

STRATEGIES DISCOURSE

The relation of this Council to the Master Strategies of 1980-81 is both obvious and an intriguing exercise. It is a very fruitful Watch. The existential aim of this discourse is to stimulate our thinking on the Master Strategies of this four years so this Council will be able to name for itself the action modes for the next year, even the next three years.

'You must not let yourselves be distressed--you must hold on to your faith in God and to your faith in Me. There are many rooms in My Father's House. If there were not, should I have told you that I am going away to get a place ready for you? It is true that I am going away to get a place ready for you, but it is just as true that I am coming again to welcome you into My own home, so that you may be where I am. You know where I am going and you know the road I am going to take.'

'Lord,' Thomas remonstrated, 'we don't know where You're going and how can we know what road You're going to take?'

'I Myself am the Road,' replied Jesus, 'and the Truth and the Life. No one approaches the Father except through Me. If you had known Who I am, you would have known My Father. From now on, you do know Him and you have seen Him.'

Then Philip said to Him, 'Show us the Father, Lord, and we shall be satisfied.'

'Have I been such a long time with you,' returned Jesus, 'without your really knowing Me, Philip? The man who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The very words I say to you are not My own. It is the Father Who lives in Me Who carries out His work through Me. Do you believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? But if you cannot, then believe Me because of what you see Me do. I assure you that the man who believes in Me will do the same things that I have done, yes, and he will do even greater things, for I am going away to the Father. Whatever you ask the Father in My name, I will do--that the Son may bring glory to the Father. And if you ask Me anything in My name, I will grant it.'

Let us begin by locating us in our missional journey spiritwise so we can see what we can see what we have done in this Council. There are four things that describe the journey of this body of people. This "who we are" question at least deserves a private answer. We are a people who have been addressed to the very bottom of our beings. That is the only reason we stick around. Somewhere along the way I got hooked, gloriously hooked. That is a wonder-filled statement. The initiating point for me was RS-1 in 1958 and my seminar teacher was Mildred Hudgins. The lectures were given by a bunch of other people, but as you know the seminars are where your life really gets hooked. Mildred left the next year so most of you don't know her. Probably she accounts for some of the warpings I have. Nonetheless in that RS-1, in spite of the teacher, the circumstances or anything else, I got said to me: David, your life is significant. There is no status in that statement. It acknowledges the fact that David is a worm, a slob. In fact it's that slob that is significant. That is what got communicated to me. And no matter where I show up next, I will know that. Each of us have a similar story.

The second thing that marks the journey of this body of people is that over the last twenty years we have been trained in the crucible of the innocent suffering of this world. That is where the training of the 12 began and ended in the New Testament story. We have been trained in the innocent suffering of this world. That is, our whole concept of suffering has exploded. My concept of suffering got exploded in the villages of India--one by the name of Kendur, where I've never seen the likes of social fragmentation, and in the village of Sordi where I was so personally humiliated during a Consult without a translator. You don't know how you do that do you? Well, you find an English speaker somewhere in the neighborhood and go ahead. That is the way we did it anyway. And in Byculla, Bombay, where there is not just one stub sticking in the window, there are thousands of them, and in Wilmette. You may wonder, why Wilmette? Well, it was only after the journey into the Indian villages that I saw the innocent suffering of Wilmette. I looked into the eyes on the well-groomed bodies of those people, and I saw vacuity--emptiness. That is innocent suffering. You finally have to say that this training has demonstrated to us that we are all one in this veil of tears we call planet earth. You and I are one because the training has been the same, nothing really unique about any of us in this sense. We are an authentic response to that innocent suffering.

The third thing I decided about the journey, to locate ourselves at this point, is following the training or in the midst of the training, we were abandoned to our own devices to find out whether we would be or not be. All our heroes are dead, it is just us. We need all of us--the old ones and the new ones, and those who have been around awhile. The moral fabric of our time has been yanked out, like cutting the guts out of a shrimp. There is nothing whatsoever firm and final on which you can base the moral decision save your own critical

intelligence. We call that the Freedom lecture.

The fourth thing that locates us in the journey at this moment is that we have been challenged to take up the task of building the earth together. It is up to us--not that we're the only people building the earth today--but that as one body unique and unrepeatable, we are about the task of building the earth. It has been very interesting to me to watch the way this Council has been done methodologically. We built our vision and our future indicatively out of our own lives. That's not always been the case in GRAs and Councils. Summer '71 built it from the top down, not from the indicative we had been living on up until 1971--at least not entirely. As I watched this develop in this Council the secret to our unity is precisely here--that whatever this Council has built and done, it is built out of our lives and therefore we are hooked on it. We have a supreme confidence in the midst of this challenge. It is not a confidence in ourselves alone, certainly not in each other individually, but a confidence that we do stand at a moment in history with a task delineated before us and the outcome we are certain is an authentic response to our times. I think that means our confidence is not in ourselves but in God. We are patient-impatient with one another, but we are confident.

