon the renewal that must go on in every local congregation.

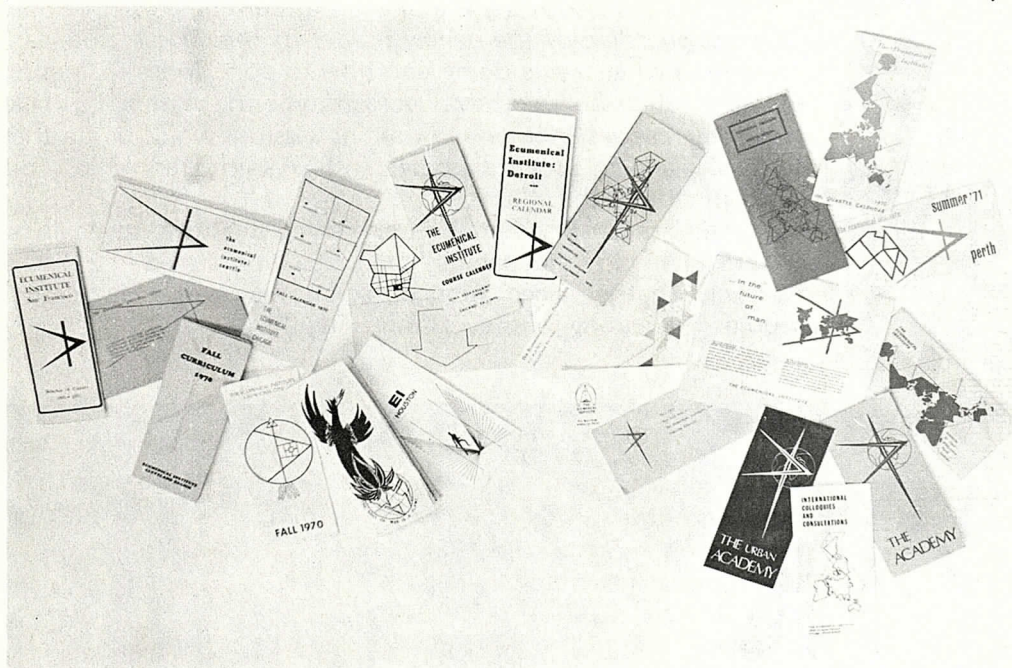
It is in the area of the practical renewal of the local church that the challenge of the next half century lies. The theoretical or theological renewal of the church is finished. In the first half of the twentieth century great theological figures such as Bultmann and Tillich and Bonhoeffer and the Neibuhrs performed the task of restating the faith of the church in ways that speak immediately to contemporary man. The job today is to see to it that every member of every congregation is given the possibility of deciding, in a fresh new way, to be the church and through the church to love the world which God has created. And precisely because the local congregation is the essence of the church, to renew it is to renew the church at large. What has to be done on the local level is a highly concrete and practical task. It means literally transfiguring every structure of the local congregation for the sake of the church being what it is, mission in the world.

Those who are determined that this practical task shall be done have conceived three broad strategies which are essential to renewing the life of the church. The first of these is *contextual re-education*, which will allow members of the church to move from a restricted view of life to one which encompasses the breadth of human life across the globe. This re-education must equip every man for practical participation in the role of being one who builds the future. The second broad strategy is *structural re-formulation*, which must



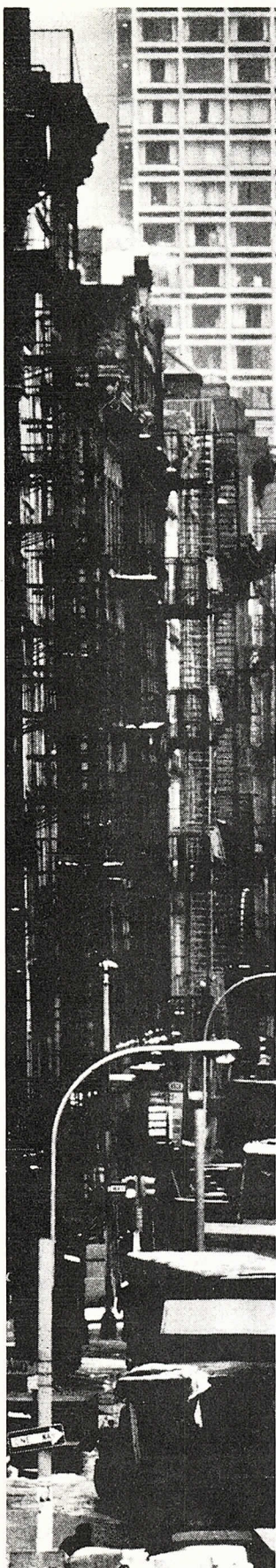
Experimentation along these lines has been proceeding in an intentional way for some sixteen years now through the work of what has come to be called 'the spirit movement' and the Ecumenical

