

BRIDGES AND THE FEW  
May 28, 1984

This is a meditation on using and being bridges. It is also a reflection on the role of the Few who manifest the One in the Many. Once it is accepted that the One and the Many are both dynamics of life, then the task of relating them appears; it is not obvious to all that there is One-ness in life. So great are the differences that divide people, ways are required to manifest that One-ness in which all participate. This is the task of the Few, and it is very like crossing and being bridges.

Bridges are humanly made instruments. They are not "natural" save in rare cases of peculiar rock formations; they are constructed for a particular purpose. In the earliest days of the Institute's work in Fifth City, when it seemed impossible to produce any real results, people tended to think that slums were part of nature. It was useful to be reminded over and over that slums are man-made and that therefore they can be man-unmade. So with the Many: the differences are real and will not go away. But the separation and hostility that attends them have a human origin and can be humanly "bridged."

A. ON CROSSING BRIDGES

A BRIDGE GETS YOU WHERE YOU WEREN'T OVER WHY YOU COULDN'T. I talked recently with members of a Roman Catholic Order who had been missionaries in the Third World for many years. As we talked, it became evident that they were never able to get past their Christian mythology and so remained cut off from the Muslims and Buddhists whom they served. They were astounded that ICA had bridged that gap and were quite affirmative. And it was quite clear that we are in a different place than they relative to rendering effective service. These experimental rituals of ours may not be very good, but they have gotten us where nobody else has ever been.

IN THE MIDDLE OF A BRIDGE, YOU'RE OVER NOTHING, AND HUMOR HAS A GREAT POWER. Last year some of us visited The Royal Gorge. The bridge, a suspension bridge, was under repair, so it was impossible to drive across. You had to walk. We did...right past the exposed cables and gears and all the things that could break. We walked out over the gorge. My colleagues were leaning on the rail and looking at the glorious scenery while I was treading uneasily in the center of the highway. Then I looked down--1000+ feet down--the distance of two Washington Monuments stacked on top of each other--the distance of three football fields--down to a roaring river that from up here sounded like a distant jet and looked like a tiny ribbon. There was nothing between me and it. And in the midst of these reflections on all manner of finitude and contingency, I noticed that someone had put up a sign that said, "NO FISHING FROM BRIDGE." Suddenly everything was different. Humor has healing power when you're out over nothing.

TO CROSS A BRIDGE IS TO NOT LOOK AROUND. Newsweek had an article recently about the people who cross the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, which is one of the world's longest. They have to station patrolmen at either side to drive some people across. Some people are deathly afraid of crossing bridges--one phobia is that they will be unable to resist the temptation to jump. So some people actually get in the trunk of their car while policemen drive them across. Crossing a bridge is an awesome thing--these people are disclosing it for us

all. I've found that it is necessary to keep your eye on the road all the way across and let other people do the sight-seeing. Otherwise either the fear or the fascination is likely to be destructive. Working with coalitions seems to require the same attention to the mundane detail; others can notice the awesome sights of unlikely peoples working together. Those in the driver's seat just keep focused on the next steps.

WHEN YOU GET ACROSS A BRIDGE, THE DISTANCE IS STILL THERE. A bridge does not close a gap, it gets you across it. And you wind up in a DIFFERENT place than you were. Getting back requires another crossing. I remember working in a town where there were two Ministerial Alliances, one for the Blacks and one for the Whites. This being the time of the Civil Rights Movement, some of us worked to deal with that situation, to bring together the groups of clergymen into a forum where issues could be faced together. The upshot of our efforts was indeed an integrated ministerial alliance--so then there were THREE in the town. The distance had not gone away, but we were in a new situation.

You always have to think about crossing a bridge.

#### B. ON BEING BRIDGES

But you have to think even more about BEING bridges, that is, making possible the linking of different parties over what has kept them apart.

A BRIDGE REQUIRES AN ANCHOR IN BOTH SIDES. This may seem obvious, but without it the bridge can't connect anything. I recall once trying to play the role of the bridge in the midst of an argument with a friend. I suggested that we each write a letter to the other stating the other's case. He would write me MY argument, and I would write him his. So we set out. When I got his letter, he had done a fine job of stating my case, even better than I. So I wrote back in my letter just one word: "RIGHT." I've not heard from him since. There was no bridging done. But this is why we insist on living among the poor; no other way could we have an anchor in that sector so that we can effectively link it to the others. It is equally true in the coalitions we are building: being the bridge requires us to be anchored in each of the sectors represented.

