

THE NEW HUMANITY
AND AN INDICATOR:
PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP ROLES OF WOMEN
AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE GLOBAL COUNCIL
OF THE ORDER: ECUMENICAL

Independent Study

with

Rosemary Radford Ruether

submitted by

Mollie Clements

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Mollie -
This is a good paper -
You write very clearly &
well -
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INTRODUCTION

An atmosphere of generalized despair pervades the planet. The evidence of collapse of western civilization and the traditional structures that have sustained it brings with it the chaos of uncertainty about forms of relationship and modes of operation. Dehumanization has grown with the same momentum as the technological revolution. This is manifested in such things as the facelessness of persons in the metropolis; the abortion controversy that does not recognize the millions of unwanted births that take place or the deaths that ensue, both to the infants in impoverished situations and to the life that is death to a mother who has no control of her biological destiny; growing rates of drug related disease and suicide; seeming helplessness in the face of political and economic systems. The invisible power of multinational corporations expressed in visible impoverishment of peoples frightens beyond expression while at the same time manipulating incalculatable numbers of people, policies, and futures to the profit of the powerful.

In the midst of this atmosphere, seemingly miraculously, the realization of the possibility of a new earth and a new humanity has arisen. Within the church this is a language that the prophets have long used as the promise of God for a faithful people. Perhaps faith today is taking a new form. That is not the subject of this study. Perhaps it is the realization of the need of the whole of humanity and the whole of the universe for God's saving activity. Perhaps there is buried in the core of this hope the understanding that we all live a new inter-related life or we all perish.

This study is research into the practical aspects of the emergence of the new humanity. It will come from a perspective of investigating the feminine dimension of this revolution. This perspective has been used for several reasons: I am a woman involved in the theological task; feminine oppression is an insidious form that has effect on the life of every man and woman of this planet; conscious attention to it has been raised; and this attention might be an indicator of the new hope for a new humanity becoming more than hope, but a reality. In the first part, the work of several women theologians will be reviewed, to look at their view of the new humanity, raising the questions of what, when, where and how. The second part will look at the issue of humanization within the church. Finally, the third part of the study will further explore the question of 'how?'. This will be done through analysis of women's leadership roles in a six week global gathering of about 850 people who are members of a secular-religious organization, the Order: Ecumenical. This third section looks to see if intentionality with regard to women's roles gives impetus to the concrescence of the new humanity.

THEOLOGY OF THE NEW HUMANITY

The new humanity is an expression of the possibility that is giving birth to a societal order wherein the whole of humankind lives out of a basic unity. The most compelling of its characteristics are justice and mutuality of participation. In a sense, it is a coming to be of the New Heaven and New Earth of Isaiah and Revelation. This is said with the consciousness that however just the structures may become, there will still be human imperfection giving rise to new challenges. Thus the eschaton will remain forever beyond, being judge and goal of the present, simultaneously giving it form.

A number of theologians have portrayed the new earth. Rosemary Radford Ruether, of the United States, in her book New Woman/New Earth paints this vision:

"The center of such a new society would have to be not just the appropriate new social form, but a new social vision, a new soul that would inspire the whole. Society would have to be transfigured by the glimpse of a new type of social personality, a "new humanity" appropriate to a "new earth." One might call this even a "new religion," if one understands by this the prophetic vision to shape a new world on earth, and not an alienated spirituality. A society no longer bent on "conquering the earth" might, however, also have more time for the cultivation of interiority, for contemplation, for artistic work that celebrated being for its own sake. But such interiority would not be cultivated at the expense of community, as in monastic escape from "the world." It would be a cultivation of the self that would be at one with an affirmation of others, both our immediate neighbors and all humanity and the earth itself, as that "thou" with whom "I" am in a state of reciprocal interdependence." (1)

The basic elements that would go into effecting such a creation have been described. They are:

(1) The expansion of the availability of and access to technological development from the few to the whole of society, with equal participation in decision-making and sharing in its gifts. Ruether says, "It must become impossible for a small ruling class to monopolize the wealth from world resources, while transferring the social costs to the people in the form of poisoned air, water, and soil." (2) Some practical implications of this might be: (a) Effective public transportation would be available in every metropolis for long distance, with local areas transversed by bicycles, electric cars, and buses (to be allowed in uncongested areas). (b) Nonpolluting and renewable resources that do not leave destructive waste, such as sun, wind, water, electricity, and possibly ~~nuclear~~ energy, would be used to the mutual benefit of humankind and the ecological universe. *then probably must be eliminated since there seems to be no way to be non-pollute*

(II) The future of the globe as an integrated society of nations would be planned with equitable representation and participation of every part. The aim would be to put an end to the impending threat of nuclear annihilation and the destruction of the natural environment. Eventually, the necessity is for communitarian socialism built from the bottom up, involving every local community. Different levels of government would be responsible for different kinds of activities, with the broad base of decision-making rooted in local community.

(III) Within the community, consensus polity would be operative with residential groups and work places, thus increasing the control of people over the quality of their own lives. (a) Communitarian socialist society in its most local manifestation might be residential groups who collectively shopped, cooked, cleaned, cared for children, etc., spreading roles across sexual lines. In this situation the child would not be taken out of the family into the impersonal care of a state agency. Rather, it would have the experience of extended family -- gaining a tribe while remaining rooted in the family. (b) New forms of architecture that provided for simplicity of life, the integration of private and corporate dimensions of life, and a variety of family forms (single parent families, elders, heterosexual and homosexual, etc) would enable the functioning of networks of kibbutz type community within the larger metropolis. (c) Decentralized economy and life patterns based on ecological concern would allow these communities to find satisfaction in excellence of work and in conservation of resources, where 'wastes' would be recycled. (d) Humanization and trust within community would again be possible as work and home were integrated into relatively small, stable communities within which men and women worked, nurtured and decided with mutuality.

These elements inter-relate and reinforce each other dynamically. They together might transform the current operating world view that permeates society with the "drive toward possession, conquest, and accumulation" and enable it to

function with "values of reciprocity and acceptance of mutual limitation." (3) No longer would the patriarchal system that infers dominance into every relationship exist. It would be made over, emptied out, with a new system of reciprocity that works for the corporate welfare, emerging from its chrysalis.

In the book To Change the World, Ruether develops a christology out of liberation theology that spells out her hope for incarnational action that might deliver humankind into a new framework of human and environmental inter-relationship. In her opinion, sin is that which undermines the new humanity. She says, "Sin means not only alienation from God and personal brokenness of life, but also the structured evils of war, racism, sexism and economic exploitation which allow some people to dehumanize others." (4) God's realm has to do with God's will being done on earth -- structurally dealing with societal evils so that humanity might live free of oppression and able to be reconciled one to another, within self, to God, nation to nation, and group to group. This christology is based on the deeds of the historical Jesus, who is the exemplar of incarnational action called for from us all. Jesus identified with the victims of oppression as he ministered to those for whom the structures of society provided no care. Those who would be his followers can only do so by ministering to history's current contradiction, with humility born of knowing the human propensity to betray. They would use power and leadership on behalf of empowering the dispossessed to bring about justice, peace and reciprocity, knowing that over and over again is the incarnation required that gives form to the cruciform life.

Letty M. Russell, also of the United States, is concerned with the formation of the new humanity, and analyzes feminist liberation to locate its clues. Calling the world to a journey toward freedom, she looks to the common longings and the experiences of liberation history already occasioned, to find the new vision. The clues she discovers include solidarity and opportunities for new responsibilities and new avenues of service. She says, in regard to our

present technological society which she views as having misused its trust:

"In this situation it is macro-charity that addresses itself to liberation and justice for peoples caught in complex structures and human relationships which dehumanize their lives. The ethical issues become ones of global peace, development, nation-building, technological exploitation, and not just ways of helping our immediate neighbor in one community or nation."(5)

She uses Paul's words in Romans 8 to describe the discovery of freedom for which humanity longs: "The created universe is waiting on tiptoe for the children of God, to show what they are. In fact, the fondest dream of the universe is to catch a glimpse of real live children of God." She calls us to seek out the signs of the times so as to discern where the need for our action is. This requires both technical know-how and a pervasive, developed life theology. She urges us to the corporate action of liberation, the liberation of humanity, at the points at which we meet oppressive structures. She gives as her definition of hope: "an impulse to change the world in the perspective of God's promise," that is taken from Ferdinand Kerstiens document on 'Hope'. (6) She describes how this hope is given to us: "The Christ event initiates our freedom in such a way that we are drawn with all creation into the horizon of God's freedom by participating in the action of God on behalf of human liberation." She adds, "How can we live now as if the horizon of that future had already broken into our lives through the Spirit of Jesus Christ?" (7)

Specific actions do change the way we think! Such a happening as a woman minister celebrating the Eucharist or the practice of singing hymns with inclusive language has a proleptic effect of infusing our world view with new images. The re-telling of the story of the past so as to uncover its usefulness for the future in light of the present moment's required mission is a means for rejecting oppressive tradition and empowering people to live out of a fuller and more visible understanding of the truth.