testing them empirically. One such an experiment has been the Fifth City Project on the West Side of Chicago where a community of 16 square blocks, encompassing some 4,500 people, has undertaken to renew itself from the grassroots in order to build a practical method by which any congregation can proceed with the task of caring for the parish in which it lives. Out of this has come a model which any local church can use as a method for reactivating its concern for its community by undertaking to love that community in every detail. The Institute has also carried on an extensive program of courses for laity and clergy based upon a comprehensive curriculum of studies. The curriculum is now being taught by the movement out of 36 regional training centers in North America, by resident colleagues in Australia, Malaysia, and the



More specifically, the Ecumenical Institute itself has carried on a series of intensive programs for the sake of building models and methods and

The Spirit Movement now believes that the time has come to begin to apply the fruits of these long years of experimentation and testing systematically and directly to the local congregations of the historical church. What finally needs to happen is the creation of ecumenical *parishes* in which, local congregations working together as a single



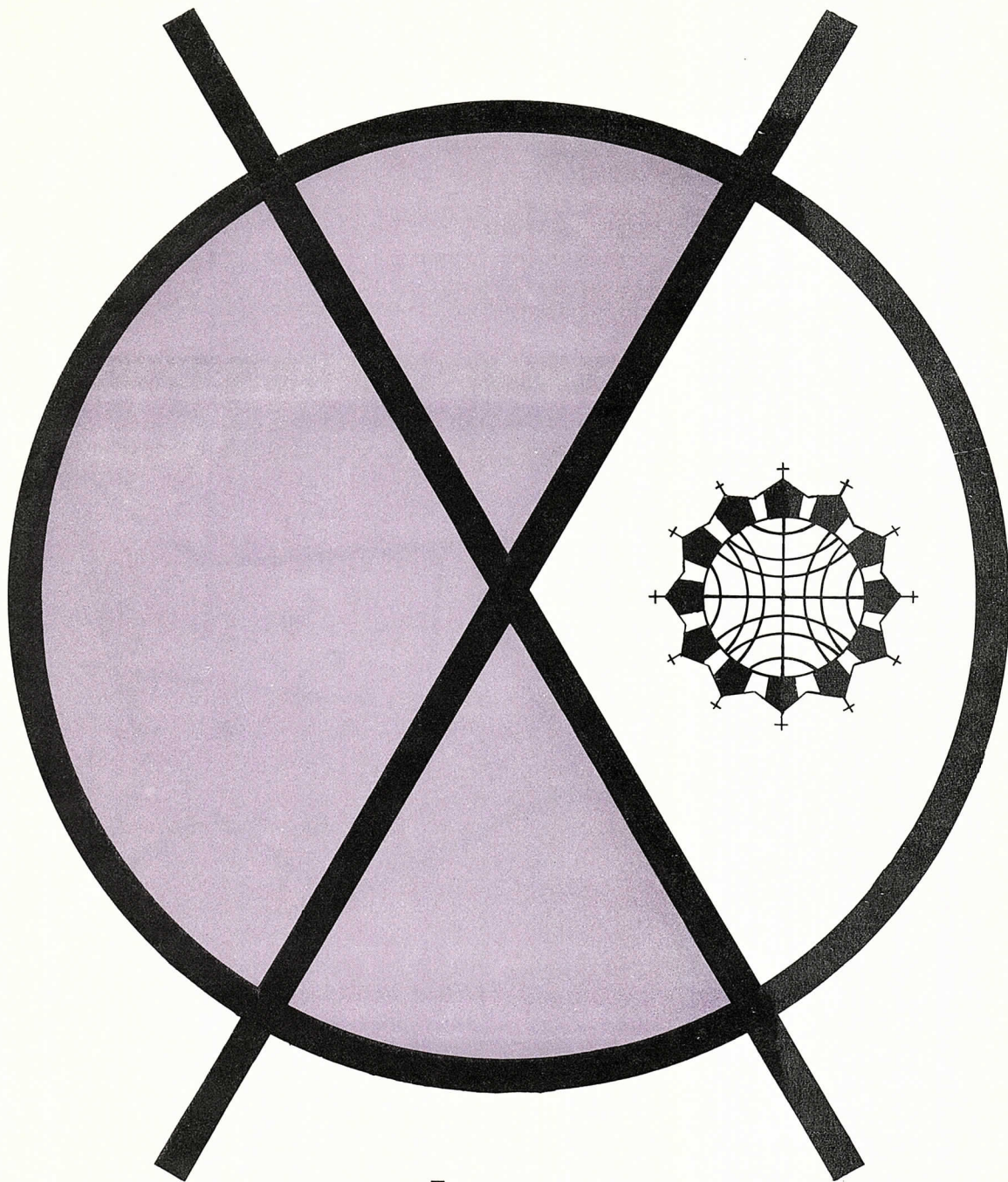
thrust would create new comprehensive programs of care for the community and so begin to deal with the basic social crises of our time. This has sometimes been characterized as placing an overlay of love on a human community in such a way that structures are altered, training is provided, and care maintained for every human life in the community.

