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Confirmed Order Reflections

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Introduction:

This paper is a contribution to the dialogue on the Order forms which has been going on since G.O.C. 1984 and earlier. It is not a direct response to the proposals made in the Hong Kong Task Force meeting nor the letter from Jim Oberg on this subject since it was "in the works" before these came out. The tone of urgency from the meeting, however, has gotten it into this form quicker than might otherwise have been the case. (This is to give credit to those events for challenging the author's procrastination not to make the usual depreciatory comments about it being hasty work, etc. though it is that too). But it is an addition hopefully to the dialogue Jim called for and George and Ruthe Yost have already contributed to.

The intent of this paper is to offer some other perspectives from which to view the Order Forms discussion and, especially, the Confirmed order; **"the NORM for commitment and covenant the Order desperately needs."** It examines certain archaic screens relative to society and the human journey in the belief that recent work in psychology and sociology bear them out. In particular, it looks at phasality; as that affects both individuals and the community itself. Its thesis is that the "8 Forms of the Order" discussion of GOC 1984 was unsatisfactory then and afterward because it confused forms of engagement in carrying out the common mission with stages in the Journey of Commitment.

In doing so, it should be stated at the beginning that it is the author's perspective that one of the greatest needs the Order has today is to "demythologise itself". And that the analytical tools of the social sciences can enable the Order to see different aspects of reality than what it has seen up to now.

As a precedent for this, there is the financial analysis of the funds that preceded the Global Order Council, 1984. Only

because the analysis was thorough and found out what the Order was spending money on in detail (what kind of health costs, incurred by whom, where, etc.) was the Council able to see that proposals like the Health desk as well as more income were part of the solution. Individual order members were also confronted, quite objectively, with the fact their collective decisions to be unhealthy affected the financial health of the whole body. A similar job was done that summer by the Health teams relative to the physical health of the Order and where there were structural deficiencies (considerably more anaemia among order women in India and Africa, etc.) Again this permitted the Order to acknowledge the problem, repent, and change.

The hope of this paper is that this self-examination will continue by looking at actual sociological patterns in the Order and reflecting on how they influence its ways of operating, including its perceptions of what its "desperate needs" are.

I. The Present Discussion and the Order's Past:

There is a hunger for certainty. We yearn for a sworn brotherhood/sisterhood. Yet, it would seem that a simple declaration of permanent commitment by itself is not enough- or else it would have had more power in the past. Anyone who has been "around for a while" remembers names of dozens of people who put on silver rings and who are no longer here, including first teachers, first priors, etc. These people, at least some of them, understood themselves to be declaring their intention to be "the Order unto death". If the goal is a Confirmed order that can be a foundation for the Order, a "let's just stand up and be counted" is too shallow. It didn't hold in the past and it lets the Order and Order members get away with not doing their homework. Like wanting to have the passing grade without having to study and pass the exam. (Jim Oberg's proposal does deal with this insofar as individuals are concerned).

What are we after then?

The 1984 council deliberations were informative here. One of the hot issues the polity group had to deal with was the priorship question. Many aspects were raised-how many singles didn't get to be priors, how few third world people were priors, etc. Underneath all of these remarks was the undertone that an "old guard" had been "in charge" too long. It was relatively easy to provide some arguments against one or more of these issues, but they never defused the issue. This was because one of the issues not discussed in this connection was the phasal question. People who have been ten years or so in the order (whatever actual age they are, although being near or past 40 years of age intensifies this) have no way to measure the Order's awareness of their "coming of Age" except through priorship and other symbolic assignments. When a certain phase of people are "in power" and the Order is

shrinking, at least as far as the number of "houses", the opportunities for having a "coming of age in the Order" symbolised are fewer and fewer. This should not be confused as it so often is with "power-hunger". It is not. It is a legitimate need to be given the chance to grow through assumption of greater responsibility-and knowing that the Order symbolizes that by making such an assignment. All the short courses in the world, "everyone is a prior" etc., don't deal with this. Nor does increasing the number of people marked as priors or on commissions, etc.: "**when everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody.**"-Gilbert & Sullivan, The Gondoliers. In the early 1970s the number of locations was doubling every year and with them the number of authentic priorship opportunities, opportunities to have one's life demanded not only in terms of programme but also in terms of formation, of "building the order". Currently, the number of houses and number of people in the order are shrinking. So this mode of symbolising transition within the Order is not very useful right now.

The decision of some mature Order members in 1984 to request not to be assigned priorship functions created a little more room for this to continue to function. Their action too is worth reflecting on because it points to the quality of detachment from and security in one's role in the Order that might be the marks of the next transition, to the Elder role within the Order.