Yet Russell is very aware of the ambiguities that are with us in this moment of history relative to the vision of the new human. She emphasizes repeatedly that the form is dependent upon the particularities of the people and the situation involved. She calls this "situation variability." She declares:

"The 'ferment of freedom' which is experienced in the restlessness and alienation of people in every part of the world is an expression of the search for the meaning of life. No longer is that meaning to be taken for granted. In a historicized world men and women have to shape their own understanding of what it is to be human out of their actions and vision of a humane society. Most Christians and non-Christians live in a world where there is no one vision of humankind; a world where visions have to be worked out in the midst of life." (8)

Russell, as do many others, points to Jesus as the representation of the new humanity. Reflecting on Dorothee Soelle's discussion of Jesus Christ as representative rather than replacement, she says that in the event of God's choosing the one Jesus through whom the fullness for human existence was revealed, the possibility was opened up for all people to become representative of a new humanity. The new humanity is marked by the dynamics of healing and trusting. It has a willingness to suffer and to risk for others, not in general, but in the concrete details of life. It blesses the lives of all people, including the self, by taking responsibility to participate in shaping the future, caring for the world, naming it and giving it meaning. The new humanity's destiny is not centrally defined by biological factors, but rather by the total creativity of the person, with actualization of all 'gifts and graces'. New life styles, roles and family relationships emerge, that assuage loneliness and create meaningful intimacy, not in response to commercialized eroticism, but out of a deep regard for the partner as a person and subject.(9) It is built on mutual partnership, and a team approach that includes others that are opposites rather than excluding them on the basis of being different.

Dorothee Soelle, of Germany, raises the question of faith as the struggle against objective cynicism. One of her examples is the human rights struggle in Argentina, the picture of a national schizophrenia is painted. There the disappearance and torture of hundreds of thousands of people is whitewashed until the panic of a people who do not know what to do in the face of terror is given expression -- not in publicly seeking to right wrong, not in organizing for labor rights and to counter the dissolution of labor unions and the failing economy, not in revolutionary activity -- but in the pastime of football. The church no longer gives people a way to communicate their anguish, to work structurally and effectively to relieve suffering, or a way to be sustained and celebrative of participation in the grand adventure of taking seriously the task of human and societal reconciliation.

Offering the fresh but anciently rooted perspective of Asia, Marianne Katoppo of Indonesia describes the new humanity as being liberated, given power, and glorified. People are able to 'stretch to their full length.' She quotes Nelle Morton in describing the full human experience as only possible "when all the oppressed peoples of the world can speak freely out of their own experiences, to be heard and touch one another to heal and be healed." (10)

Emphasizing inclusiveness, she says that this is a key to human community as well as to God language. She says that in Indonesia there is no problem relative to pronouns, as the same ones refer to both sexes. This results in a less fierce dichotomy than is evident in the West. "After all, " she says, "language is where theology begins." (11) She points to the Hebrew words of feminine gender used to describe God: Ruach, spirit, Hokmeh, wisdom, and Shekineh, presence, whose significance is often buried, but which help to make more relevant the task of women's theology. She delights in the discovery in seminary that the word used for God's mercy and compassion, rechamim (as in Ex. 34), originally meant "movements of the womb." Against a background of deprived, manipulated, dispossessed women of her country whose lives have no

hope, Katoppo declares a theology of the womb. This concerns a salvation that involves the totality of the world in the struggle for freedom and peace. As people participate in the process of shaping history, they participate in a continuity of life that has as an analogy that of the family. In Asia kinship ties are strong and have significance for the direction of one's life. The Asian always places hope in the next generation -- in the ones yet in the womb, awaiting birth. For in these will the significance of the present be actualized. And it is these whose call brings out the finest of what happens today. Hope cannot be separated from the continuation of life, one generation born unto another. This hope is "historical, existential, and eschatological."

(12) This image serves to tie this moment of the church's life back to its earliest roots in Abraham's and Sarah's time, to bond it to the future, and to provide the needed corrective of female imagery for God.

PART II

THE QUESTION OF THE HUMANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

Letty M. Russell raises the question of the church itself becoming an exemplification of the new humanity. As it calls people to this new relationship with all that is, should it not in its actions and patterns practice as much as it knows of what it is to be the recreated people?

An open eccesiology, in terms of the church's theology, would be required that shifted the focus of the church from theory to praxis of 'God's love affair with the world.' Mutual interpellation, which is a style of thinking together that emerges in corporate action, would enable the church to act in the face of the ambiguity exposed when turning resolutely away from the past and determinedly facing the future. A new model of ministry would emerge which might be characterized by "advocacy, nurturing and riotous pluralism." (13)

Other authors also give attention to this question. Ruether, in a church study book, examines one aspect of it within the framework of the church's feminization as expressed by Mariology. Particularly relevant to the new humanity is the study of the Lucan tradition which portrays Mary as "an independent agent cooperating with God in the redemption of humanity." (14) In Catholicism, which cuts over against the purely submissive role generally ascribed to her by Protestants, Mary is sometimes seen as a symbol which transforms domination/subjection to reciprocity. Thus she, as well as Jesus, becomes a sign of the new humanity.

The role model that Mary becomes for the church affirms selfhood, dignity and gracious human interaction, rejecting hierarchal structures that empower the powerful. Not only are church bureaucratic structures called into question, but also the concepts of God, ministry, and purpose. Mary is one who stands with dignity, aligning with the oppressed, serving the deep need of history without servility, emptied out of self pride but filled with the power of God. The

humanized church would be like that.

In another context Ruether says that the church must grapple with the issues of liberation, sectarianism, sexism and ecology. In terms of liberation, the fact must be realized that the church has perpetuated the betrayal of Jesus by using his name and cross as a means of power and dominion over other people. She says, "The Jesus who made himself one of the poor, one of the outcasts, and finally, one of the dead, in order to witness to the true conditions for entering God's reign, witnesses against this betrayal of his name." (15) The liberation theology of Latin America reveals that the primary point for incarnation is in the unending struggle of good and evil. The incarnational act maintains the edge of appropriate action, acting even unto death to enable liberation. On the other hand, it restrains the movement when it is tempted to absolutize its own victory, struggle and truth. The church must involve itself; it cannot keep its hands clean. It is called to be the conscience of change.

In Jewish-Christian relations the thrust is a new solidarity built upon cleansing itself of the practice of using Jesus' name to deny the validity of other people's experience of God. Ruether condemns the bigotry of particularism that claims for itself the only valid revelation of authentic humanness. She names this as imperialistic universalism. It is the absolutization of one particularism. Understanding that God is one and universal, the church must revise its view and mode of relating to other cultures and other religious heritages. She says, "There is no final perspective or salvation available through the identity of only one people, although each people's revelatory point of reference expresses this universal in different contexts." (16) If the church is not to oppose the coming of the new humanity, it must cleanse itself of imperialism, and relate with dignity-giving graciousness to others. Then God's realm might be evident.

Feminism explicates Christ as the representation of a new humanity of service and mutual empowerment. As he related to women, Jesus demonstrated a

way of life that is tied to neither sex. He cared for and responded to the most oppressed. Women were and are the oppressed of the oppressed. Jesus did not separate himself from or ignore them. He lifted up the new humanity of suffering servanthood through his relations with them.

The issue of human survival or the abuse of the resources of the earth has resulted primarily from the affluent minority owning and controlling the resources to the exclusion of the majority who are poor and powerless. What is required is the creation of "a new society of justice, in which nature can be dominated without social domination." (17) Nature can also be related to as *isn't this the future necessary and?* part of the universal life process without which each member is inter-dependent with every other.