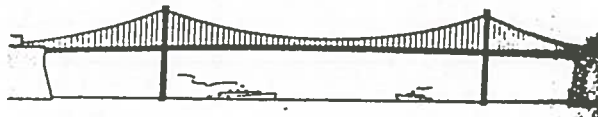
IN THE MIDDLE OF A BRIDGE, THE SUPPORT COMES FROM ABOVE. Some architect or engineer may need to elaborate on this; but it is certainly true of suspension bridges like the Golden Gate: the road bed is hanging by cables suspended across pillars at either end. This would be an easy analogy if we lived in a two-story universe--we're supported from the Other World. But in this world, we could translate by saying that in the midst of a bridge, what holds you up is your story. There is nothing underneath supporting you. The most dangerous enemy is the one who attacks the story. As we set out to do the Human Development Zone, we are stepping out over nothing; if we knew what we were doing, we wouldn't need to do it, it wouldn't be the edge. The only support in the midst of that task is the story of what we are doing and why. And for someone within or without to point out that something isn't clear or that maybe we should be doing something else--that is the most destructive act that could be done. It's to file away at the cables hanging from the main suspension cable, and when enough get filed away, collapse occurs. We need to guard our story.

WHEN YOU'RE BEING A BRIDGE, YOU GET RUN OVER ALL THE TIME. We have recently gotten invitations to participate with three or four other groups in joint venture-like efforts next year. Although we can give them a big build-up about how they are potential coalitions and opening avenues of access to audiences we could never reach otherwise, you know in your heart that these groups have NO grasp WHATSOEVER of what it means to be anchored on both sides, over nothing and exposed to the winds of history. So you can anticipate that we'll be used and abused, and that's no mistake; that's the agenda, the mark of success for a bridge. Sometime, however, I'd like to distinguish between being walked all over as a bridge, and being a doormat to history's vagrants. A bridge does set directions and limits on the crossing it makes possible.

FINALLY, THERE IS GIVE AND SWAY IN A BRIDGE. In a windstorm, bridges like the Golden Gate sway visibly; and every bridge has strips that allow for expansion and contraction with the heat and cold. A rigid bridge will crumble with the heat or wind, and the climate DOES vary. It's happened to some of our fair-weather bridges when the climate changed and criticisms came; some would say our corporate psyche still isn't over it. I hope it's taught us the necessary flexibility to absorb the bumps and blasts and ruts and ridges that history will inflict on her bridges into the future. To give and expand or sway without losing the anchors is the necessary deed for being a bridge.

I was downtown yesterday looking with some awe at the glorious new skyscrapers around 17th and 18th streets. And, as it was lunch hour, I was watching all the beautiful people who inhabit the new offices: their clothes and their cars and their eating habits, and I began to envy them that style of affluence. Then it came to me: There is no way under the sun that an American cardiac surgeon could encounter the Maliwada villager who ran the sucre factory or that an Indonesian villager could become a global development consultant without a bridge. None of us could have the global experience, the social mobility or the spiritual acumen we do have without the bridge of the Order Ecumenical. With all its ruts and ridges, its rust and scratches, it's a sign for history of possibility for the future.

--John Epps  
Denver



YEAR OF ORDER COUNCIL

SPIRIT MODE

SPIRIT THEME: "We propose that the overarching image for the Summer of 1984 be the ONE, THE MANY, AND THE FEW: THE STYLE AND TASK OF RECONCILIATION..... we suggest that a powerful overarching image might be the BRIDGE, and that decor be built which features the variety of bridges (Sydney, Golden Gate, Hoogley, Covered Bridges, etc.)..."



BRIDGES

FIRST DRAFT MODEL

Submitted by Denver/Billings  
April 28, 1984

YEAR OF ORDER COUNCIL

SPIRIT MODE

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SPIRIT THEME OF THE COUNCIL AND BEYOND  
DENVER, April 28, 1984

I. THE SITUATION

A. The Moral Issue of Our Time

We are in a period in which the major moral issue is shifting. Recently, it was seen as the gap between the 15% and the 85%--those who participate in the creation of the future (15%) and the rest for whom the future is created (85%). Lately, however, a new candidate has emerged: the threat of nuclear war. In the West, Peace Movements and groups are everywhere, and to try to talk about building a future inevitably gets into the discussion of whether there will BE a future. A prominent supporter has observed that the largest motivated group now active is the Peace Movement. It is being widely noted that peace is more than the absence of war, however, and people are increasingly aware that peace through development is the only way.