The question of phasality in the Order therefore has two points of transition that seem to be important-the transition from initiate to associate and from associate to confirmed. And the apparent difficulty with the initiate phase (who is one, how to symbolise, who decides, etc.-for that matter, the difficulty in North America and Europe especially to get initiates) may be more a symptom of the "pile up" at these other points (if I don't know where I am on my journey through the Order, how can I invite anyone else to participate?), than the root problem.

II IV. The Archaic Screens:

The Hindu understanding of the Life Phases is a helpful screen for looking at the Order forms discussion. It is psychologically sound, as the West is beginning to find out (hence, the number of books on "mid-life" crisis) and reveals a great deal in the interaction of the 4. The four phases: Student, Householder, Teacher and Wandering Saint are not only chronological passages of time, they are also acts of will: the Student must decide to practice he/she he has learned in assuming the duties of parent, spouse and community member; the Householders must let go of their children, their possessions, their community status and assume the role of guides not political authorities; the Teacher, finally, lets go of even the role of teacher to be the completely unattached embodiment of what he/she has taught.

The **Psychological screen of Life Crises** is another helpful one. the version here is reproduced from The Road Less Travelled but there are similar versions to be found elsewhere.

The examples after each point are from the history of the Order. None of them are bad. Peck and most other psychologists would suggest they are necessary.

1. The state of infancy, in which no external demands need be responded to -the early days as a student group
2. The fantasy of omnipotence- the global problems, world grid, the songs
3. the desire for total possession of one's parents -we are the only true interpreters of the 20th century theological revolution, why doesn't the established church wake up and acknowledge us?
4. the dependency of childhood-old financial model, "development raises the money, it goes into the global pot, each child gets an equal, fair share"
5. Distorted images of one's parents-the local church, the body of christ the hope of the world.
6. the omnipotentiality of adolescence-we can do anything w decide to do
7. the "freedom" of uncommittment- don't decide until the last moment, we don't need to be in a project more than two years
8. the agility of youth- two suitcases, one-year assignments, opening and closing houses, in and out of nations
9. the sexual attractiveness and/or potency of youth-gatherings of 500 or 1000 people, most under 40, eventfulness, sense of power to do anything
10. the fantasy of immortality-the Thousand-year Order. The Order is our greatest strategy, we will build now to be ready by 2004 to " be a key player in the reframing of the whole civilizational adventure.
11. authority over one's children- delaying leaving HDPs or turning over control (including responsibility for finances) for fear they would collapse without us. (Significantly, the oldest child-5th City-is the one we have held on to longest.)
12. various forms of temporal power -the power of being a facilitator in a Lens with a large corporation or agency, especially when they invite us to continue as consultants,
13. the independence of physical health-ignoring health issues in people until they become epidemic
14. the self and life itself -for what would the Order be prepared to go out of being?

The **Social Process** is another screen that is helpful to use. The **Initiates** can be seen as the Economic or foundational dynamic. Without constant inflow of new potential order members the Order stagnates and eventually dies. The **Associate** phase is the Political -the locus of most strategic planning and programmatic

action. The "up front" people in most locations. The ones who are best known by power structures. The Confirmed Order is the Cultural pole. They guard, nurture and pass on the context of the Order. To do this they are freer of the economic support of the Order. They are less the locally rooted face of the Order, but its global nobodiness. They "give up" positions of political authority and social significance in order to embody the Global Order.

III. Order's Journey:

Perhaps the Order as a group, at least the core of it as it exists at present can also be seen to have gone through the life phases--now perhaps entering the "adult" phase, leaving behind adolescence, the sense of pride in your energy and strength, the belief that there are no barriers, the Order's youthful arrogance. e.g. in doing the 232, ignoring the work of existing groups like Jamkhed. Now, we are aware that we are not able to do everything at least not well. We choose, and work at what we do choose. If this is true, it is worth remembering first, how necessary these stages of the journey were and are for anyone who enters the Order at any time. Second, it will be important to recognize that making decisions when the core of the order has entered this phase would have to be done in such a way that the dynamics of the other phase are preserved, for the Order, unlike any individual, can only "go on living" if all of the phases have their place within it, and shape it all the time. A visual image for this is that of the representations of Brahma, the god of creation with four faces but one head and the four faces give him 360 degree vision. If this is true, then the 4 phases of Order experience need to be present in each Primary Unit--ideally in each location or team. Again, this is not chronological age of persons but years in the Order and decision to be that phase (though the 4 phases in chronological terms are also helpful).