In our Symbolic Life Guide the context for the summer symbol indicates how the symbol is related to the three Master Strategies. It is very interesting to read. The gold within the blue is the four exemplars, the saint, the poet, the general and the sage. The anointed is the centre point where those in the service of the world and the exemplars converge. This is transparent style. The gold represents the master strategy of ethical declaration.

Declaration. When we were preparing for this Council we plotted the actions we did last year into the triangle of the Master Strategies. We found the most diversity and unevenness, the most splatteredness in the activities in the triangle of Declaration. We decided that means this is the most futuric edge of all of our strategies. I have even thought during this Council that we might not actually do that strategy until the 1990's. In any case it is a very futuric edge. Who knows, perhaps we'll come off with Formation next year and the year after we will do Declaration. Then again, maybe they go together.

Declaration, you remember is one of the facets of Profound Humanity that we have pointed to and that chart says that it deals with continual exposure, being a visible sign, constant interpretation and public accountability. That sounds familiar does it not? In any case it is clear to me that these are the times for Declaration. These are not the times for us to hem and haw and say, well maybe--if we--think we--can might get around to that sooner or later... This is a time for Declaration because the moral fabric of our time has

been yanked out and some prophet will emerge--corporate or individual. It includes a willingness to risk yourself with your life, and not just your head. It is a willingness to be first in what gets said and done.

What we've done in this Council is to say--and it's rather astounding--that what we have to declare is the global mythology of our time. I find that startling. But the first mandate says that they associate it with the strategy of Declaration. I did some reading around here in what methology is all about and found the TV interview of Bill Moyers with Joseph Campbell. In that interview Campbell says that mythology has four functions. "The first, I would call the mystical function. That is the one I have been speaking about: realizing what a wonder the universe is." (We've been doing that since we did CS-1, at least that, or maybe it's the Other World work.) "What a wonder you are. And feeling awe before this mystery. That's the mystical dimension."

"The second function of a myth is a cosmological dimension. The dimension which science is concerned with. Showing you what the shape of the universe is." Maybe this is CS-1. "Showing it in such a way that the Mystery comes through. Now one of the things that the scientist tends to say is: oh, we've got the answers. But the good ones come and say no, we haven't got the answers; we are telling you how it works. What is it? Well, that's the 20th century mythology of knowledge." You could add to the rest of the CS-1 course probably.

"The third function is a sociological one, supporting and validating a certain social order." And here is where "the myths vary enormously from place to place." (I wonder what that would have to do with maybe the Ur images or the Social Process.) "You can have," he says, "a whole mythology for polygamy; a whole mythology for monogamy--either one's o.k., it depends on where you are."

"The fourth function of myth I would call the pedagogical, that is, to guide the individual through the normal crises of a lifetime decently and harmoniously." (And he goes through the life phases.)

We have the elements of the mythology. What the job is, is to get those elements together; to pull them into one form of expression. I don't know what form. Maybe it is not a written form. Maybe it's a dramatic form. Maybe it's a musical form. Who knows? Maybe it is putting our songs into a great aria. But then how would we take those elements and pull them through the poetry of the world? I am very convinced that coming at mythology through the world religions is a very, very tricky thing to do. I began on that and backed off entirely. But the world cultures, their poetry, that is the way. The other thing I have discovered is that we have no chance in hell of coming off with it without one life understanding through which to pull it. For me it is the Contentless Christ.

The other interesting thing I discovered as I looked at the mandates in terms of getting our story together was number 16. The mandate called Equipping Interchange has to do with getting together our story and making it accessible. This is because finally the story is declared out of the stuff of your own life.

The second thing I discovered about our work in this Council, on Declaration, is that no matter how good a story or mythology you have pulled together, you have to have a vehicle through which to declare it. It used to be on street corners. I think for us it is the courses, and so I put the Profound Commitment course and the part of the training mandate that dealt with courses of training together. Those are our vehicles for declaration. You have said in this Council that we will do those every where we can, as many as we can. Also I notice in terms of a vehicle that when you are doing declaration it is not just verbal and through courses, it is also with your life, with your being. It was the Phase I Extension mandate that pointed to that. They were saying: "Send us. We want to declare (in terms of the ethical question of our time relative to Phase I). We have something to declare."