Underlying both analyses of the major issue is a common thread which is the underlying spirit contradiction of the times: the Adversary Mode-- that approach to life which assumes differences are evil, that things are either right or wrong, that things are either uniform or in opposition. This assumption is the reason nations are at each others' throats, with or without nuclear devices. This assumption is also the basis of the 15/85 gap: the two are in opposition to each other.

B. The Ontological Dynamics

Two things are increasingly clear: Unity and Diversity. There is no getting away from either. There is UNITY--one planet on which we all live. There is physical unity so that a doctor trained in New York can treat the broken bone of an African tribesman. There is unity in standing before the radical mystery of life and death. There is a profound humanness in which all are united.

But there is also inescapable DIVERSITY--of cultures, values, languages, environments, experiences and interests. There is no way to diminish the importance and the pervasiveness of these differences among people. In fact, most social patterns of etiquette were established in order to prevent these differences from being disruptive.

C. The Emerging Insight

It is impossible to diminish either Unity or Diversity. We have witnessed the collapse of imposed unification. Nations which have abolished the diversity of languages and customs in the rightful hopes of establishing sufficient unity to participate in the global economy are now in trouble. The Philippines, China and El Salvador are but three examples of how diversity inevitably reasserts itself and turns the unifier into the tyrant.

But we are also seeing the collapse of institutionalized diversity. The structured opposition of management and labor simply doesn't work, except to the detriment of both. The opposition of capitalism and communism seems anachronistic on both sides, but manages to usurp a huge amount of the world's resources. So also with the opposition of North and South, of men and women, and the 3d and 1st worlds.

Unity and diversity are not adversaries, they are complementary. But the adversary mode promotes fear (of differences or of conformity) and opposition. THIS IS THE MORAL/SPIRITUAL ISSUE WITH WHICH WE AND SOCIETY ARE CONTENDING.

## II. THE SPIRIT THEME FOR THE SUMMER OF 1984

### A. The Thesis

The spirit theme required in this situation described above is RECONCILIATION, THE STYLE OF PROFOUND ECUMENISM. It is the theme of the FEW holding together the ONE and the MANY. It involves an acknowledgement of basic unity with appreciation of differences; a recognition of basic diversity with forgiveness and repentance; and a mission of reconciliation bridging the opposition between the unity and diversity.

### B. The Background

Reconciliation is not new, however, we have arrived at an historic point where it is appropriate to highlight. And we got here by accident (or divine guidance, if you wish). In the early days, our emphasis in spirit life and exercises was aimed at recognizing and appreciating diversity. We were out to break out of our WASP-mindsets, locked in, as most of us were, to a suburban view of life. And so our celebrations celebrated diversity--the Urs; and we experimented with rituals and decor and stories from other cultures. We even invented the Global Odyssey--a trip around the world which was indeed a spirit exercise.

But now we are immersed deeply in diversity--of mission, of rituals, of cultures, of languages, of strategies--and we hear frequently the cry, "Where's the Unity?" "Where's the Blue?" And it is quite clear that we cannot go back to the time when there was simple unity.

We have been led to the quest for reconciliation by who we are. And by what we have done. Because we are and have been the FEW who hold together the one and the many. Reconciliation is not a foreign theme, it is the name for what we've in fact been doing. For we have not ended poverty in our development efforts; we have sanctified it. We have not tapped the wealth of the world, we have engaged it. The way we've effectively dealt with the gap and opposition of the 15 and 85 is to have brought them together and enabled them to work effectively. And that has dealt with much more than poverty.

Now is the time in our spirit life to rehearse, reflect, embody and incorporate that which we have done and about which we know far more than we know we know. That is one mark of an appropriate theme.

### C. Elaboration

The reconciliation of which we have experience is no simple matter: it's a miraculous gift in the midst of a bloody battle. Where diversity is tearing a situation apart, yet all are deciding to continue, sometimes a ZOT! occurs which brings an entirely new perspective and allows things to continue. Where unity has stifled any creativity and killing routine has set in, sometimes a ZOT! into the real world brings the fresh air of chaos once more. Our mission, that of the FEW is to be the self-conscious giver and receiver of the ZOTS!.