IV. Phases of the Order covenant:

(Note: None of this would be rigid, but the flexibility to waive any of these guidelines for Initiates or Associates should reside at the level of the Priory and Order Life commission responsible for that Primary Unit.

The **Initiate phase** is one of learning and of obedience. It needs to be long enough for initial enthusiasm and romanticism to be put to the test. It also should involve thorough basic training and global exposure.

This indicates a period more like 4 years than one or two. It could be done through the International volunteer and national volunteer forms as part of the 4 years, but only if these have

been followed by two years as one who has declared their intention to explore a permanent membership in the Order. If someone is illiterate or without basic (generally secondary) school education, they would acquire it in this phase of the Order. The Order would make sure there was time available for the initiate member to do this. It would not finance such training. The financial obligation of an initiate would vary greatly, but it would at a minimum involve a willingness and the actual opportunity to be assigned to some income-earning activity (a job, a role in a venture, part of a programme marketing team) or the willingness to contribute monthly to the Order from family resources.

The **Associate** phase is the period where one has the greatest social responsibilities both in the family and in the community. It is the period when these responsibilities are paramount. For the Order this should be the period when people are responsible for programme development and delivery, priorship in houses, cadres, finance commissions, etc. People from this phase should be 3 of the Panchayat elected every two years by people from this form and initiates. The relationship of people in this phase to assignments should be one of **stability** - a willingness to be in one place for 10 years if necessary to ensure the growth of the Order and its mission. Financially, people in this category would be covered by Order funds for health, children's education, etc., but would understand themselves primarily responsible for earning those funds and the support of the Order in general. People who had joined the Order unmarried would marry and have children (if they desire them) in this phase of the Order. People could have personal assets, financial and otherwise in this phase without the Order having to know how much, etc. If a person has joined the Order without post-secondary training, it is in this Order phase that they would acquire such training. The Order would work out with the person a feasible training model. Completion of formal education and training would be a necessary prerequisite for the Confirmed phase.

The **Confirmed** - This is the elder role, the point in life when the family commitments are basically fulfilled and social status no longer matters. In Japan, this may be equivalent to the senior company people who are assigned training roles, as are elders in tribes. The role is not one of executive authority but of counselling. As such, people have to be able to take the time to consider what training is required, what guidance can and should be given; time that may be as much devoted to prayer and contemplation as to building constructs. As long as we image the "career" of an Order member as one in which they take on ever-increasing amounts of programme responsibility this care for formation will never happen, and we as an order will continue to suffer.

The **Post-Confirmed** (the Translated, the Transposed?) Maybe, if only for the sake of following the Hindu model to completion, there is a fourth phase- one where the Order member is beyond any formal responsibility, except perhaps the most practical ones, their health permitting. At this phase, one expects the wisdom of the sage, the wise one, the one beyond the teacher, the Don Juan type. The Order has such people now and in the past. It never gives them the role, they just became it. So, this phase isn't one to worry about, it tends to take care of itself. Hence, the somewhat facetious title what is a name for what is essentially invisible, or sheer incarnation?

V VI. Proposals for the Confirmed Order Phase:

Issues this model attempts to address:

- an order made up of families with children
- pluriformity in regard to education level
- global assignability
- continental team strength
- limited usefulness of the global assignability criteria at present when a sizeable number of the Order do not for reasons of education, visa, etc have any likelihood of participating
- the difficulty of anchoring the Order (not a programme) in a culture
- overemphasis on the political dynamic within the order to the weakening of the cultural
- safeguarding the context, the original "charism", of the Order.
- ensuring that the status of confirmed is a radical decision of detachment, obedience and single-mindedness.
- holding creative tensions within the Order between the "new" and the "old" without allowing either to incarnate.
- dealing with the question of who gets education and how much from an equitable screen.

The Guidelines:

Role in Order:

- the primary function of the Confirmed Order would be the formation of order members, hence the restrictions following on priorship assignments and on programme responsibilities
- confirmed order would as far as possible, be less responsible for major programme or income arenas, but would be mostly responsible for training within such arenas
- confirmed order people would not be given formal priorship assignments, though they could be assigned on a temporary basis to deal with emergencies
- no Primary Unit would exist or be created that did not have 6 (or

some other minimum) confirmed order members assigned to it. They would not have to live in the same house. There would be provision for them to meet for 7 days annually to reflect on the care of the Order.

