

T-172
 Base centrum
 Prior Spin

Spring Quarter –
 June 21, 1973

LEAVES FROM THE JOURNAL OF A TRANSFORMED STOIC

Some of you remember Rheinold Niebuhr's little book called *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic* which goes back to the mood of the Thirties. I would like to call what I have to say this morning, "Leaves from the Journal of a Transformed Stoic." Now, any of you who have known me in the past, know when I can call myself a transformed stoic, that is a big step. As a Yankee, straight out of ten generations of New England, I am a stoic to the tips of my toes.

I have discovered that stoicism really comes to the fore when the going gets so heavy that you do not know what to do next, except square your shoulders, take one step and make another list of things to do. I could have brought my folder this morning from Miami; it is about an inch thick, and all it holds is lists of things to do. Some of them will get done; some of them will not. What happened to me this year, or more particularly this quarter, is the taking of a new relationship to that folder of things to do.

Now the first step in transforming a stoic occurs when he discovers that stoicism is simply not an adequate response to his situation. There is nothing like a Religious House to teach you that. This was my first year as a prior of a Religious House. You would think when you had only nine people to worry about, your lists of things to do would be fairly short. But my experience is that when you have nine or ten people to care about, the list gets longer for nothing escapes your attention. Because it just gets longer every day, I tried stoicism. When things really got tough, I made another list. The tougher they got, the longer the list. I tried to do all of it. Pretty soon, it became apparent that Stoicism was not an adequate response to the situation. The Lord has ways of reaching you. He sets on top of you the burden of so many things to be done, but down underneath the Lord is doing something else called Resurgence. The first few times I heard about Resurgence I did not believe that was what was going on. In certain parts of this country where you do not see very much new going on, sometimes it is difficult to believe. I discovered this year that I was caught in a vise. Stoicism was not an adequate response to the fact that Resurgence was bubbling up from underneath while the burden was sitting on top. Somehow that situation had to be transformed.

Now to speak about three or four leaves from this "Journal of a Transformed Stoic." One leaf is called, "the Man of La Mancha" or the "Knight Errant" or the "Knight of the Woeful Countenance." I like the last phrase. We had not seen *Man of La Mancha* until last Quarter. The Knight of the Woeful Countenance became a leaf in the transformation notebook. I saw, through that movie, what happens to people when a character like Don Quixote rides into the midst of a situation. I suppose what will go to the grave with me is the image of Don Quixote with that awful old dish rag on top of his head as a token from his lady, and the brass shaving bowl, the Golden Helmet, upside down on his head. There he stood with his twisted lance, conquering the world. That image is on one of the leaves of the "Journal of a Transformed Stoic"--the Man of La Mancha being an absolute fool, but a fool who was turning matter into spirit everywhere, transforming life and altering the course of human events every moment. That was a great address.

Another event occurred in Regional Council. Our image of Regional Councils in years back was that of a board meeting with a long agenda. We were going to build models in which the Movement would be moved down the road because of a great Regional Council. The struggle to design a Regional Council was brought home when my wife, who had been harping about the type of Regional Council we should have said to me, "Let's have a Cabaret on the Friday night of Regional Council. We won't do anything serious; we'll just do a Cabaret." All I could think of was another list of things to do. You would have to move all the furniture out, find lights and small tables; there were so many things on my list of things to do in order to have a Cabaret. But, the Lord prevailed, via my wife, and we had a Cabaret Friday night. Then, on Saturday, we had our Regional Council meeting. But we did not really have a Regional Council meeting, for on Saturday we did not do any business at all. Basically, we just continued dancing--the Cabaret went on all the way through Saturday. We had workshops and reports but I have never before seen such spirit in a Regional Council. Everybody who got up to talk or participate in the Regional Council had been transformed by the Cabaret the night before. The Academy report was sheer spirit. One of the people from the Religious House gave a report that was sheer spirit. She did not say anything that went on in the Religious House, yet it was a great Religious House report. During the Common Meal, at the close of Regional Council, it became my turn. I had to say something. After the Common Meal, while people were sitting and eating, I did something I had never done before. I want to witness to you that it was the Spirit. I got up and led an altar call and filled our Summer '73 quota. I never thought this could be possible. I stood there and we sang songs, and told stories, and I looked people in the eye, and just waited for them to get out their pens and their checkbooks and write out their registrations. That is another leaf from the "Journal of a Transformed Stoic."

The last event occurred on Pentecost Sunday. It almost came as an anticlimax. When we read that passage from the story of Pentecost, which says that the apostles were "filled with new wine" I said, "That's right! What we have on our hands now is a Region of people filled with new wine." It was great! I was impacted by the fact that the Christian year only allows us to have our red altar cloth out for one week. Then a green cloth is put for the season of Trinity. That offended me so much that I had to be reminded to take the red cloth off for I had decided Pentecost was going to go on for the whole year. I said, "Let's leave the red out there for the whole calendar year because this is going to be the Year of the Spirit." Hell, Trinity is here now, but it still is the Year of the Spirit.

The word I want to leave with you is, "The Lord has broken through." This is not just a personal testimony. The Movement has experienced this breakthrough. In the Year of the Spirit, we are going to find the power of the Holy Spirit bubbling into our lives, our Religious Houses, and everything we do as a Movement. Amen.

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