## III. THE USES

We propose that the overarching image for the Summer of 1984 be the ONE, THE MANY, AND THE FEW: THE STYLE AND TASK OF RECONCILIATION. This is a theme that can be held in a variety of ways and will provide grist for universes of insights.

### A. In Talks and Presentations

We recommend that collegiums be spent exploring this theme in its various parts, sometimes by talks, sometimes by panels and sometimes in other forms. But the

themes would be: 1) Profound Unity: the One in the One; 2) Profound Diversity: the Struggle of the Many; and 3) Profound Reconciliation: the Task of the Few.

#### B. In Structured Conversations

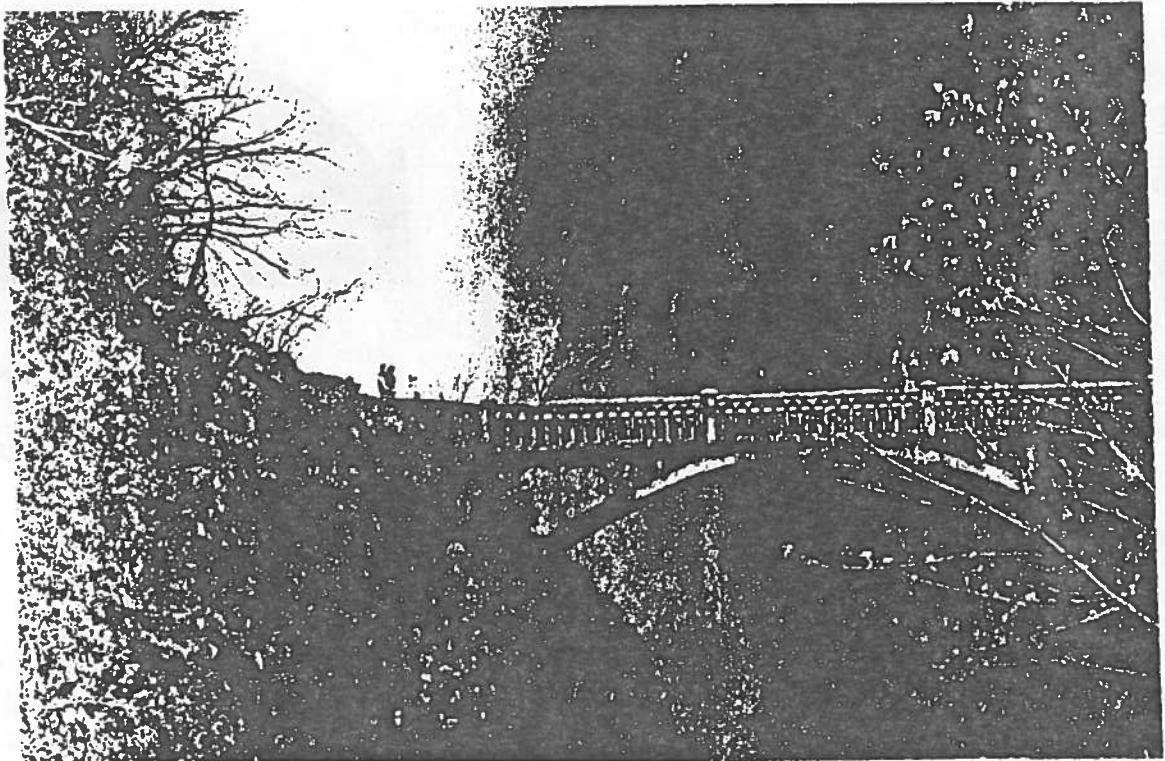
We recommend that conversations hold these points as well (see enclosed model). We would have one set on Unity that moves to a perspective where differences are acknowledged with appreciation. Another set would be on diversity that moves to consideration of how bridges are built between the differences. The third set would be on Reconciliation that explore its underlying dynamics of infatuation, disillusionment, decision and transformation.

#### C. In Decor and Ambience

We recommend that the global diversity of the Order's life and mission be amply displayed in the decor with both cultural artifacts and missional displays provided. We further recommend that symbols of our unity such as the Iron Man, the Social Process Triangles, etc. be prominently featured. We suggest that a powerful overarching image might be the BRIDGE, and that decor be built which features the variety of bridges (Sydney, Golden Gate, Hoogley, Covered Bridges, etc.), a stylized drawing anyone could reproduce, and a single classical bridge (like Van Gogh's bridge).