Prior Conditions:

- minimum of 10 years in the Order
- confirmed order have completed education to a post-secondary diploma or degree level, or the equivalent in socially recognised technical skills acquired "on the job". The key factor would be the personal sense of competence and completion of the order member. It would not preclude being assigned to further training which the Order saw as helpful to the Order, but the confirmed Order member's personal stance would be one of detachment from the possibility
- disposition of personal wealth. Order member could keep assets worth \$1000 obtained from family or pre-Order work plus any savings accumulated in the Order savings scheme. The disposition could be in the form of a gift to the Order, or to extended family or to children, including the creation of a trust for children providing it is used for their benefit and not for the parents and providing the assets going into it have been declared to the Order (one way might be for the trustees to be people other than the parents)

Elements of the vow:

- confirmed Order vow only possible if one has declared their intention never to marry and never to have children or, if married, if both parties are ready to declare it. If there are children, they must be over 18 and the family declares it does not intend to have any more
- willingness to accept any assignment
- declaration of independence from extended family claims
- willingness to declare significant gifts of personal property and other assets, at time of receiving them and to dispose of them in accordance with Order guidelines (no personal claims on lottery windfalls after Associate phase)

Confirmed Role in Order Polity:

- two confirmed order maximum on Panchayat, elected for 4 years, one every two years, by those in the confirmed phase. The election would be by maximum of votes cast. Members could serve once in their lifetime.
 - Confirmed Order meet every 4 years at end of a global council for one week.
 - The confirmed Order members would be 3 of 5 members of the Order Life commission in any PU, one of the members of all other commissions.
- These assignments would be made by the confirmed order assigned

to that continent.

Care Obligation of the Order for the Confirmed:

-the Order would be responsible for all health costs of confirmed Order members and would keep each confirmed order member fully covered for health and hospitalisation.

"Worst Case" Scenario:

-If someone chose to "leave" the Order while in the confirmed phase (for whatever reason, to study, to marry or care for sick parents, etc.) and later wished to rejoin the Order, they would rejoin as Associates and would not be eligible for the Confirmed status until 5 years had passed). A similar rule would apply in the case of marriage, having further children, receiving further assets and not disclosing and disposing of them, etc.

Note:At present I personally would not qualify for the Confirmed Phase. However those who could be it would have my trust. And it would give both a practical and a volitional screen for me to consider making that decision in the years to come.

VI: Implications for other Order phases:

for Initiates:

1. Initiates would have access to Order wisdom in any PU, because there would not be one without six or more people from the Confirmed Order phase assigned there.
2. Order Formation would be "handled" -by an ongoing structure that was "built-in" to every PU, people with the vocational responsibility (the will plus the assignment) and the time, experience and training to ensure that Order Formation happened.
3. Initiates would have a symbol of what it meant to journey in the Order.

for Associates:

1. We would stabilize the Order presence in cultures and regions, and permit the broader Order forms to grow and the Order's societal impact to spread.
2. Maturation in responsibility would be furthered as this phase found themselves playing the major programme leadership roles.
3. The sense of failure for not being able to do the Order Training required and carry out societal impact programmes and care for families would be relieved.
4. People with children would be freed of the guilt they have lived under when resisting the "pack your two suitcases and go

tomorrow to Rong Rong" demand. They would understand that that is not their role.

Conversely, the tendency to leave a disaster for someone else to clean up, or to run away from the demand to create the global in every local would be challenged by the vow of stability. And the Confirmed Order presence changing regularly, would be the strongest counterbalance possible to the danger of parochial thinking.

for **Confirmed Order**:

People who have married the Order until death would have a way to express that decision clearly, becoming in fact an elite within the Order, but a **servant** elite, ones who more in the image of Leo, Francis, Brother Lawrence, Nanak and Gandhi, than Patton, Napoleon, or the Godfather.

for **"Transposed"**:

They would smile benignly and perhaps laugh a little.

VII. Relationship of the Phases of Covenant to the Forms of Service:

The above discussion began with the hope that it would help to clarify the discussion of the 8 Forms of the Order. It put forward the perspective that the 8 Forms are a mixture of **covenantal phases** and **forms of relating to the social task**. Therefore, it makes sense to look at the 8 forms and see how the understanding might be altered.

If the categories **Initiate**, **Associate**, and **Confirmed** are now seen to be to be time and will **phases of covenant**, the remaining forms are clearly something else. The forms of: **International volunteer**, **National volunteer**, **Global Advisor**, **Regional Colleague** and **Affiliate Order** are descriptive of a form of service not of degree of covenant. (the two "volunteer" categories are not necessarily time-limited). The question of whether someone is within the **Initiate**, **Associate** or **Confirmed** phase within one of these Forms of Service would become something for a Primary unit or Continental Priory/ Order Life commission to decide. The clear implication is that someone can be in the **initiate** or **associate** or **confirmed** forms and not be residing in a house with others of the Order.