Soelle also critiques the church. She feels that the church has lost its profundity and become a middle class organization that conforms its religion to society rather than the other way around. She gives vivid examples of how Biblical concepts have become spiritualized and emptied of meaning. Referring to seminary years, she says:

"We spiritualized these concepts until they ceased to express anything concrete at all. It didn't occur to us that they had anything to do with finances, unpaid bills, arrears of rent, eviction orders and homelessness, with underemployment and unemployment, with lack of food or the wrong food, with hunger and sickness. We romanticized 'the poor'. We didn't describe them in bald words, like the country proletariat or war widows. We spiritualized the poor -- and forgot them. Working people became invisible in theological circles...We related sin to the rebellious personality, and no one taught us to think in collective categories...We separated the guilt meticulously from our economy. We surmised what estrangement was, but we ontologized it into an eternal fate which was given with human existence. Thus we avoided calling the whole thing 'sin', and looking it in the face in the midst of our society." (18)

The church became the vehicle for affirming and protecting extreme

individualism, in terms of salvation, significance, initiative, and profit.

Speaking of the centrality of the resurrection for the life of the church Soelle recalls Mary Daly's concept of "Christolatry." She says that Christ becomes an idol when the church venerates Christ's resurrection without sharing in it, without becoming alive from death through the struggle of societal righteousness and peace. "If individualism is our ultimate and most profound category for human beings, then we cannot understand what the resurrection is really about." (19)

Resurrection is a process in which we may all participate. It is a process of initiating the God's realm, of introducing the new humanity. "Islands of resurrection," which are beginnings of new community, are coming into existence. They are characterized by the way they separate themselves from old culture, "rejecting its standards of education, career, income and way of living." (20) 'Presence' as an identification with the poor is emphasized. Middle class privileges are renounced. Work is done cooperatively. "The groups read the gospels together and develop new forms of the spirituality of liberation, which rests on radical identification with the poor." (21)

The theological task of the church today is to point out the connection of the physical suffering of the Third World and the psychological sickness of the West, expressed in economic, political, ecological, cultural and psychological bondage. So long as this persists people cannot live with dignity, in any part of the world, for they are dispossessed of grace.

Marianne Katoppo, with reference to Dutch theologian Maria de Groot, compares the stultification within the institutional church with the head of the synagogue in the Luke 13 story of Jesus healing the woman bent double and possessed. The Jewish pharisee condemned Jesus for the action, for it was on the Sabbath. The churches, similarly, are not eager for women to stand tall and take roles of leadership and ordination. Neither are they eager for inclusive language that allows people of both sexes to understand themselves as created in

God's image.

She mentions that the Balinese church has ordained women since it began. This is perhaps in keeping with the strong culturally pervasive image of the mother in Bali. Katoppo calls the church to a new appreciation and appropriation of the female images of God in the Scriptures, pointing to such as the brooding hen, child birth and the suckling at the breast. In contrast to Christianity's tendency to exclusivity in language and images, Hinduism and other Asian religions see God as having female expressions and they do not dichotomize life and death. Durga in Hinduism is the goddess of death, whose thousand year old statue watches over the ocean in Bali. She also has the attributes of "life, activity, energy, power. Life and death are one." (22)

PART III

THE ORDER: ECUMENICAL AND THE GLOBAL COUNCIL

The Order: Ecumenical is a global body of about a thousand people, 777 of whom are beyond what has been termed the intern level. It is family order that had its roots in Christian faith. Its purpose is Christian witness.

As this is the group whose council and mode of operation are being examined for a limited investigation of the role of women as an indicator of the new humanity, a personal perspective of its history, mission and style of life will be presented. (23)

HISTORY AND MISSION

The original staff was convinced that the church was a dynamic crucial for society and the future of the world. They realized that it was not church attendance that made one a Christian, nor the voicing of words, or moral progress. They discerned that being an authentic human being meant standing before limits, articulating the word of possibility and living that word in full, responsible freedom. Being the church meant doing this together on behalf of others in order that the needed deed of history might be done in such a way as to call others to do the same. It meant living the cruciform life.

They determined to give witness with word and deed to the facticity of the Word of Jesus Christ: creation is good, the self is received, the past is approved and the future is open. The explication of this life understanding was called Religious Studies I (RS-I). Born within the Christian church, the first awareness of duty was to serve the church so that people in congregations could be better equipped to see through the words of the Christian gospel to their meaning. Thus they too could have the opportunity of living the profoundly meaningful life and of being the dynamic of the church. Further curriculum was developed which was taught across the United States.

At the same time it was sensed that a disciplined life style was necessary

in order to be obedient to the directives inherent in authentic life. Thus came emphasis on being a community. The Order positioned itself where it would be in the midst of human need, to serve it. A vacated seminary in the west side of Chicago became the home of the Order. The surrounding neighborhood -- in the midst of a ghetto -- was the community intimately served. This was called Fifth City, the inner city to which people return to live and serve. Fifth City taught the Order about primal community.

In being the church the Order realized that by definition this meant a demonstration of the society that is not divided by racism, class, or nationalism.(24) The Order did not turn people away who wanted to work with it. The criteria for being the Order: Ecumenical was the decision to give your life to care for the world through this particular corporate experiment. The collegium table was at the heart of decision making. Consensus was the mode.

In time the Order felt impelled to move beyond work with the church through congregations and beyond the one community of Fifth City to serve the broader world at its point of greatest need. This need was articulated as the gap between the haves and have-nots. Based on the learnings of Fifth City and what had been learned within community about RS-I in practical action, the structures of the community forum and consult emerged with contradictional analysis as their inner framework. Around the world the Order moved to serve intensively the disadvantaged. It linked itself with local people, giving them methods which sustained them on the journey of community self-development that encompassed all within it. Others around the world who were not Christian felt themselves called to this same task. Not knowing anything about what it meant to be the church, not caring to be Christian, but compelled to care for the dispossessed and powerless, they joined the ranks of the Order. In some ways these colleagues who became a part of the Order from around the world with the motivation to care for the least of society have sensed the word of life that got this journey started.

X = All of the above

NATION	YEAR: WORK INITIATED	TYPE OF WORK	ANTION	YEAR: WORK INITIATED	TYPE OF WORK
Afghanistan.....			Comoros.....		
Albania.....			Congo.....		
Algeria.....1966		E	Costa Rica.....		
Andorra.....			Cuba.....		
Angola.....1969		A E	Cyprus.....		
Antigua & Barbuda.....			Czechoslovakia.....		
Argentina.....			Denmark.....1980		B
Australia.....1967	A & D	1969 B X	Djibouti.....		
Austria.....1980		B	Dominica.....		
Bahamas.....1977		E	Dominican Rep.....		
Bahrain.....			Ecuador.....		
Bangladesh.....			Egypt.....1971 E	1977 B	C X
Barbados.....			El Salvador.....		
Belgium.....1972	D & E	1974 B	Equatorial Guinea.....		
Belize.....			Ethiopia.....1971		A
Benin.....			Fiji.....1969		A E
Bhutan.....			Finland.....		
Boliva.....1965		D E	France.....1972	D E	1973 B
Botswana.....			Gabon.....		
Brazil.....1965	D E	1977 B	Gambia.....		
Bulgaria.....			East Germany.....		
Burma.....			West Germany.....1972	E	1975 A
Burundi.....			1977 C		
Cambodia.....			Ghana.....		
Cameroon.....			Greece.....		
Canada.....1964	A	1970 B	Grenada.....		
1977 C		X	Gautemala.....1969		C
Cape Verde.....			Guinea.....		
Central African Rep.....			Guinea-Bissau.....		
Chad.....			Guyana.....		
Chile.....1965	D E	1977 B	Haiti.....		
1978 C			Honduras.....		
China.....1978	E		Hungary.....		
Colombia.....			Hong Kong.....A	1967 E	1970 B
			1976 C		X