The key to this long range human task is the local *congregation*. It is the people of the local congregation who must image themselves as the shepherds of the sheep—the spirit leaders of mankind. The immediate task for the forces of renewal, therefore, is to construct and implement those practical steps which will enable every congregation to experience a radical metamorphosis in the presently-existing structures without necessarily changing those structures. The Summer '70 Research Assembly, in which five hundred churchmen built upon the wisdom of the past, created the necessary tactical systems and declared that the time to move is at hand. Now, signal congregations need to be created in every part of the world to stand as a sign to the whole church that it is possible to do this overwhelming task.

An effort of this kind requires highly-trained leaders who are prepared to play a series of roles in the life of the church. These roles can be described with the terms *guardian of the deeps*, *trainer of the people*, and *warrior sociologist*, who knows what needs doing and how to do it. More than ever, therefore, it is necessary for those who have decided to be the church, both clergy and lay, to involve themselves in intensive training sessions which equip them to undertake these roles and to provide a new depth of spirit leadership, a disciplined *cadre*, within the life of the church.

A ritual that is used at the Ecumenical Institute reads as follows: "Now is the time. We are the people." Perhaps this statement should stand as the imperative that is placed upon the self-conscious people of God at this particular point in the long journey of renewing the church.





advent

The four Sundays preceding Christmas
mark the season of Advent: the Church's deep
and awe-filled anticipation
across the world of the coming
of the Word once again.