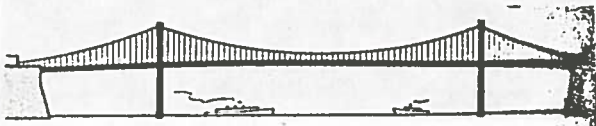
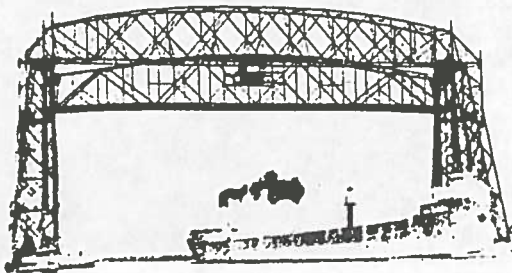
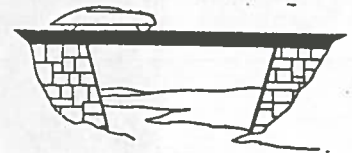
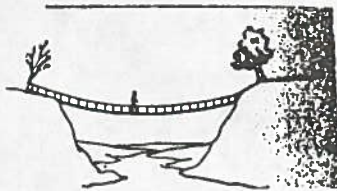
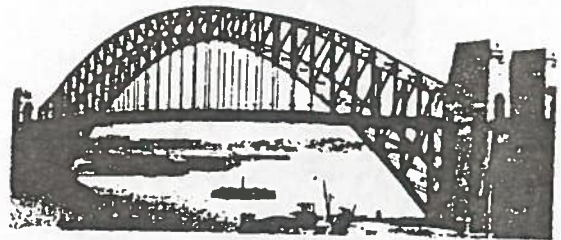
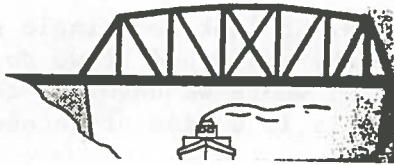
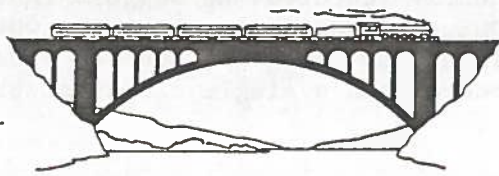
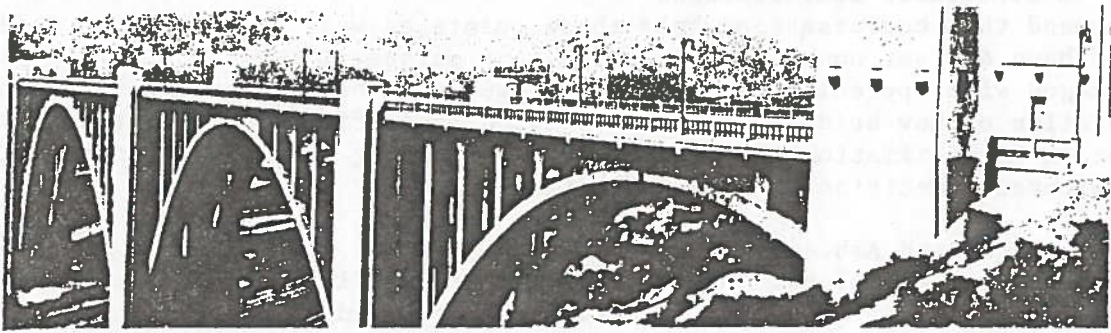
#### IV. CONCLUSION

We are not in a time of unity. To look for single emphases and strategies and vows and rituals is not now the task, and if we do, we will not succeed. We have been given a time, once again, where we have the tools and the experience to meet the cry of the world. This is a time of reconciliation, the time for the One, the Many and the Few.