Then, of course, the very epitome of this strategy is in that International Exposition for Rural Reconstruction. What a declaration that will be! I looked in their work and I could not see this explicitly, but I know it is there. Grassroots up development can happen anywhere in this world. What a declaration! Not only can it happen, but, here is how. Let's go look at it. That is the embodiment of declaration.

Now in each one of these, just to push our thinking a bit and to stimulate us to think creatively about those action modes I put a "What if" in each one. What if, in terms of declaration, the symbology experiment is really about this. I don't think it is because my heritage is the Baptist tradition which says that finally it is getting on the road and declaring yourself with your symbols--that is what preaching is all about--pure symbol. What if that is really not just for ourselves, to sustain ourselves, but it is for the world. I would like to somehow find within the action modes of the next year or the next three years something that says to ourselves that our internal life is not for ourselves. It is for mission. Just as missional as HDZ is missional. That is what we do when we rehearse the global mythology to ourselves. It is very clear when you go to a village, that is what you do. You go public with your worship service and that is what threw us into the whole ritual experiment. I have been trying to think what that would mean in Uptown. I haven't come up with much but I thought about taking all these brick walls down and putting glass windows up. That would begin to do it. God sent us to the villages. We did not just think up a good idea that we ought to go. If we thought it up as a good idea, it wasn't a very good one. But we dare not pull out. All is forgiveable save the

denial of the holy spirit. That is in our tradition. The holy spirit led us into the villages. If we pull out now, it is only for a time and only for a time, in order to go back with power, maybe with the zone. I have been thinking about Asherton and that being a zone.

"The burgundy on the summer symbol points to the whole earth, the unity of the globe. This is where expenditure happens. It is for which expenditure happens. This is one common earth. The burgundy represents the Master Strategy, Social Manifestation."

The fewest number of mandates are in the arena of manifestation. It is because this is what we do. We do not have a lot more to say to ourselves about what we need to do, but we do need to focus the task. We have been trying to get this task focused for several years now and I think this Council did it.

In the Profound Humanness chart again, manifestation is called Presence. Being profoundly human requires that you be a presence. That is inescapable selfhood, enigmatic archetype, internalized affirmation and transparent signification.

We have said in this Council and before, that in the arena of manifestation we understand that we have gone beyond demonstration. That does not mean that we have stopped doing demonstrations but that we have done demonstrations, now what? Once you have demonstrated the new earth, what next do you do? We are saying that we are moving toward substantial structural change in society. That is a frightening decision if that in fact is what we are doing. Again out of our Christian memory I don't think you can approach this area any other way than our Lord did when he set his face toward Jerusalem. There is nothing else on the other end, but your total life and your total death. It is structural revolution come of age. This is what we all do, and this is what we do well. It is awakenment and engagement and formation all focused in one.

The Human Development Zone is not a big human development project, we've said. I don't know what we will finally do to give shape to that or whether we will get up our courage enough to do the same thing everywhere with the same methods as we did the HDP. But it is certainly the intensive and the focusing of our one task in one hunk of geography. It is the Regionalis being done in the local. It is profound ecumenism. That fifth great talk has within it the theoretical underpinnings we need in order to do what we set out to do sometime ago and that is the ecumenical parish. That is, Church renewal like any other religious body's renewal will come at the point of mission and not in terms of pumping itself up with a few more fancy programs. It is a socio-spirit reality, the human development zone. The one, the many, and the few have to be written into it. The one is the life understanding. It is the contentless word. It is the universal common water table of humanness. It is present in

India or Africa or whatever other place you show up. That oneness is there within the zone. The manyness is also there. The many people, the poetries that point to that one life understanding. Why we have to argue about poetry I don't know, but that is also built into humanness. And there is the few. They are the ones who can transcend their own parochialism and their own reluctance to give their lives with action. They are the rare ones who transcend these and bring about unity for everyone. Maybe I am getting too philosophical about the zone, but I am convinced that if we do it we had better think it through in the depths of humanness and not just go out and do some things.

Structural revitalization is also in this area. If the Human Development Zone is the intensive of manifestation, structural revitalization is the extensive strategy of that. It takes the Regionalis to the Globalis. I really didn't think that we would ever do this. In fact, I think the reason I was assigned to that task force was because people knew I didn't think we really ought to do this. But what we discovered in that task force was that we were giving rational and practical form on a set of givens that we are already doing. Like in the rest of the Council, this mandate is based on already happening missional activities. Therefore I got excited about it. The alligators are still there and we will continue to name them.