Perhaps at this point it is good to state openly that one of the undercurrents in this whole discussion that the Order still evades discussing publicly is the question of whether or not it is willing to be an order of people resident in gathered communities and "scattered" or not.

This debate is not a new one. ^{bux} There are many aspects to it that make it hard to discuss. More than anything else, there is the

memory in some of the older Order members (now less than half of the Order in the Assignments book and the 8 forms probably) of the Guardians in North America (later the Extended Order), and of the mixture of motives behind that structure. There is also the memory of comments of Joseph Wesley Mathews like (freely paraphrased from memory, Order archivists please document and correct): "if you do not understand that you have to ask that guardian to pack his bags and move into the house next week, then you do not understand what it means to be a revolutionary. You have to do this to save his soul." This was a powerful statement when made and has an eventfulness content quite apart from the words themselves that it is impossible to convey to someone who was not there or who has no direct experience of the charisma of that man to enable them to recreate the eventfulness. (This is also one of the deep underlying currents in many debates- whether anyone who did not experience the charisma of JWM can ever be trusted with the shaping of the Order, whether in fact they can ever be the Order.)

Maybe here is a point where there is no way out other than to decide: Yes or No. If Yes, then it has to be understood that living in a house is not the norm of being the Order. If No, then people know where they stand.

However, there are new dimensions to this discussion, that could be considered, because, if it is only discussed in light of the 1970s, largely North American experience, it could be that it will be culturally and socially limited and out of date in relation to the missional configurations the Order has had to invent as it has become more and more global and pluriform.

One example, but a very important one: the ICA boards in other countries. Especially in countries where there is socially and politically a great sensitivity to a colonial past and current economic and cultural imperialisms from Europe and America, it has been impossible for the Order to operate without a public, legal face made of people indigenous to the nation where the Order wishes to work. Often it has been thought to be very important that such a Board be made up primarily or exclusively of people not in the house (if there is a house). In few if any of these cases is there any "veto power" or other legal control in the hands of "symbolic" (to use the old term for purposes of historical clarity) Order member. This is a great departure from the 1970s and the very clear opinion of the Founder that the Symbolic Order should always have actual control of such boards: "the Order must always keep control of the institute finances. If you don't, you're not revolutionary" (from the apochryphal Sayings of a 20th Century Structural Revolutionary; attributed to Joseph w. Mathews). So, logically, either the Order is not revolutionary anymore because in fact many of its national boards are made up of people outside houses, or they are within what JWM meant by the word "Order" and therefore revolutionaries themselves or JWM never said this or anything like it, or he was wrong.

The reality is that the Order has come to include such people among its members. It has to. As the recent struggle in the Manila

PU, especially the most recent letter from J. Armas, indicates; such people in time of major crisis are, well, simply crucial. They can't be mere rubber-stamps; they have to understand fully what is going on and why and that means they have absorbed and accepted a fairly deep context about what the Order is and is about, or else they would never risk their reputations, connections, even legal liability the way they have. How can it be said such people are not the Order? And if, they have operated this way for years, how can it not be contemplated that at some point they journey to a degree of commitment which they and the others in the Order will wish to symbolize in some fashion?

This has more undramatic, mundane implications. If the Order is pluri-form in this sense, then all of its structures will need to be looked at with the screen of all the forms as well as all the phases in mind. For instance, to go back to the financial question, members of other forms than the Associate and Confirmed Cohabiting will have to participate in creating budgets, raising money, deciding how it is spent and spending it. At a "local" level many cadres and regional offices (mostly but not only in North America) have done this for quite some time, usually within an understanding of covenant that had them also contributing to "global fundraising". The question of participating in electing the Panchayat, of having a voice in recommendations about purchases of property, of being delegated to attend planetary network gatherings as bona fide representatives of the Order from a location; if in the confirmed form the question of the Order's care for them financially, especially if up until that time they have been under another regime- these and more are raised and will not be easy to answer.