MISSION to all HUMANITY

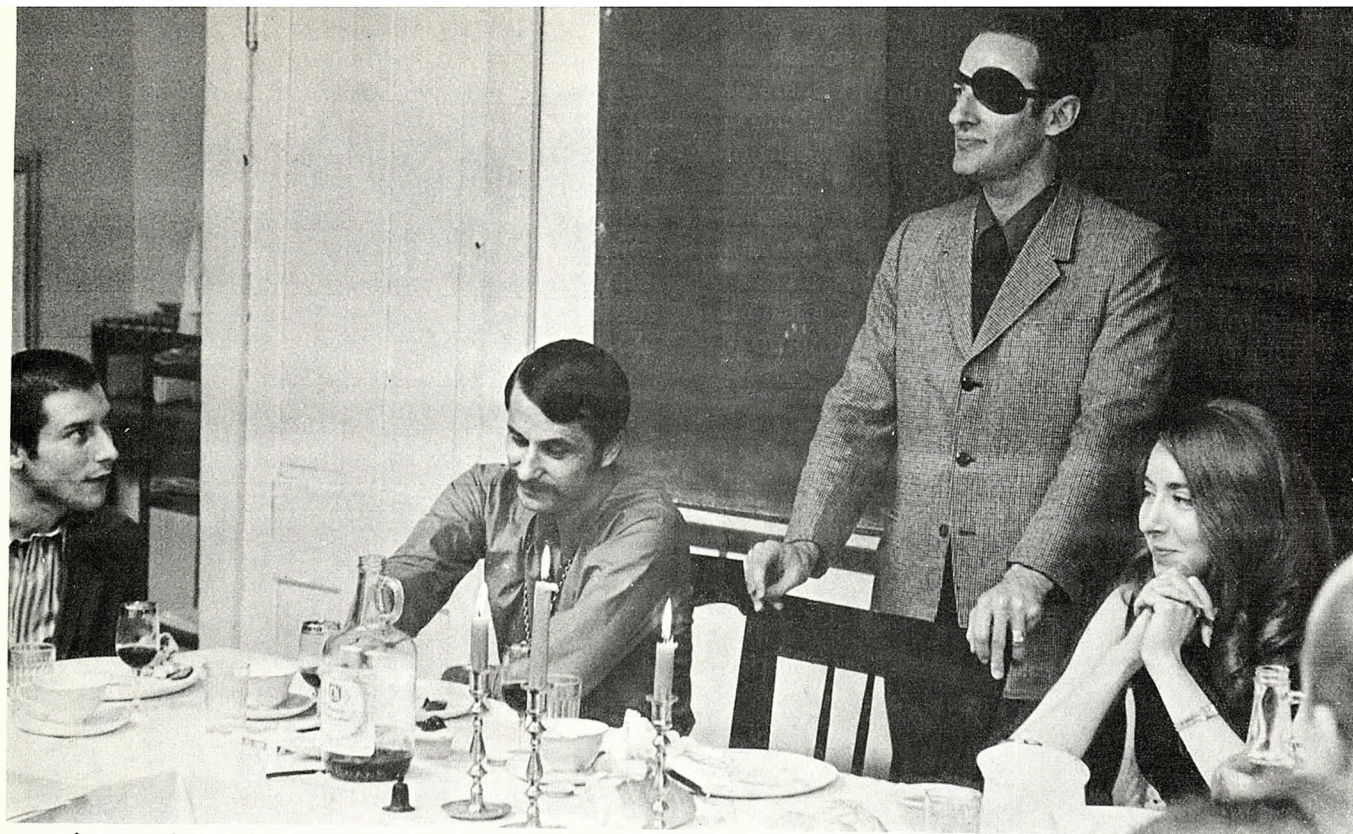
September, 1970 marked the beginning of the third year of experimentation with a disciplined, corporate life style for laymen and clergy across the North American continent, as the Spirit Movement brought into being Religious Houses in eight additional regions. The experiment began in 1968 with the creation of small, residential communities in Chicago, Boston, Atlanta, and Los Angeles to answer the question of whether such intentional signs of the movemental church could catalyze the renewal of the local church by intensifying the training and nurture of grass-roots churchmen.

The central strategy of the Religious House experiment is the enablement of a collegial spirit among those churchmen who have decided to assume the tasks of the Spirit Movement in their region. The House members offer not only the possibility of assistance with regional tasks, but also the opportunity for regional colleagues to participate in the internal life and discipline of the

Religious House through periodic meetings, the Weekend Odyssey (an opportunity for intensive experience with the interior spirit depths), the short-term residential program (monk-for-a-month), and finally, the year-long internship, an intensive training program involving families from the region who decide to participate experimentally in the life of the Order of the Ecumenical Institute.

Following the first year's experiment in four regions, and on the basis of the great need and possibility it revealed, the Spirit Movement established six additional houses in 1969 in Seattle, San Francisco, Oklahoma City, Cleveland, New York City, and Washington, D.C. The question then became one of whether it was possible to implement the Religious House dynamic on a massive scale across the globe.

Following the Summer '70 Research Assembly, which signaled the beginning of coordinated



experimentation with a renewal program in pilot churches across the continent, the Spirit Movement added Religious Houses in Montreal, Winnipeg, Rochester, Detroit, Denver, New Orleans, Kansas City, and Houston, making a total of eighteen Houses on the North American continent. The Religious Houses, after the initial two-year experiment, now have the specific task of providing resources on the regional level for sustaining the ensuing local church renewal experiment in adjacent congregations. The issue now is that of continuing to create spirit giants within the local congregation.