The third thing I discovered in our mandates that has to do with manifestation is LENS. LENS is really not declaration, at least not declaration alone. In the way we are using it right now and the way it is spelled out in these mandates, it is an entré tool for manifestation. The wonder of it all is that LENS' time has come. And, boy!! Has it come in that mandate! The other mandate on LENS is on professional style. This is where I would issue a caution. In fact, any time somebody tries to impose upon everyone a kind of elite professionalism, it grates against every fiber of my being. I say that as one who could pretend to professionalism if he chose. It smacks of elitism, unrealizable by the masses of people. And yet the push there is right, in terms of the excellence required in our presence. We are people that live in a time in which that is what is required. Therefore, if you as an individual have not decided to overcome your shaggy doggism, this is a good time to decide. But I am pushing that we push through it as we have said we do with all bourgeoisism of our time. We punch a few holes in it. When you do, you will discover that the presence we need to be is the religious. We are the religious. If that is what you mean by professional, o.k., I submit.

The "what if" in this arena is a proposal. What is the Religious House is not really a manifestation strategy. At least for me it transforms that whole thing from what we used to do with Religious House. We are not going to transform them unless somehow we tell ourselves that what we are doing is something we have never done before. Maybe it is something we should have been doing before, but

at least the houses I have been in.... Two person houses. That is probably one of the most risky, could even go down in history as the most stupid maneuver we ever did. These regional colleagues who think they have a choice, they need to hear what the choice is. Either you have a two person house that this year you will move into or you ain't going to have no Religious House or symbolic order in that region ere long. It is a people maneuver!

A colleague has been trying to beat into my head for two years now that the most crucial thing we do is care for each other. Care for people. And that is what this Religious House Transformation is all about. If we don't know how to care for each other, how in the world can we care for this world. What do I know I asked myself, what do I really know about caring for people? Sometimes I don't think I know a thing. At least, my failures in this arena are numerous. What do I know about caring for people? There are three things I really know. The first thing I know is that some people at some times in their lives don't want to be cared for. They just don't want anyone to touch them. In fact they sit over in the corner eating worms. They insist that they will not be cared for. They go on eating worms. If you bomb them with blockbusters or H-bombs and run over them with whatever the latest version of the Sherman tank is... they won't be cared for. That I learned. We must be spirit surgeons with these people.

Second, I know others who insist and neurotically yearn to be cared for. I have discovered the best way is to give them a stiff arm. The third thing I know is that when you really decide to care for people, it will take every ounce of your energy to care for one human being. I happened to get into several psychiatric wards this year. Not myself as a patient, though it could have been. I could have been there as well as the people I was there to care for. They told me in those wards that this psychologist can only handle six and this one over here, he can handle twenty. But that is about the limit. This is the touch on the hem of the garment in New Testament mythology. When you decide to really do a religious house, you will care for people and it will take every ounce of your being.

The third strategy has to do with the blue. It talks about the blue--that's the arrow points on the symbol, that point to the four directions for service and those who care. It points to the directions of the four corners of the earth--the archaic, the comprehensive, the futuristic, and the profound--that's a little different than north, east, south, and west. And it points to the one pluriform Order, it points to the blue in history.

This is the most current and the most practical edge we have in our strategies. Formation, some people have said, this is our job for the next 20 years. I'm not so sure about that but it's the most current practical edge that we have. In the Profound Humanness chart

I located it under the category of corporateness. We have decided that one of our strategies in terms of caring for this world is to both demonstrate and actualize among ourselves corporateness. That is focused power, covenantal collegiality, profound fellowship and decisional obedience. Why would this be a strategy for anyone? Why isn't this what you do last. After you have all your strategies thought through, you form you group to do them? Well, I think again it is because the moral fabric has been yanked out. This is the global milieu we live in. You don't choose the times you live in. They happen to you. These are the times we are living in and to build corporateness is one of the foundation stones of post-civilization that is now emerging. When we are going this strategy, we are facing the greatest danger we as a group ever faced. It could be turned-in-ness of turned-in-ness of turned-in-ness. If you sit around trying to get your group together so that they will get out doing mission, you will be doomed. A whole area once plateaued precisely because this was all they did for a year or two. Yet, it is critical that we, in terms of our strategies, find out how you missionally, externally, in the world, create corporateness. Formation in society begins to happen only when mission comes first. Then you have something to formate for. There is a word "formate"; I looked it up in the dictionary. It is not a verb. It is a noun and it means "a salt to formic acid," and formic acid is the acid ants sting with. Is not that interesting.