NATION	YEAR: WORK INITIATED	TYPE OF WORK	NATION	YEAR: WORK INITIATED	TYPE OF W
Iceland.....			Poland.....		
India.....1969 B	1975 C	X	Portugal.....1981 D	1982 C B	
Indonesia.....1974 B	1976 C		Qatar.....		
Iran.....			Romania.....		
Iraq.....			Rwanda.....		
Ireland.....1974 E			St. Lucia.....		
Israel.....1966 E			St. Vincent & Grens.....		
Italy.....1975 B	1977 B		San Marino.....		
Ivory Coast.....1981 B	1982 C		Sao Tome e Principe.....		
Jamaica.....1973 E	1978 B C	X	Saudi Arabia.....		
Japan.....1967 E	1971 B	1977 C	Senegal.....		
Jordan.....			Seychelles.....		
Kenya.....1969 A E	1970 B	X	Sierra Leone.....		
Kiribati.....			Singapore.....1969 A		
North Korea.....			Solomon Islands.....		
South Korea.....1971 B	1975 C	X	Somolia.....		
Kuwait.....			South Africa.....		
Laos.....			Spain.....		
Lebanon.....			Sri Lanka.....		
Lesotho.....			Sudan.....		
Liberia.....			Suriname.....		
Libya.....1966 E			Swaziland.....		
Liechtenstein.....			Sweden.....		
Luxemburg.....			Switzerland.....		
Madagascar.....			Syria.....		
Malawi.....			Taiwan.....		
Malaysia.....1967 E	1968 B	1976 C	Tanzania.....		
Maldives.....			Thailand.....		
Mali.....			Togo.....		
Malta.....			Tonga.....1973 A		
Mauritania.....			Trinidad & Tobago.....		
Mauritius.....			Tunisia.....		
Mexico.....1965 D E	1980 B		Turkey.....		
Monaco.....			Tuvalu.....		
Mongolia.....			Uganda.....		
Morocco.....			U.S.S.R.....		
Mozambique.....			United Arab Emirates.....		
Nauru.....			United Kingdom.....1968 D	1970 B	X
Nepal.....			United States.....1962 A B		X
Netherlands.....1972 D E	1974 B		Upper Volta.....		
New Zealand.....1980 E			Uruguay.....		
Nicaragua.....			Vanuatu.....		
Niger.....			Vatican City.....		
Nigeria.....1969 A E	1974 B		Venezuela.....1965 D E	1973 B	1977 C
Norway.....			Vietnam.....		
Oman.....			Western Samoa.....1973 B		
Pakistan.....			Yemen.....		
Panama.....			Yemen Arab Rep.....		
Papua New Guinea.....			Yugoslavia.....		
Paraguay.....1965 E	1977 D	1979 C B	Zaire.....		
Peru.....1967 E	1970 B	1977 C	Zambia.....1969 A B	1975 B	1978 C X
Philippines.....			Zimbabwe.....1969 A B		

The movement of the order to countries around the globe is shown on the chart on the preceding two pages.

The community consults begin with calling forth the practical vision of the people of a particular community or village. Contradictions are delineated. Proposals, programs and implementaries are built that would deal with the contradictions. The consult moves hopeless people to hope. It binds geographically located people into community with mission, a long-range inclusive task which everyone has participated in building. The work of doing the programs begins immediately, with an auxillary staff of the Institute living with the people and working beside them, providing methods where appropriate. So the stance of living out of possibility, acknowledging the real limits, and working together on behalf of the whole community rather than out of personal "druthers" has been communicated. But the ground of faith that produced this stance, the religious articulation that indicated this mission, has not been self-consciously shared with all. The time has not been taken to wrestle through this kind of conversation. In some places, talk of the traditional religious would have undermined community work or relationships with government. Secular rituals and symbolic life was maintained, but the relationship with religious roots was uninvestigated. This produced an awkwardness for inter-relating the various heritages which had become the make-up of the Order.

The Order became a missional people, and in its deepest fabric a religious people, without a common heritage. It became this by following the dictates of its faith. Faith in the Event of Jesus Christ produced this body of people. Now the Order is something different from what it was when it was only situated in Fifth City. Because this new being needed definition and because needed decisions about common form and common structures required the struggle of the entire body to a consensus out of which all could work, the Year of Order Council was called. (25)

OPERATING MODES

The Order lives as a community. Where possible, each couple or single adult has a private room, with children two to a bedroom. In some locations, walls are curtains, and children share the same room as parents, while single member families live dormitory style. The Order is self-supporting, and where appropriate, each family participates in earning. Incomes are pooled continentally, or in larger configurations. Stipends range from \$12 per adult in nations such as India to \$96 in places like the United States. Besides the stipend, housing and utilities, food at \$30 per month per person in western countries, and health and education funds are covered by self support. *for what time period? per month*

House work and cooking are done by teams with all persons participating on a rotational basis. Generally the day begins with corporate structures at 6 a.m., with everyone gathering for rituals, breakfast, corporate conversation and a collegium that lasts until 7:30 a.m. The body of the day is used for missional activity, with those persons who are assigned to work for self-support going to their jobs, while others do jobs related to the current strategies of the region. Everyone gathers again in the evening, for the meal and appropriate work, with 9 or 9:30 ending corporate work. Weekends are used for strategy building, problem-solving, work days, training programs or other such corporate activity.

ORDER STRATEGIES

During the days of intensive work in Fifth City, the basic strategies of the order's work were delineated as contextual reeducation, community reformulation and spirit remotivation. The reeducation was carried out through teaching programs using a two track curriculum, religious and cultural studies. An imaginal education process was used and also taught. Many of the courses were offered in an intensive forty-eight hour weekend, but others required a longer period. The total curriculum was offered once to three times a year in a residential, covenanted community called the Global Academy.

Spirit remotivation focussed on the creation of screens and methods for

enabling life to be lived at a profound level. Corporate and solitary worship forms were created. As the community struggled with the dimensions of religious life, their learnings were put onto charts, papers and lectures that delineated the Other World of mystery, consciousness, care and tranquillity; the New Religious Mode of poverty, chastity and obedience; knowing, doing and being, and meditation, contemplation and prayer; and the stages of an individual's vocational journey.

As the order turned its attention to caring for the world, out of its learnings from Fifth City, the term Human Development Project (HDP) was adopted for comprehensive work with neighborhood communities or villages. Five presuppositions gave form to each HDP. 1. Establish the boundaries within which the work will be done. 2. Within those boundaries, work with all the people. 3. Deal with all problems, or the ones untouched will drain away whatever success is accomplished. 4. The depth human problem must be discerned and articulated. 5. Symbols are key to catalyzing change in people and community. In 1971 a six week summer research program of a thousand people gave form to the social process articulated in dynamically related economic, political and cultural triangles. A copy of the triangles is in the appendix.

The order, in most of its work, has maintained a low visibility. Its public face has been the Ecumenical Institute for church related programs and the Institute of Cultural Affairs for secular work.

SPIRIT LIFE

The Order understands that spirit is key to life. Whatever one's circumstances, there is a propensity within everyone to experience self as victim to the situation. When this happens the human spirit collapses and life seems to be without meaning or hope. In contrast to this is the decision to live out of the word of possibility. The Order attempts to live out of this stance, to rehearse it, and to hold each other accountable through rituals and acts of care to ever again be self conscious to the opportunity of saying 'Yes'

to life rather than 'No.'

The symbolic life is an acting out of this life stance. The day begins with a wake up ritual that calls attention to this resolve. The first gathered activity marks the beginning of the day with a drama that rehearses these decisions and their implications for life as a global servant force. Within the day specific accountability is held, so the real situation can be faced and its consequences addressed. Absolution is pronounced in realization of the abounding of life in the midst of brokenness.