VIII. My Own Journey:

I began my journey with the Order Ecumenical in 1969. It was a time of infatuation with the Order, quite similar to "falling in love" as Dr. M. Scott Peck in The Road less Travelled analyzes it. This period, which lasted until 1975 or thereabouts, was succeeded by a more "adult" relationship; an awareness caused in part by two memorable confrontations with more senior Order members where I was asked to be a "good order member" by their definition of that term and I, in weighing up the situation, decided that to be a "good Order member" in those situations required another kind of decision. Thus I became aware that the Order is not some "mystic band of brothers" imbued with "magical" powers, but is the collection of each individual's decision to be "religious" and express it in this particular form, and that I am responsible for interacting with all of these other individuals to shape it.

There still are a few who have a "magical" aura about them for me,

but most I now see and experience as my colleagues, likely to be wrong often (as I now see our founder was wrong at least twice in my personal experience) and prone to despair, resentment, bitterness and weakness just like me.. I look forward to the day when I might be beyond merely the sense of burden and want to share what I have learned with "the newer ones" exploring with them the new Reality (and some aspects of a much older reality).

Postscript: One of the many helpful points in the Hong Kong Task Force's activities was the work that was done on the Core teams concept. Without commenting on the correctness of any details, it may be that this approach to the Confirmed Order might give another way of approaching the core teams question. It is hard at present to imagine how a configurations/assignments task force could consense on who was or wasn't part of such a core and then obtain the consent of the whole Order. It would require a judgmental assessment not only of Order member's skills, but also of their committment or else the configuration would be meaningless. Skills, facilitation, bookkeeping or whatever, that are not accompanied by firm committment mean a team that has breakdown built-in, that means a team that has to come to the Global Order a year or two later (or less) cap in hand begging for more people to replace the "irreplacable" ones who left. And, since these are in fairly limited quantity if Hong Knog's exercise at this kind of judgment was at all accurate, they wouldn't be available without weakening another "core team" and therefore the Order would find itself talking about still fewer PUs and the downward spiral would continue.

If the Confirmed Order is used as the anchors of PU, the exercise would not be less painful, but might be more objective: How many people have declared their willingness to be the Confirmed Order and fulfilled the requirements? Divide by 6 or 8 or whatever the minimum number is it is probably less than 16, and that would give with minor adjustments (the 2 on the Panchayat, a few on global task forces if that Hong Kong recommendation is accepted) give the number of of Primary Unit cores around which a team with the kind of skills required for particular missional tasks could be built. It would be a much more flexible approach if there were people in other forms of service than the Confirmed residentially cohabiting who were included.

A WITNESS ON PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

The world today is struggling deeply with the reality of transformation. It is manifest in every part of the social process and across our entire world.

Over the years I've become very astute at pointing out where others are struggling with transformation. Sometimes I've even taken pride in my ability to reveal the inadequacy of another's model, vision or response to the profound times in which we live. On other occasions I've judged my colleagues in relation to how they need to change or be transformed. Now I'm aware that the process of reflecting on others is a natural one so I'm not condemning it, but I am saying it's not enough for one to participant authentically in life.

Believe it or not I often find myself relating to our order this way. In private and public settings I come upon myself demanding this change or that change and if these changes are not forth coming I say under my breath "count me out". I also experience the flip of this -- I find myself promoting little or no change at all and if we do change "count me out".

The most addressing revelation in my life recently has been that the transformation being demanded is not over there or out there but is in here, in me. Now this is ancient wisdom but because it is ancient does not mean it is dead for this wisdom has never been more alive than in my life right now. I've discovered that I've split my world, that I'm capable of demanding or refusing changes because I assume that I'm not really a part of what is going on.

In my encounters with individuals, families, companies and nations I experience this same perception. We are all very willing to make demands regarding transformation of "the other". What I'm trying to say is I'm painfully aware that I've lived my life in an assumed dichotomy that has resulted in appropriating my own transformation as a static state of being while at the same time grasping my world as a dynamic, evolving reality. It is now clear to me that authenticity lies in my perception of reality out of which I relate to my world and my own life.

This has released me to see in new ways how I perceive the Order's journey of transformation. I perceive that the Order must stay on the edge of socio-spirit change. I perceive that the Order must stay a movemental dynamic in history. I perceive that the Order must capitalize it's future etc. But I just realized that my perceptions are that the above is something the Order must do and my role is to respond to whether I like the way it proceeds in doing it. I have made speeches about our mission being changed lives and more often than not I was not referring to my own.

In becoming aware of this particular perception, I can openly acknowledge a shrinking of my identity, a narrowness of my loyalty and a limited grasp of my covenant with the whole of life and our Order. I'm not trying to impress you with my consciousness of my imperfection, I'm just saying how this perception has manifest itself in me.