# BRIDGES



YEAR OF ORDER COUNCIL - SUMMER TIME DESIGN

week	Global Research Assembly				Council	
	Reports&Trends (The MANY Happenings)		Model Building (The ONE Thrust)		Planning the Future (The FEW Who Dare)	
	The Order 1	The World 2	The Order 3	The World 4	The Order 5	The World 6
Theme	REGIONAL REPORTS & ANALYSES	THE URBAN/RURAL ANALYSIS	8 MODELS RESTATED	THE BIG PULL TOGETHER	8 MODELS REFINEMENT	CONTINENTAL STRATEGY
wk I	Total Plenary Continentals G	Teams Continentals G	Continental Grps Teams	Continental Grps Teams	Plenary Teams	Continental Grps Teams
wk II	Write-up Disc	Reporting Disc	Drama Disc	Council Prep & Set-up	Consensus Disc	Consensus Send-out
Approach	Exhibits, Reports	Think Tanks	Workshops	Document Writing	Task Forces	Maneuvers
Major Happ	Big Celebration	Excursions	Plenary	Big Celebration	Solitary Office	Big Celebration

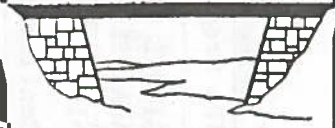
Dynamic	Time	Activity	Group Size
Worshiping in the New World	5:15	Wake-up	Total
Learning in the New World	6:00	Ritual: India, Kenya, Japan, US, Eur, Indo	2 Gr
Working in the New World	6:45	Breakfast Collegium Panels & Speakers	2 Gr
Living in the New World	9:30	Task Forces	T/F
		Sack Lunch	30 ea
	5:00	Task Forces	
Living in the New World	5:00	Interlude/Park Dinner	Total
	9:30	Conversations	Teams

S	D	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
6	8:30	Ritual: Breakfast Collegium Spirit Themes							Wkly Ritual
9:30	12	Day I Tasks					Week II	Celeb'n 2	DISCONTINUITY
		Sack Lunch							
		Day I Tasks							
7	9:30	Dinner			Celeb'n 1				

	CELEBRATIONS -The Many-	RITUALS -The One-	DECOR -The Few-	SONGS -The One, Many, Few
VALUE	<u>VARIETY</u> -In-house & Outside -big & small -individual gifts & group shows -one per week	<u>PROFOUNDLY INCLUSIVE</u> -based on RS-1 -not have to read -use of music -have solitary time	<u>THEMATIC &amp; COLORFUL</u> -The Order classics -Cultural variety -Theme: Bridges classical art stylized drawing many varied pics	<u>VARIETY</u> - Songs from each culture - Build up in rhythm
IMAGE	<u>FUN</u> -Ur Buffets -Physical activities -1 Cabaret -Seated in Great Hall	<u>TRANSPARENT</u> -Musical wake-up -roles by lang. groups -Transpose the Geneva -Transpose the Lord's Prayer	<u>COMPREHENSIVE</u> -Candles & Balloons -Large montages with single pics between -Theme in stairways	<u>REPLICABLE</u> - 2 sided tape to take home: 1, classic UR & 1, new summer songs
REC- OMMEN DA- TIONS	-One "Potlach" celebration where all bring a get a gift. -Team Celebrations or picnics. -Coffee House dynamic before Daily Ritual. -A Ravinia Concert just for us. -Performances from different cultures.	-Antiphonal Office so we don't need to read from paper. -use Existing Daily Rituals-India, Kenya, Japan, etc. -Allow witnesses to be non-English w/translation option -Provide occasion and space for traditional workshop - Muslim, prayers, Christian Eucharist, etc.	-Encourage back hall decor with "do your own" materials. -Kabir quotes -Large map from each nation -Missional decor and diversity pictures	-Invite a celebrity like Willie Nelson -Use "Tumble Weed" -Flute and drum music -Quartets & small group singing -Clear way to collect new songs

**RAVINIA  
CONCERT**

C: Let us give ourselves to the task.  
 L: It is to build the Earth.  
 C: Be it so.



**BRIDGE**

ACROSS THE WORLD,  
 IN EVERY LAND

(Tune: The Garden Song)

## SPIRIT MODES: TEAM CONVERSATIONS

Team conversations this summer need to explore the arenas of the Order's unity, diversity, and its mission. This will ground the theme of the One, the Many, and the Few. In order for these conversations to come off, careful selection of topics and the 4-5 questions to raise is necessary. The major values of these conversations are:

1. exploring and grounding and arena rather than solving it.
2. short rather than long. (10-15 minutes)
3. topics chosen should relate to common experiences that every person in the team could talk about.
4. one should be left pondering the future at the end of these conversations.

The following chart contains some possible topics and considerations in building the conversation.