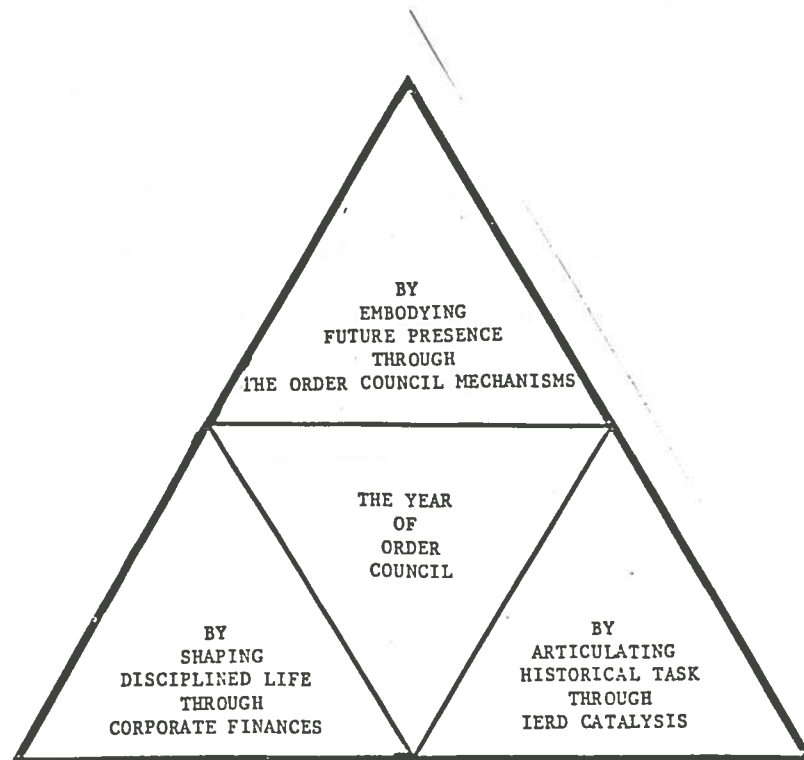
The culmination of each week is in a corporate liturgical celebration that gives witness to the profound meaning of life. Celebrations of individual life, of covenant, and of special corporate activity are raised up. The reports of the week from local and global work inform the body of the victories accomplished and difficulties encountered. The final act of the celebration is the holding of symbolic accountability and the pronouncement of absolution on each participant.

THE YEAR OF ORDER COUNCIL

The Year of Order Council was called to enable the total body to reflect on its past and create the directions for its future. The sixteen months, August 1983 through December 1984, were designated as the extended "Year." Two diagrams interpret the aim and strategies.

DIAGRAM A

Diagram A is a triangle which became the symbol for the order across the globe for this sixteen months. It held the consensus that the Order for this period had but one priority and that was the Year of Order Council. This major focus had three dimensions: (a) dealing with the financial situation, (b) doing a major global program, the International Exposition of Rural Development (IERD), and (c) getting a new grasp on the destinal function.



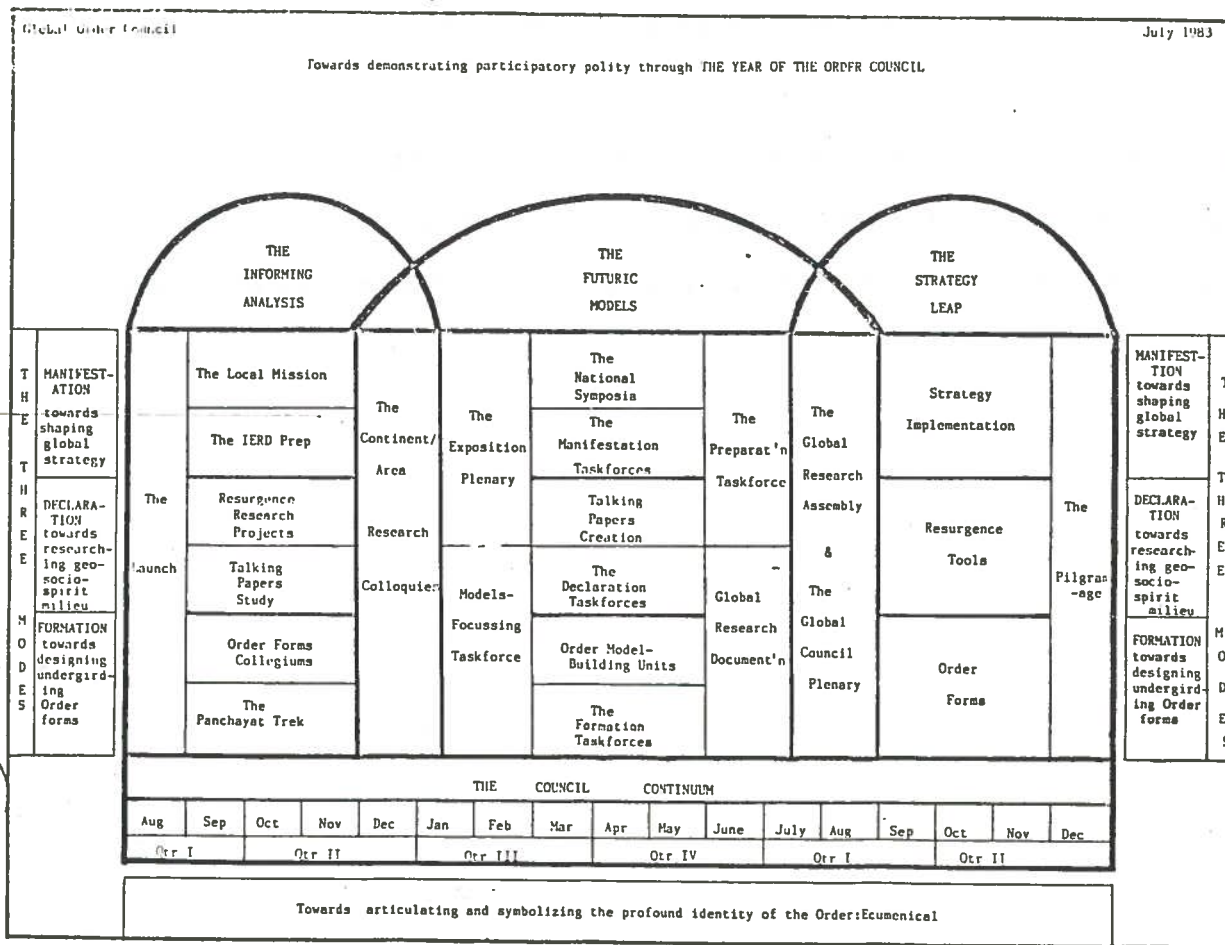


DIAGRAM B

Diagram B lays out a time frame that names the three major tasks and gives them definition. The tasks are: analysis of the situation for informing decisions, building the models which would be the groundwork for the gathered council plenary, and a strategy leap that would put the order into a new position by January 1985. The foundational pillars that appear as transitions or as hinges between each two consecutive tasks are gathered events of various sizes. These are:

1. The launching of the year at the area councils in August 1983.
2. Continental Councils and Research Coloquies to be completed by January

1984.

3. The major gathering for the year -- the Global Council Plenary where all members would come together to participate in face-to-face dialogue and decisions, and

4. The final event of the Pilgrimage to be conducted in December 1984 by gatherings in twenty-two locations across the globe.

The focus of this study is the third pillar, the Global Council Plenary.

THE GLOBAL COUNCIL PLENARY

The Plenary met from July 1 until August 12, 1984. A thousand people gathered, about two-thirds of whom were present for the entire six weeks. Most people were housed in the training center of the Institute in Uptown Chicago, with married couples having private rooms and single persons living in four to eight person dormitories. Apartments in a building across the street were rented for the overflow.

All families or individuals were responsible for the care of their own space, and groups of people were assigned care of corporate space and as kitchen assistants on a rotating basis. Assignments to the kitchen was for three weeks for the core crew of cooks, as was the assignment to the print shop and building maintenance, and other special support. The assignments, shown by numbers of people and by sex, are shown in the chart below.

The Council Support - July 5 - 23, 1984

Code: F=female, M=male

Support Coordination: 4M

Finance Monitoring: 3F, 2M

Hosting Services: 6F, 6M

Travel Desk: 2M

Environmental Services: 6 M

Health Services: 2F, 1M

Food Services: 8F, 8M

Communic'n & Media: 2F, 1M

Cost Coverage: 3F, 1M

Development: 5F, 6M

Children's Program

Day Camp: 8F, 1 M

6th

Grade Trip: 2F, 1M

9th Grade Student Mobilization: 5 F, 6 M

(Roles that required less physical labor and more decision-making responsibility were as follows.)

Procedures: 13F, 12 M

Events & interchange: 4 F, 4M

In the highlighted areas, traditional patterns of the order and of society for gender-associated assignment, or expertise, had more weight than did exemplifying equality between the sexes in all tasks. However, a noticeable effort is made in this direction. In the second six weeks the last three groups stayed the same, as did the staff for the children's program, but all others changed. No significant difference was made in male-female ratio. It should also be noted that attention was given to having all assignments reflect national representation.