What do I mean by transformation? First of all I mean it's a life reality, it goes on whether we are self-conscious about it or not. I've become aware of this experience in time two ways. The first way is the cyclical or linear awareness of time, like growing old. The second way is through time as radical happening, like discovering you're going to have a child (this is not an indirect announcement) or that you have cancer and six months to live. Transformation goes on in relation to space as well. It comes to me through altered images of the external space I'm related to, like moving to a new city when I was a child or receiving a new assignment. It also comes through altered awareness of internal space, like discovering new things about yourself that you didn't know previously, like you have a drinking problem or have discovered how much you can earn outside the Order.

Transformation is also experienced through relationships. Either your relationships change, like a close friend moves away or you experience divorce or you experience marriage and you are different or you become a parent or a grandparent or you become a part of a new working team and things are not the same.

Transformation is not a category of moral progression or individual achievement, but rather a gift of life to life for it opens us up to the fact that we are sustained beyond the familiar and routine. Transformation is grounded in the content of our own lives and does not require copying another's life. But transformation is not just a private matter to be dealt with in our closets, for as it touches our lives it touches all lives with which we are intertwined. While it is not about copying others, another's life can provide motivation. While it is not individual achievement, it does not reach its fulfillment without an effort of profound will. While it is manifested in time, space and relationships, it only exists now, here and in relation to you or me. The mystics of every tradition tell us that it goes on deep within the soul. It is not visible in the first instance, but for the one to whom it is occurring, nothing is more real. It is a subtle thing like printing a typed page. When lining up the paper a slight difference does not seem to matter but when the page is finally printed some of the words don't make it on to the page and therefore the whole meaning is lost. For me I only surrender to the fact of transformation when it has become a life and death matter, and today for all of us it is a life and death matter, because in response to it we act out our individual and corporate destinies.

Transformation as an ontological or natural process seems to pivot around the facts of life, death and rebirth, whether one looks at the descriptions of evolutionary, sociological or individual journeys. Many people from various cultures, religions and ideologies throughout history have sought to describe this profound dimension of reality. Several foundational insights seem to be present despite the diverse origins and approaches to describing the happening or path of transformation.

THE QUESTIONING one is confronted with a new awareness of doubt in relation to one's life images, patterns and assumptions which have provided meaning to one's identity, task and life style. When this occurs our denial mechanisms come to the fore and we seek ways to repair the previous picture of reality which has been damaged. As this questioning probes deeper, anger, rage, envy and resentment seem to rise while one turns to bargaining to avoid the depth of the call to let go.

THE ACCEPTANCE one is led to admit that all is not well and in spite of this fact one is sustained to take up the challenge of a new way. This is very simple, but it is this very simplicity that poses the difficulty, for images, patterns and assumptions are deeply ingrained and do not surrender themselves easily. This is a time of great promise and pain for it seems that one is all alone or empty, but it is this emptiness that in fact is the openness necessary to receive the new in one's life.

THE RISKING one is stepping out on nothing, one is open to the unknown. Fascination now is as strong as the fear, and the courage from the depths becomes a colleague. One is risking one's whole being but in this awareness one also realizes that the whole universe is risking its being on you. So earnest experimentation begins. It almost doesn't matter what the experimentation is at this point in the journey as long as it keeps one like a little child, full of wonder and flexibility.

THE SYNTHESIS one is reintegrating one's images, patterns and styles in "light" of the new consciousness brought about by this awesome journey. This is not experienced as having reached nirvana, or having a life of perfection, but it is experienced as a new lease on life. It comes to one that the opportunity for one's whole life is growth. A new energy seems to be present even to face the usual mundanities and one's own neuroses. This synthesis provides the fertile ground for one's continued growth.

So I would invite us all to live through our fear, to go beyond our own fear, and to celebrate life's basic goodness as it continually calls us forward toward unity with itself and profound care for the whole.

Larry Ward

SOME REFLECTIONS ON
THE VOCATIONAL AND MOTIVATING BASIS
OF THE ORDER/ICA

The Order has always had as its chief concern being a catalyst in the continual evolutionary process of awakening and expanding consciousness. We are about the task of actively participating in those trends present in society which seem to have the potential of moving individual, societal, and ethical awareness a further step toward wholeness and unity.

We have worked thru the years to discern historic and social trends in order to intuit "movings" that with some intensification, could become a trend to overcome aspects of duality, isolation and dichotomy. Such divisions are illusory and therefore inconsistent with true spirit, with the Mystery, the final meaning, God, etc. When we believed we "saw" such an opening, we moved on it, in the hope that it could provide the point to move civilization and human consciousness forward. We have always looked for these social, evolutionary and human advantages in order to act. This moving of consciousness and its practical manifestations have, and remain our primary concern.