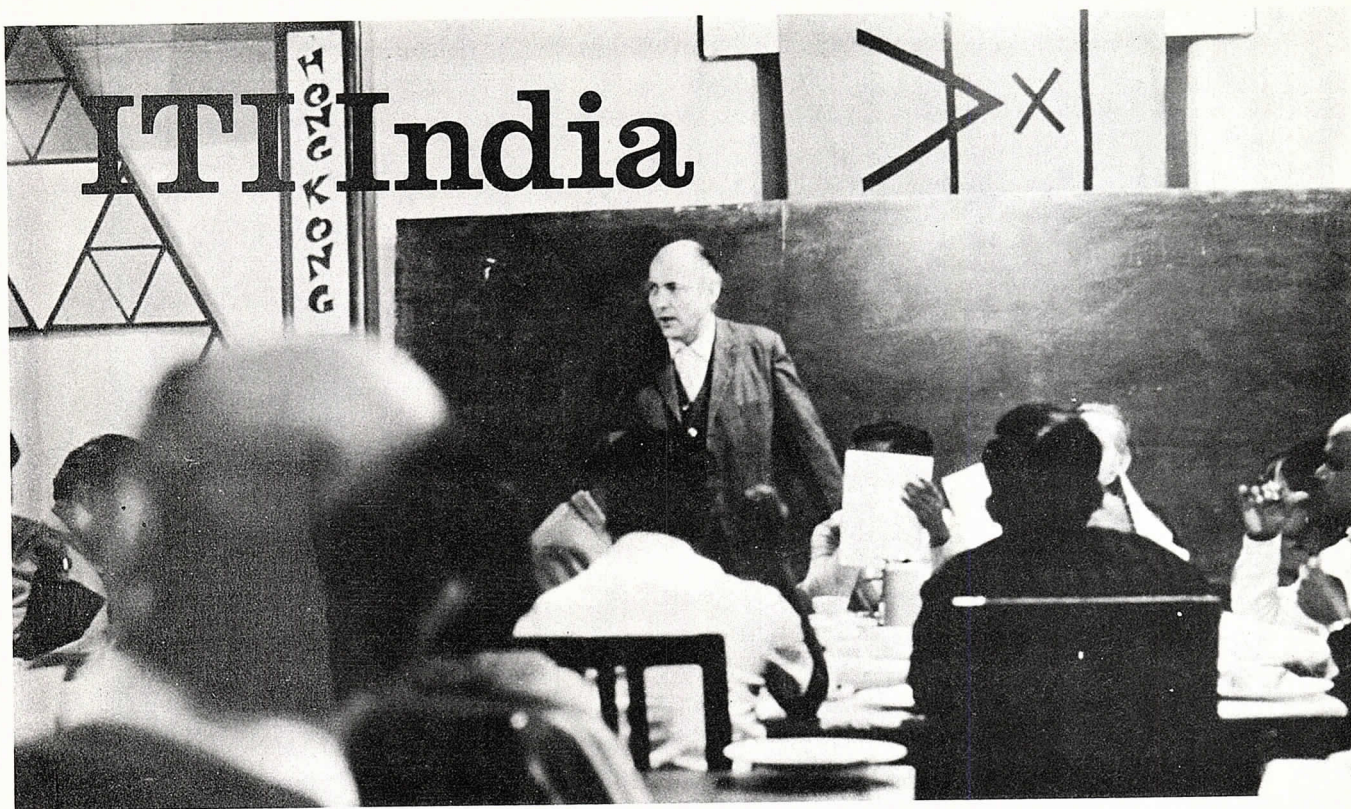
Two years of experimentation have demonstrated that the Religious House is a crucial element in the total regional dynamic, representing the possibility of the disciplined, corporate life style, and thus is a necessary dimension of every region in which the Spirit Movement is self-consciously present. The other two dimensions of the regional dynamic necessary for sustaining the renewal process on the local level are the regional training center, which provides comprehensive and intensive training for twentieth century churchmen, and the action centrum, which coordinates the missional thrust of the renewal forces in the region.