Groupings for the conference were mainly at three levels: the total body (planetary plenary), small groups of about twenty-four people (holon units), and intermediate networking of the small groups (networks of four holons). Each of the holons had international character, as well as being made up of about equal numbers of men and women. A sheet in the appendix (III) shows the numbers of people from each continent, by sex and age phase, as well as listing the nationalities and first languages of the symbolic order members. The plenaries were equipped with closed television and simultaneous translation in Hindi, Spanish and Swahili. Other translation was carried on as a translator sat near those who needed it. English was the basic language used, but several talks and presentations were given in other languages, then translated into the variety of languages including English. Other symbols of globality in communication were introduced for the whole body, such as the Swahili clap of agreement.

The spirit life of the council was a focus for expression of globality. The holons began each morning with a meditation exercises, using the insight method associated with Zen Buddhism, followed by visualization. Mid-way through the council a swami visited for several days and led the whole gathering in mantra meditation. There was also extended opportunity for participation in Tai Chi, and those who learned the method led each holon in this practice, in the

fifth week. The final week had experiments in daily rituals as a rehearsal of life decision. Each day had time allotted for reflection on the experience as well as the method, and longer periods of conversation and reflection were scheduled on three different occasions.

Weekly celebrations on Saturday evening were hosted by continental groupings who prepared their own food, dances, costumes, music and decor for the whole group to experience an event special to that culture. Each had its own flavor, but all invited participation, and produced unforgettable eventfulness. Each day had two other high points of gratitude for globality: singing and the decorations of meeting spaces. The appendix has a copy of one song sheet used. The main hall had a six foot picture of a three dimensional earth against a background of black velvet. Along one side of the hall were fifty-four banners of various hues hung from ceiling to floor each bearing the name of a major city around the globe. To walk into this hall was to experience the global village.

At the beginning of the council, after the first three days of exhibits, reports, and mapping out the journey of the council, small groups called 'Safaris' based on interest were used to investigate the form of the new paradigm. There were twelve approaches, with two groups for each: community, new human, employment-work place, polity, ecology, new education, life style, peace, the arts, health, spirit and social task. At the end of the second week imaginal, dramatic presentations were made of the learnings as well as a publication of documents. The findings of the new human task force are appended (IV), and the reflections of this group are presented as grist from global-local people about process and paradigm.

The two groups who focussed on the new humanity were made up of thirteen white females plus one black from North America, eleven of whom had been assigned to the United States, with the other three in Kenya the past year. In addition were an Australian assigned to India, a Britisher assigned to Hong Kong, a Peruvian assigned to Venezuela, a Japanese assigned to Japan and two

Indians who had been in India. Together with these twenty women were nineteen men. Eight were white from the United States, four of whom had been assigned there. The others spent the last year in India, Egypt, Hong Kong and Kenya. Two Kenyan males had been in Kenya and the USA, a Peruvian was in Venezuela, a Chinese Singaporean and a Malaysian had been in Chicago, a Canadian in Canada, a Filipino in Tonga, a Jamaican in Jamaica, and two Indians in India. Only at the end, when they brought their work together for publication and presentation did the two groups meet together. Otherwise, they were in their own safari configuration or in smaller sub-groups. The leadership assignment rationale for the Safaris was two women and a man in one group, and the reverse in the other. The sub-groups provided opportunity for five or six other people in each safari to lead groups. In the New Human Safaris, this small group leadership was predominantly women.

As the two safari groups reflected on their findings these individuals were struck by the various forms of family and the numbers of affirmative, supportive structures that are provided in the North American setting. It came as a shock to some of the men to have heard and read about women viewed as machines for producing children. Others had not been in touch with the drive for quality human relationships, as between homosexuals. It was a revelation to realize that authentic systems other than that of the dominant white male were being described.

The people of these two groups wanted to know more about new male roles, the results of family experiments, the ways other cultures treat the various life phases and their transitions, and other experiments of self-conscious multi-cultural communities. When asked what frightened them about the new humanity that was coming to be, they responded: not knowing what to trust, not knowing how to prepare children for the new world, the increase of youth suicides, the backlash of new gains made, the statistics that 60% food is produced by women, 35% by machines, 10% by children and 5% by men, and "I have a

picture of the new man, but I'm not sure I want my daughter to marry several."

Through reflecting on what is going on in society, description was given to the following two questions:

"What is going out of being?"

- Single definition of family
- People's unawareness of a system of dominance
- women's unconscious agreement to be treated as property

"What is coming into being?"

- Early retirement in the west, and an appreciation of the gifts of elders
- elders' picking up on voluntary jobs
- women's consciousness of new roles
- Korean women are conscious they can play more roles, but after marriage they tend to revert back to traditional patterns.

A number of shifts happening in society today were discerned.

In style: from win/lose to win/win

from invulnerability to openness of wrestling with life issues

In relationship: from pre-determined family formation to decisional

from anti-male feminists to an inclusive appreciation and realism about both sexes

from the family as primary care structure to less care, less intimacy

from courtship and marriage that is socially differentiated to trying out marriage before actually marrying

In roles: relative to males -- from an easily threatened position of

superiority to a participative, sympathetic dialogue

-- from old, familiar patterns to struggling with new roles in relation to emerging new roles of women

In definitions: the family -- from sacred to practical

the multi-cultural -- from the melting pot to a synergy of
individual cultures

Despair about the future and the new humanity is being experienced in a
variety of ways:

-Paralysis about creating another family, as there are so many alternatives
with no significance attached to any one

-Unengaged youth and elders

-Identity in the midst of multi-cultures

-Struggle with negation of culture in effort to blend one homogeneous whole

-Artificial values that hide the authentic struggle to be real, as

manifested in growing numbers with anorexia and bulimia

-Elders' realization of the cynicism of youth

-Depth and pervasiveness of old images of what it means to be male and
female

-In Jamaica, the force of the tradition for males to become men by producing
offspring, within or outside of marriage.

On the other hand, it was felt that there is deep excitement about the new
roles of women, the remarkable number of second marriages, the community
festivals that share the diversity of multi-cultures, and folk art that takes
whatever is at hand and makes of it an art form.

The new human was defined as integrating male and female qualities that are
necessary for human community while operating out of a context of caring for
self and others, honoring the differences of others, and willingness to risk an
affirmational style that dramatizes unity and relatedness. The qualities are a
style of reconciliation and openness, the use of intuition as well as
rationality, and a sharing of power. With a male focus on work and self and a
female focus on relationship, the crisis is in how to work out and express this

ontology creatively, so that each experiences full significance.

LEADERSHIP ROLES AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

To discern the leadership roles of women the total framework of leadership must be examined. The council needed several types of leadership. One was up-front leadership to guide groups that numbered from four to a thousand. These up-front leaders were required to have a developed sensitivity to group concerns. If they did not voice the consensus, state innovative declarations about reality that would trigger serious dialogue, or provide clear, acceptable guidelines, their leadership was ineffective. There was a time when charismatic lecturers presented great visions, but this was a time when the group required shorter talks and in-depth probing of what is going on now.

These up-front roles at the plenary level were carried by a rotation of the Panchayat and the Procedures groups or others appointed by them. The Panchayat functioned as the corporate dean. It tried to stay in touch with the spirit milieu and respond with needed guidance in that area. It also announced statements of final consensus. It was made up of an American white female, a Filipino female, and three white males from America, the Netherlands, and Australia. Each of them played a significant role, enabling and protecting the process. Sometimes it was by introducing a note of humor. Many times it was by providing a new context for the method of consensus, coming at it from many different directions, telling stories of the difficulties as well as offering definitions. In week 5 when there was a lot of tension in the air because of unresolved issues, particularly involving corporate-individual integrity versus corporate-individual responsibility, the young Filipino woman made a brief but moving talk. Because of her willingness to reveal herself, her own journey, inclusive of her inadequacies, she indirectly opened doors to the rebuilding of trust.

The procedures group was responsible for guiding the practical work of the council. They received the work of all groups, announced preliminary consensus,

and provided directions for moving on through further issues to reach new decisions. Every major arena of work passed from one grouping to another and sometimes back again, or to new configurations of task forces which worked on it, pushed from different perspectives, edited, and re-stated. The procedures group planned this process, down to each day's timeline, working in liaison with the leaders of the various groups in coordinations meetings, which were always open. They were ready to readjust plans when necessary, which was frequently. This was a council of people who got their own creativity into the procedures.