For example, the sensitivity to and focus on the World Council of Churches with its emerging concern for social, ethical awareness provided the opportunity for RS-I to be such a vehicle of transformation. It was a very effective tool of transformation because it had an eager audience. This audience was available because the moment was available. When this momentum seemed to stop, we dropped RS-I as a key tool.

When there was a stirring and restlessness in local community, we saw a new opening which could become a trend toward a new sense of capacity, creativity and responsibility--again, a concern for new awareness--and we moved on it with Town Meetings and then highlighted this capacity with the PCX demonstrations. The demonstrations were only important to keep the spotlight on an emerging capacity of consciousness

When consciousness began to experience as new, the reality of the "rest of the World" (sometimes called The Third), and when this part of the world began to wrestle with its place in society (i.e. the 1960's new nations in Africa) we responded with HDP's. Their purpose was to move a humanizing trend down the road.

In the 60's our decision to participate in the Black Revolution in North America was because we saw an "opening" in the illusory consciousness of humankind and added our "weight" to it. In the first instance it was not because we thought we could "right" of the plight of the Blacks in America. This distinction is utterly foundational. We kept the awakening alive for ourselves and others thru Fifth City. Had the intuition that the "times were right" or had an opening not presented itself, we would not have moved, for there would have been no real opportunity to move consciousness forward. It would only have been one of millions of places to 'help the needy.' The difference is vast.

The issue for us always is this: What and where is the "leading edge" for the next unfolding of consciousness, moving it away from illusion toward spirit. Or, put another way, what moves do we need to make for which this is the kairotic moment? It is this question that is paramount rather than "where is human suffering to be found?"

A number of documents that we have written and many comments that I have heard have suggested that our chief concern is "response to human suffering" or acting for the sake of human dignity, or caring for the poor, etc. I know that these may be understood with a more profound and deeper meaning, but I fear that we tend to employ them for exactly what they say. These statements are, therefore, quite a different center piece from "Concerned with the Human Factor in World Development". It is starting from a different point and viewing vocation with a different intent. "Response to human suffering" is a selective, dualistic and hopeless enterprise. For, how do you choose? Where would you go? Which is worse? What are you finally out to transform? Further, you will always be forced to select in such a way that you must say more "no's" than "yeses". Viewed from this perspective, even the best of "comprehensive development" is a band aid undertaking and still maintains polarization.

We do however, have concern about human suffering, for human suffering is an indicator of the blocks in creation's yearning to move to a new position of fulfilling. In looking at contradictions we are seeking those points where manifest suffering and the potential of emerging trends of consciousness come together to form a kairotic moment (like the Civil Rights Movement).

As we look at questions of what we should be about at any given time, I believe it is something like the above that needs to be our screen. It cannot be the question of voting on which human suffering is the greatest-- is it the fourth world? is it Latin American Barrios? or shall we deal with AIDS? or Uptown? or, or, or...there is no answer to the question posed in this way. It is an illusion too, to have some vague image called "caring for geography". What in the geography, where in the geography, who in the geography--why this geography and not twenty one other primary locations with an equal amount of human suffering?

We must also ask, where has the moment passed? This not a negative statement; only that global human consciousness will not most effectively be "moved" by continuation at this particular point as this particular time. Suffering is still there, need is still there, creativity is still there--but the "edge" is not. Such "edges" cannot be re-created or kept in being when the "point" has moved. We can do lots of good and even great things, but if it is not the "leading edge" of human consciousness, then it is not our task. Perhaps, this is why we have self-consciously never "finished" anything--it is not our task to do so.

Our task is to figure out where the edges are now. No easy undertaking. I feel quite sure, however, that if any of the above is on target that this kind of discernment cannot be done primary unit by primary unit, for we are talking about the moving of global human consciousness--that must be our starting point. I'm sure that the new edge is unlikely to be an extension or extrapolation of what is now happening. There is motion in consciousness concerning global peace, ecology, self-fulfillment, women, and health. Perhaps these are places to look. Global communication is certainly another spot to consider. None of these imply content--only where we may need to look because the momentum and the coagulation of sensitivities are there.

The process of "looking" is very difficult. If we do not "see" it before it is public news, then it is likely that we cannot mobilize to act before such a motion has moved on. Which may raise questions on the arenas I have mentioned above.

Perhaps this is something of what it means to be concerned with the Human Factor in World Development.

Justin Morrill
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