The power of the Religious House within the region is threefold. The first is as a sign of spirit depths; the second is that of pedagogical competence in the faculty of the region; and the third is as a corporately disciplined body available for use

within the life of the region. Of these three functions, the most important by far is the symbolic or spirit function. By making available spirit-sustaining tools such as the Odyssey and the Solitary Office, which permits a continuing struggle with how one goes about being the particular human being that one is, the Religious House nurtures and sustains the spirit life of colleagues in the midst of the overwhelming task of renewing the local congregation. Questions of how to intensify the discipline of the Spirit Movement are grappled with by the House and by the regional structures.

Secondly, ongoing pedagogical training on a systematic basis is available to enable the development of the regional faculty as a means for making available the curriculum of the regional training center. Finally, the Religious House is an experiment in congregational forms. It experiments in the symbolic or worship life through a daily office, rites and rituals, and songs; in study life through systematic, corporate study in common with the other Houses; in disciplined life through the creation of corporate structures that enable colleagues to stand firm in the midst of chaotic situations and pronounce the Word in Jesus Christ. The demand is to discover the congregational forms which make it possible for a body of people to work together as a renewed church for the sake of the community and the world in which it finds itself.

The Religious Houses, in sum, exist solely for the sake of renewing the local church from within in order that it may be mission to all humanity.



The third International Training Institute for World Churchmen in Asia was held August 16 through September 26, 1970, in Anandagiri, Ootacamund, India, under the sponsorship of Asian churchmen. Built upon the experience of the two previous ITI's, it provided a unique educational vehicle geared to equip churchmen in every way necessary to be mission in the twentieth century. The Institute was designed to maintain the dynamic between practical and theoretical studies to provide the contextual framework from which concrete models could be built. Its second emphasis was provided through the structuring of all time in order to provide a practical experience allowing participants to re-style their own time design. An additional emphasis was that of enabling participants to see themselves in the broadest possible set of relationships so that the church's mission to the world might be expanded.

The basic design of the construct was given added depth in order to assist in the participants' struggle to define themselves imaginally as twentieth century human beings. This was enabled initially through decor which made use of an all-encompassing network of global symbols. The rhythm of a creative time design that included not only study and workshops, but missional trips, celebrations, and hard physical work further aided this task of imaginal re-education.

As a result of this Institute the future holds many new possibilities. Four faculty members from this course will be holding consults and courses on the sub-continent throughout the coming months. Secondly, a special conference will be conducted in February, 1971 for course graduates especially committed to a demonstration project, in order to formulate tactical procedures for congregational renewal. And finally, a consultation, also in February, 1971, will finalize plans for a summer Institute and develop plans for further pedagogical training for indigenous teachers.

In reflecting on his six weeks at the Institute, a faculty member talks about Ootacamund as that event which gave form to a new mood of hope concerning the church. Asian participants were so addressed by the collapse of the church that when they became aware of a new vision for the church, they were indeed ready to take another look at that historical dynamic. An Indian participant commented that he was "a changed man and a global man with a new vision, a new wisdom, and a new vigor for a mission to build up a new church, a new India, and a new world to enable each man on this earth to live a meaningful life which is pleasing to the Lord." This remark typified responses of the Ootacamund graduates and indicates that a new hope for the church's future is about to take an active and concrete shape in the Asian sub-continent.

VISITORS TO CHICAGO WEST

Among the signal international visits to the Chicago campus of the Ecumenical Institute was the Rev. Mr. G. Hunter of Liverpool, England. The Rev. Mr. Hunter, the Diocesan Missioner for the Church of England, is seriously examining the training of clergy and laity. He was excited about the missional style of the Institute as a life style for being the Church.

After hearing about the work of the Ecumenical Institute, Dr. and Mrs. Angus H. MacLeod recently spent time with the Institute staff. Dr. MacLeod is the head of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand and president of the Baptist Union in New Zealand. Because of his involvement in the changing urban situation in Christchurch, New Zealand, he was particularly enthusiastic about the possibilities of the local church tactical model.

Two Australian visitors this last month were the Rev. Fred Nile and Sister Mary Juan Caulfield. Mr. Nile is the national director of the Australian Christian Endeavor Union in Sydney and is setting up nationwide experimental urban ministries in that country. Sister Mary Juan, from Victoria, Australia, evidenced interest in the current polity construct and in the experimental family order.