The prior, or leader, of this group was a white male, whose family had been assigned the last several years to the United States. They had spent a year in Singapore, following several years in Europe. He only sporadically appeared up-front, and then briefly. His wife, however, offered stability and continuity to the plenaries. She was the one person who could always be expected to appear, to give announcements, which she did with poise and grace, making them to the point and clearly understood. It was recognized that each played a role intentionally and according to plan.

The procedures group selected the other persons who had up-front roles, or they directed the units or task forces to make presentations, and those groups selected a spokesperson from among themselves. Generally the roles were evenly divided, with a slight weight on men, but inclusive of various races and cultures. This was the first time in order council history that such equality had continuously been achieved.

The key to this equality was the nature of the procedures group, or the continuum, as it had been called at its inception. It was assigned in August of 1983, and it came together in intentional stages from the various parts of the globe. It began with a group of five in September, then nine, then the total group attended the central event (IERD) in Delhi, followed by the meeting in Jaipur which reflected on the significance of the IERD and made decisions about the Global Council. It began meeting in full force in March 1984, four months

before the beginning of the council.

The continuum had within it: five couples who were white American, two who were British-American, and others who were Indian, Kenyan, Peruvian, Filipino and black-white American. It had other individuals from Kenya, India, Korea, Australia, Jamaica, Guatemala, and Americans, black and white. There were thirty-four people, made up of equal numbers of women and men. The diversity of the order was represented in the continuum, and this allowed it to experience beforehand the issues that were to confront the council.

This group was in continuing dialogue with every location of the order, before the council, receiving talking papers and models for new modes of operation. The continuum re-distributed these models around the globe by related topics to build a foundation of conversation from which the council plenary could begin. They also experimented on behalf of the total group with ritual life, meditation forms, time designs, and methods for doing work. It was reported that the issue of female leadership and participation surfaced here and was given sustained reflection by a small group of women who periodically injected stimulæ for group attention.

Another level of leadership was within the holons, safaris and task forces. Again, the assigned leadership reflected equal distribution between the sexes, and there was no problem with women assuming the role effectively. These roles also reflected the globality of the Order, but they, as other assigned leadership positions, generally reflected higher levels of educational background. There were exceptions. The health caretakers were led by highly qualified physicians and nurses, but their presentations were usually made by village women, excited about their learnings.

Individuals within groups who assumed responsibility to enable the process provided another level of leadership. At one point it might mean raising the underlying issue. At another it might mean offering the consensus. At another it might mean sharing real feelings. In the beginning two weeks of the council,

these persons were predominantly white males, especially at pivotal points, in the larger meetings, beyond the unit meetings. The translation systems had to have the kinks worked out of them, many people had just arrived and were adjusting to a new culture, and for everybody there were many strangers.

Within the six weeks of the council there was a progressive journey of women's willingness to assume this kind of responsibility. Toward the end of the second week, in a network meeting of a hundred people, an Indian woman with no formal education stood up and without hesitancy spoke on the issue being discussed. She used 'poor' English, but she communicated effectively, and then she translated into Hindi. This broke the ice for this kind of participation.

Behind the scenes a small group of women from the Washington, D.C., House had decided on the basis of their own struggles and study during the year that they would take responsibility to "enhance female participation." They therefore scheduled meetings once or twice a week which from twenty to a hundred women attended at hours after most other meetings were finished. They shared their statement of aim.

"Many of us, even the North American Women, have not participated regularly in councils. If someone questions what we have to say, we tend to back down from our perceptions, unless we have a four by four (a charted outline) behind them. Even though our gift is intuitional sense, we feel that we are not able to keep on top of what's going on.

Though we participate well in small groups, we hesitate to participate in plenary sessions. Indeed, we are terrorized at the prospect of speaking out in large sessions. Although we are experienced at tactics and implementaries, we are not experienced at strategy.

SO...

How do we give ourselves the time and a place to talk? When we don't understand, how do we get our questions asked and answered without feeling "dumb"? How can we have a "sounding board" for new ideas besides

feedback from spouses or house priors? How do we maximize feedback to ourselves so that we can become more effective at strategy? How do we acknowledge and honor each other's perceptions? How do we push "good ideas" to become strategy? How do we deal with our anger so that our stance is helpful to the whole council? We are NOT out to create an "over against" the male dynamic. But to give ourselves courage and creativity which will then enable everybody's courage and creativity."(4)

They raised questions and heard the questions of others. They had a continuing study of the book, Women's Reality, by Anne Wilson Scharf. They provided for role playing. They told stories. They collected suggestions to enhance female participation which they turned over to the procedures group. Some proposals they fed back to the broad informal network of women at the council.

Examples of the feedback to the procedures group were:

- Concern about the interpretation beyond initial translation and time to talk things through. (This was responded to by giving attention to the language group meetings.)

- A request that the talks given in plenary be written out and translated beforehand, to enable the translators. (This was done.)

- Have main ideas of talks in images in three languages with space on the paper for people to take notes on sub-points.

- When using big words, have synonyms or smaller words ready to assist the translators. (Procedures asked speakers to do this. Some speakers did, and some did not.)

- Avoid using national "code words" like initials for program names. (This was not given the attention it could have been.)

Suggestions collected and passed on to the larger numbers of women were such as:

- Give ourselves permission to talk - raise hands if necessary.

- If you have questions of clarity, ask people around you. Women try to sit

together.

-When needed, ask questions on behalf of others who do not understand. These were effective suggestions, that were used. They did help to enhance the participation of women.

The week after the council ended, one of the women in the procedures group before departing for India, reflected on the interweaving waves of process that affected the effectiveness of the council. She said:

"The women's group of about 30 to 40 women met informally, about once a week. They pledged themselves and did continue to guard the three main issues they had identified: communication, participation, and the support of other women when they spoke and participated.

When the language groups stopped meeting, the women's group urged that the time design be altered to accomodate this late afternoon time. It was so altered.

The women in the procedures group were sensitive to and supported the women's group in the various suggestions to make the meetings effective, and to broaden the base of participation. Early in the council, at the plenaries, there were a few days when it seemed that speakers from the floor were always the same "five white men." The women in the coordination group (leaders of all the groups) said "No" to this. They had already experienced the value of the holon as a place where people felt comfortable to speak out. Yet they knew that such a group of 20 to 25 was too small for building the needed consensus of the entire body. Thus there was a tension between communication and participation in small groups and consensus building for the plenary. Due to insistence of the women, the procedures group took a lot of time to get out the values that were important to hold, from which it became clear that a new form or mechanism was needed to hold both poles and get the job done. Thus was born the clarity and consensus table concept.

Within the coordination group the leadership was so broad that everybody could talk. No one had ever dealt with this kind of group before, so it was spoken about as being on an "uncommon plain." Women seemed to be more willing to step out onto this plain than men and to suggest directions to go. Sometimes it was like a beach ball got tossed around the group of 60 to 80 for one and a half to two hours, and still the direction would be unclear. Questions would be asked, and not answered within the group. One night this happened and several women sitting together noticed that these answers were critical to the group in order for it to proceed. They brought this to the attention of the convenor (a man) and asked that the discussion back-up, so these questions could get clarified and answered. They felt that if this group of leaders could not effectively communicate, how could it be expected that the whole council would be able to? Values got clarified, and the foundations were laid for configurations and mechanisms to build the consensus for the next two to three weeks."(5)

Further reflections on women's roles in the council were provided by conversation and written interviews with women participants. Among all there was agreement as to a high level of participation and equality in assigned roles. In relation to women's leadership roles, one white American woman said, "Women are more often assigned up-front. There are two women running the audio system. Women are much more into the process than the men, so speak more often in certain sessions. But men 'come out of the woodwork' when its time for strategy sessions. And women feel themselves weak in this arena. I feel that women support each other more publically. Some of us are attempting to find ways to give courage to all. Women tend to take on the whole responsibility while the men tend to walk away from it."

An Egyptian woman described how roles here were different from the roles women now have in her nation. She said, "Women here share more in making

decisions, even in strategies and internal life of the order. Here there is more freedom of movement and wider vocational experience. At the house in El Bayad, the women have much more social freedom in relating to men within the house, although outside the tradition is respected."