This is the theology of expenditure. This is the theology of cruciformity. This is the on-behalf-of principle. You do your region on behalf of the whole body. Save the on-behalf-of comes first, you are defending yourself either through doctrinalism or communalism, that is doing everything for the sake of internal harmony or for institutionalism. There are some of the most wondrous things in these mandates about what we have decided to do in the arena of formation. It is our current edge.

The regional team: I would urge us to be as broad as possible in the network we mean by the regional team. We don't mean just a bunch of people who like each other or the ones that happen to show up every now and then. We mean our team. They include as many nobodies as we can find. We are creating a something here. If I had to say what the three somethings are this Council called for to be created, they are this one, the regional team, and two others. The regional teams are not in being yet. Let's go create them this year. We got our feet wet but there is a lot to do yet. Also the Profound Commitment course has to be created. I was interested that Indianapolis claimed they had done one. There is also the Human Development Zone. No one knows what that is. Those are the three creations needed this year.

Also in this arena is Order Pluriformity. I suspect we will solve the question of Order pluriformity, not in the Symbolic Order but in this regional team, what we called the Extended, Movemental Order before.

Phase I Extension no doubt goes somewhere in this arena. Creating corporateness for the sake of the youth revolution of our time, and this year it needs to stay in the strategy of formation. Maybe next year it is declaration. The Religious House, of course, is a part of this strategy. The Religious House in the future is not those people living in residence but it is that whole team. They need to solve the discipline needed. I heard us pointing to that in the covenants that we laid out.

This arena of training is a very definite action component in these strategies for the sake of creating revolutionary cells in history. That is what we are creating, otherwise we will have turned-in-ness or turned-in-ness of turned-in-ness. Unless the Academy creates revolutionaries it is worthless. Unless it creates corporate cells of revolutionary people, we should drop it.

Priorship, training of ourselves in priorship, people who care. This is a people tactic again, just like the Religious House is. Generalship is not doing it on your own. What would a general be without an army? It includes care for the people. What happened to the retreat? I really expected it to show up more strongly than it did. It is there in some socio-spirit exercises and other things. Maybe it is because we didn't really decide to do one in the Council, I don't know. For the future that may be all we do. The retreat will do every strategy we have. Is it another mandate this year? I ask the Council.

Self-support is also in the arena of formation. What excites me is the number of tools, a proliferation of tools for self-support. They have the three old standbys, the three expansion tasks and the two edge experiments. That was an exciting breakloose. I would hope that in this next year with these tools, we will find that we are no longer on the defensive in the arena of self-support. What a victory that would be.

The "what if" in this strategy is not a strong "what if". But, "what if" we approached the global rhythms in a new way. They didn't get too many votes yesterday. They are revolutionary glue that holds us together. Those who think we don't need these Councils don't understand what kind of revolution we are in. They are not to be tampered with willy-nilly. Without the glue, we wouldn't last very long. No one is too busy to come to Council. I would like to say that to a lot of people. This is what we are about, and if it takes three months to do the next Council, let's take it. But the global rhythms could be the secret of why we don't have to take three months if we can really actuate those. And my "what if" about them is this. "What if" we are attempting through that rhythm to create a global time design that the world could use. You can see that I am trying to turn every one of those outwards rather than simply to ourselves.

In conclusion, I simply want to express gratitude for being a part of this bunch of people, and to say that we have got focus. We have really got the focus. All we have to do next year is four things: (1) we do as many Profound Commitment Courses in whatever forms we can do them, as many as we can. That is all we need to do, Profound Commitment courses, RS-1s, vocational journey exercises or whatever they are, in order to equip the regional team. This is not just to do the number of courses but to equip the regional team in order that they might be spiritually equipped to go out and do LENS courses as a way to enter the Human Development Zone. Only four things: Profound Commitment Course, a Regional Team, LENS courses and a Human Development Zone. If you did those you would have done the mission and if you do that, I would suggest, your Religious House would be transformed and you will have something to train people for. That covers the first six mandates in rank from yesterday's analysis plus I bumped Profound Commitment Course up from number 10 to put it as part of our primary task. I thought that was my prerogative in this assignment.

We have struggled for thirty years against those who think the opposite of what I have just said. They think that if you straighten out your Religious House (usually based on a set of petty moralisms) and if you train your troops, then you will be able to march forth. But life is not that way. That is speaking out of a dead historical mode. It is a dead church mode, a dead mosque mode, a dead anything institutional mode. Life is not that way. You have internal decay when you are not missionally engaged, and when you are missionally engaged internal decay--by-and-large, disappears.