Typical of several visits made by groups from local congregations was the youth group from the Irving Park Baptist Church on Chicago's North Side. The group and their counselor, Mrs. Joseph Feiler, spent a morning discussing the mission of the Church with the Institute staff. Dr. Gilbert James returned with his sociology class from Asbury Theological Seminary for one of their continuing visits to the Institute's Chicago campus.

Concern for humanizing social structures was expressed during the visit of a sociology class from Iowa Wesleyan College. The class and their instructor, Professor Jack Kinton, were excited by the comprehensive curriculum of the Pre-Schooling Institute and the possibilities of the 5th City model for community reformulation.

Academy: Spirit Training

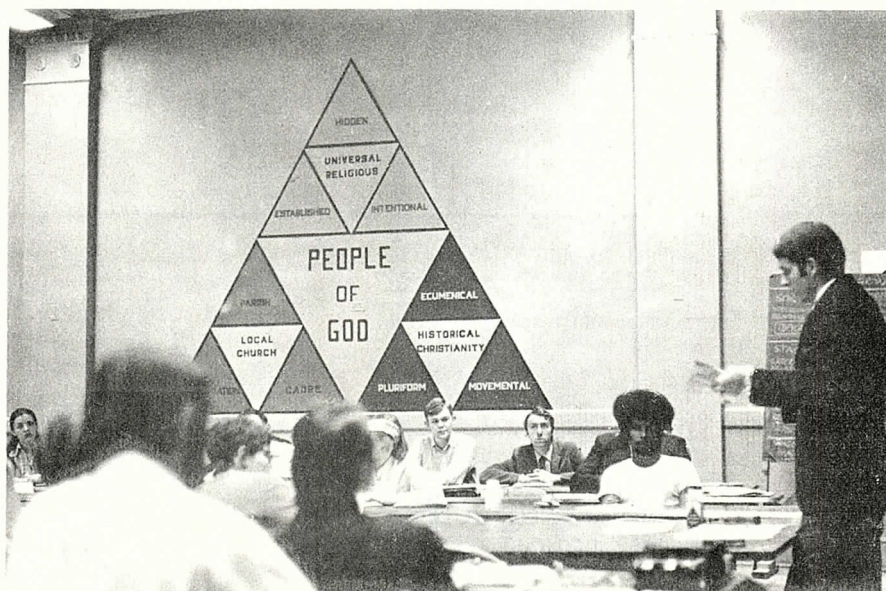
The practical renewal of the local church demands the total life energy of a new breed of spirit men, sensitized to the human struggle with divine activity and equipped with the tools and methods for transforming the everyday stuff of human society into self-conscious spiritual reality. The demand to be about the humanizing task in the local church requires a new response from those who love the church, and an adequate response, in turn, requires contextual re-education and practical retooling. What is required for serious participation in the renewing task is an intensive post-liberal educational construct designed to enable spirit men through priorship training, corporate care, pedagogical training, and practical grounding in the parish, congregation, and cadre.

The eight-week Academy for Global Churchmen, which is now in its eighth quarter of operation, was the revolutionary educational response to the demand for depth training for signal churchmen who see the need for a new approach to the awakening of the local congregation. Experience with the initial training construct enabled the Ecumenical Institute's faculty to establish similar six-week programs for churchmen overseas (The International Training Institute) and

for black churchmen on the North American continent (The Urban Academy). The Academy for Global Churchmen has enrolled 75 participants for the current quarter, and the two International Training Institutes just completed in Hong Kong and in India included a total of 203 churchmen from across Asia and the Pacific islands.

The Academy construct offers the opportunity for disciplined reflection and serious dialogue with the wisdom of the Christian memory, with the edge insights of the contemporary cultural revolution, with the reality of one's own interior depths, and with the futuristic demand to create a new global social vehicle. It is in this context—in which all the past, present, and future is related to one's selfhood—that the individual is trained to play the roles demanded by the task of local church reformulation and equipped with the methodological tools to engage every churchman in the struggle.

As the momentum of practical experimentation in local church renewal increases, the Academy will be the significant structure for enabling disciplined spirit men to create the necessary response as those whose lives are given concretely to the task of loving the church.



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