EXPLORATION OF THE BACKGROUND FOR PARTICIPATION

Because it was observed that some women made phenomenal leaps in participation and leadership, most noticeably women from small villages who had had little or no formal education, it was decided to look into some of the background factors. The following chart delineates the amount of schooling that order members have had, by continents. 6% have had eight years or less. The total number of the base is inflated from 777 to 829, by the inclusion of colleagues who are not full time staff, but who were at the council full time, and who take heavy responsibility for programs. This chart does indicate the array of backgrounds present in the order.

THE ORDER ECUMENICAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA REPORT

Printed: September 1, 1984

Education length by continent

	0-3 yr	4-8 yr	9-12 yr	13-17 yr	17+ yrs	No data
North America	0	1	28	249	138	48
Latin America	2	11	9	6	0	7
Europe	0	1	11	25	8	1
Africa	0	12	46	8	3	27
Sub-cont.	10	12	54	30	3	3
SEAPAC	0	3	24	31	8	10
**TOTAL	12	40	172	349	160	96
%	1.44%	4.82%	20.74%	42.09%	19.30%	11.58%

Notes: Report based on 829 individuals
Information was not available for 14 persons

The order roster sheets of one group of women at the council, those from India, were researched to see if they would provide clues as to how women who would normally have been reticent to contribute from being locked into a "breeder-feeder" system, could emerge and so confidently take part in so large a gathering. Diagram E shows the broad array of training experiences that had been provided, some of which were especially designed for women. Such attention no doubt had effect.

I would also like to share a verbal interview given by an Indian woman. She and her husband have been one of two prior couples in India who have carried the heaviest weight of responsibility for massive work going on in Human Development Projects and clusters of projects. Her name is Laxmi. She was asked, "Did you grow up in a village?" She answered, Yes."

To the question: "What activities did women do in your village as you were growing up?" she responded: "They were all housewives, getting married, having children, taking care of children. They didn't have much education. Traditionally the women cannot even go out."

What activities do women do now in that village? Is life of women different now, or the same? "When I was young, I was not supposed to even wear chappels (sandals). Now the girls ride bicycles. There is a college where the girls can even become engineers. The traditions change. Like some now do second marriages. I got married when I was eleven. There were many child marriages then. Now girls are at least eighteen."

What new things were you expected to do in the order, in the first years, that were different from your village? "The weekly rituals, and house structures. My English was poor, and I didn't even have good Hindi."

How did you feel about doing these new things? "A bit nervous. I didn't know how I was going to do these things."

DIAGRAM E
I.C.A. TRAINING EVENTS PARTICIPATED IN BY
INDIAN WOMEN

Yrs of formal School Training event	0 - 3	4 - 8	9 - 12	13 +
Human Dev. Trng. School for Global Methods Sch.	8	5	11	3
Community Youth Forum in Male		1		
In-House Methods Training	6	5	11	4
Maliwada Women's School 1978/79	4	2	2	
Maliwada Women's School 1981	5		1	
Rural Development Symposium, Pune 1983	1			
Global Women's Forum	1	1		2
1984 Sevagram Women's School Marathi Basic	4	4	2	
1984 Delhi Women's School	8	1		
Leadership training to teach women	3	5	9	2
Imaginal Education Crs.		1	1	1
Jawale Do-Your-Own Project Training		1		
U.S.A. Training, Inc.			1	
Global Academy (out- side India)			3	3
IERD Team Leaders Training			2	1
Women's Training in Health, Faridabad	1	1		
New Skills Training Pune		2	7	1
International Assignment		1	3	3
International Training Institute			2	2
Leadership Effectiveness and New Strategies			1	2
Assignment to do Women's Advancement in Village Clusters	2	3	4	1

NOTES

- (1) Ruether, New Woman/New Earth, p. 211.
- (2) ibid, p. 205.
- (3) ibid, p. 205.
- (4) ibid, To Change the World, p. 19.
- (5) Russell, Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective -- A Theology, p. .
- (6) ibid, p. 41 referring to Ferdinand Kerstiens, "Hope," Sacramentum Mundi, Herder & Herder, Inc., 1969, Vol. III, p. 65.
- (7) op. cit., pp.41-41 .
- (8) ibid, p. 131.
- (9) ibid, p. 15 with reference to J. G. Davies, Everyday God, London SCM Press, Ltd., 1973, "The Holy in Sacred Relations," pp. 158-17.
- (10) Katoppo, Compassionate and Free, An Asian Woman's Theology, p. 65.
- (11) ibid, p. 66.
- (12) ibid, p. 84.
- (13) Russell, p. 165.
- (14) Ruether, Mary: The Feminine Face of the Church, p. 33.
- (15) ibid, To Change the World, p. 18.
- (16) ibid, p. 39.
- (17) ibid, p. 65.
- (18) Soelle, Choosing Life, p. 81.
- (19) ibid, p. 87.
- (20) ibid, p. 90.
- (21) ibid, p. 91.
- (22) Katoppo, Compassionate and Free, p. 73.
- (23) My family has been part of the symbolic order (full-time, globally assignable) since 1971. We have had a looser association with it since its inception. My husband and I were both charter members of the Christian Faith and Life Community in Austin, Texas, from which came the six families who originally formed the Ecumenical Institute associated with the Chicago Council of Churches. The Order: Ecumenical became the name of the full time staff of the Institute, which in 1972 also incorporated as the Institute of Cultural Affairs as a vehicle for secular work in countries around the world.
- (22) See the excerpt by H. Richard Niebuhr: "The Church as Social Pioneer" which is one of the four papers studied in the formal curriculum of RS-I. The four papers are appended. Rudolf Bultmann's "Crisis of Faith" is used to open the question of God. Paul Tillich's sermon "You Are Accepted" expresses the Event of Jesus Christ. The excerpt from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ethics on "Freedom" presents the life issue wherein the reality of the holy spirit is encountered. Niebuhr's paper raises the question of the task and nature of the church. A film, generally "Requiem for a Heavyweight" with Anthony Quinn, is used to examine the theological issues through a slice of life.
- (23) The existential situation being experienced by the Order is expressed in "A Statement of Indicative for the Year of Order Council" which is included in the Appendix.
- (24) This statement was prepared by Doris Rettig and Sandra True.
- (25) This was shared by Elaine Stover.

During the last year, were there new roles, new responsibilities, that you did or were assigned that were different from the first year? "I did everything. Rural development symposiums, project description labs -- two of us did six in North India. I was the first leader of a team in the IERD. Last year I raised alot of money for programs." (She has three young children, too.)

How did you learn to do these things? "By hearing, learning and practicing. I would memorize my lectures in the first years, word for word. The rituals and the talks. My husband helped me to learn. He would say, 'You have to make a decision.'"

"One day some women in the house came to me and said, 'There is a woman smoking, come and see.' I went and she said to me, 'You must smoke and drink because you are always with the Westerners.' 'Yes,' I said, 'I am with the Westerners, but that doesn't mean I smoke and drink. I do not.' Learning comes in many ways."

CONCLUSION

good, Women's participation and assumption of leadership roles does not just come naturally. It comes if it is given attention, and if an environment of support is created. As women are victims of an insidious kind of oppression, their roles may be an indication of an organizations' seriousness of attempt to embody the new paradigm of a new humanity. This was not proved by this study, but it was supported and given illustration. An organization of a religious order that is formed of the many religious heritages of the globe, in seeking to discover how it is that 'the lost, the least and the lonely' may be effectively served, gave demonstration within itself. It sought out the contributions of women through formal assignment. Women sought ways to support other women, person to person, and structurally. They made a difference. They enhanced women's participation and thus enabled new organizational decisions on behalf of a new future and a new world.

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APPENDIX

- I. R.S. - I PAPERS(4)
- II. INSTITUTE SONGS
- III. A STATEMENT OF INDICATIVE FOR THE YEAR OF ORDER COUNCIL
- IV. ORDER PRESENCE AT JULY-AUGUST GRA-GOC, 1984
- V. SOCIAL PROCESS TRIANGLES
- VI. IERD PRODUCT: VOICES OF RURAL PRACTITIONERS SERIES:
WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT
- VII. SAFARI DOCUMENT ON THE NEW HUMAN