Team Conversations Rational			
	THE ONE	THE MANY	THE FEW
TOPICS	1. different phases 2. spirit conversations 3. relationships to the environment	1. situations with translations 2. languages/communication 3. celebrations	1. being a "blue Shirt" 2. movies pointing to heroes 3. unholy calitions
EXPERIENCE	Encountering the Deeps	Having Fun	My Journey
PUSH THRU	Pushes towards the diversity in people's exp.	Pushes towards the unity of people's experiences	Pushes towards the resolve people make
PEARL	Relating Experiences	Telling Stories	My Commitment

### A SAMPLE CONVERSATION

Topic: Situations with two languages

- Questions:
1. Describe the situation/ characters.
  2. What has been a humorous situation/ difficult one?
  3. What has been a situation where nobody has spoken your language?
  4. How did you communicate?
  5. What are the keys to bridging this gap?

**ICA** THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
CONCERNED WITH THE HUMAN FACTOR IN WORLD DEVELOPMENT

May 9th, 1984

Dear Colleagues,

The following notes are an addition to our recommendations on the Team conversations that was printed in our Spirit Modes Document. These recommendations and its additions reflect an experiment we did with various formats and topics for conversations this Summer. We have used these conversations during the Tuesday and Wednesday evening meals over the past weeks. Also, we have used these conversations as a way to get on stage for various collegiums.

On the reverse side, please find a chart that has 3 sample conversations. Also, there is a write up of considerations and topics for designing a conversation.

We recommend that you might consider the following:

1. Brainstorm more topics for each of the three arenas of the Summer theme.
2. Assign one or two people to select a few topics, build a conversation format, and do it. Do three or four of these conversations.
3. After each conversation, critique and reflect on it as a group.
4. Include the reflections in any models you send out.

We found that these conversations and its reflections were a tremendous exercise to go thru. We hope you have fun doing them.

Regards,  
Denver/Billings House

SPIRIT MODES: TEAM CONVERSATIONS, CONSTRUCTS  
AND RATIONAL

## First Draft Conversation Constructs

<p>Spirit Theme: The Many</p> <p>Topic: "When I have been in situations in which my language is not spoken."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe the situation/characters</li> <li>2. What has been a humorous/difficult situation?</li> <li>3. What did you do when nobody has spoken your language?</li> <li>4. What are the keys to communicating?</li> </ol>	<p>Spirit Theme: The One</p> <p>Topic: Roles and the Phases</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce the group to a "memorable" person you know. Mention their phase and what makes them memorable.</li> <li>2. What is your phase?</li> <li>3. What are the roles that people have in these phases?</li> </ol>	<p>Spirit Theme: The Many</p> <p>Topic: Differences in the way of thinking and communication.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who represents other ways of thinking?</li> <li>2. How do you characterize your own way of thinking?</li> <li>3. What do you do when you run up against some one who does things very differently?</li> </ol>
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## VALUES, THEMES AND TOPICS

Conversations: Hints and Values	Topics and Themes	Teams: Settings and Leadership
Conversations need to start with a question or context that everybody on the team can respond to.	THE ONE/UNITY	Teams will be doing enablement quite a bit, we need conversations that context and reflect on these assignments.
The conversations need to draw on the common experiences people have.	POSSIBLE TOPICS: 1. the 4 phases 2. types of roles we play in these phases 3. the environment /5. my grandmother 4. spirit conversations	These conversations should be a refreshing and energizing time for the teams.
The method needs to include going around the table at least once with a question.	THE MANY/DIVERSITY	Conversation leaders need to be adequately prepared and trained before leading them, altho anybody should be able to lead one
Conversations need to be short rather than long, they are not meant to solve an issue but rather explore an arena.	POSSIBLE TOPICS: 1. being a translator 2. different ways to communicate 3. celebrations 4. goofs I've had in front of a group	A conversation leader is not trying to teach something or be an expert, but should be transparent.
Conversations need to be thought thru so that so that anybody, regardless of first language can participate.	THE FEW/MISSION, THOSE WHO CARE	A team, at some point during the 6 weeks, needs to get on stage in front of everyone.
At the end of a conversation, one should be left pondering the future.	POSSIBLE TOPICS: 1. differences in rural/urban living 2. "Blue Shirts", that which points to service 3. movies and hero's/4. unholy, coalitions 5. expectations/anticipations	
These conversations need to relate to the total theme of the council.		