

Presidium and Local Church Training School  
Ecumenical Institute, Chicago  
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### GALACTIC REPORT

I'm sure you won't mind if I pray over you to begin with.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants with water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given them forgiveness of all their sins, strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts and grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and forever. Amen.

I want to say in the beginning today that after years---is it 50 years? or maybe 200 years?, or longer---of patient, frustrating, painful, unbelievable negotiations, the marriage of the historical Church and the spirit movement has taken place. Now, you couldn't say that either was highly enthusiastic. A few years ago a few marriage brokers brought the movement before the great and majestic power of the historical Church and proposed that there be a marriage. But the historical Church said something like, "To whom?" And later on, the movement, when broached seriously with the possibility of marrying the historical Church, looked and said, "Get married to that?" But somehow that unbelievable process of negotiation took place, and the marriage has happened. Of course there are some questions now about compatibility - if we ever had an opportunity for creative corporate marriage counseling, I suspect that it is given to us now.

But I come today to talk about the galaxy out of the concrete experience of the last quarter. The insight that we had earlier last summer and even before, I now give back to you as confirmed on the battlefield (or whatever you want to call it). We had said that the time is now, that the kairos has arrived. And if we sometimes changed the ritual a little, "Now is the time. Are we the people?" because of our anxieties, that's all right. Because when you think about it, what it means to have shown up in this kairotic time is that we say to ourselves that we are in the era of the practical revolution in the church. We experience the awful amazement that we were born back somewhere in that time of theoretical renewal and that we have indeed lived until this day is something so awesome that anxiety would be the only honest way to respond to it. Therefore it seems to me that daily we are all absolved of all our anxieties, they are given to us as great gifts and we don't have to be anxious about them.

This is a moment of universal hesitation; every group of people, every person on the face of the earth, somehow senses that it is not time to act, that we've got to wait. And I would remind you that this is the time when revolutionaries move. Not when they are sure of what it is they are doing, not when they have their anxieties handled and assuaged, but when they sense that the whole world is waiting; and I am absolutely sure that that this is the case.

But it is not that all of a sudden we looked up and saw that the moment was ripe, and went out to now renew the world, we have come through a very real and rational journey. There was a period of research, 1966-1970, and it was painful research. Many of you that are here today bear the scars of what had to happen then. But it has happened, and now we are in the period of experimentation, 1970-1976, when we are permitted to make mistakes, when we don't really know for sure, what it

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is that we are going to do, but we know that we are not going to stop. And then in 1976-1984 is the period that just will make you want to dance the jig when you think about it,---the period of replication, when everywhere the movement will just be popping out, so that our problem will just be how can we keep it structured.

And of course the key, as I mentioned already, to this was at Summer 70. I never will forget sitting over there in the corner on the opening occasion of that Research Assembly, and realizing that the movement had come of age. And that is really the whole galactic report, as far as I'm concerned: the local church experiment has shown to us and to the Historical Church that the movement has come of age. And I sensed, sitting there, that I was part of a movement that was going to be beyond the Protestant Reformation or anything else that has ever occurred in history; and I couldn't believe it. And never before that moment had I sensed what I sensed over there at the beginning of Summer 70. Well, what the Local Church Experiment is all about (we said it before, and now after this last quarter there should be no doubt about it) is loving God. We are enabling people to be married to the Mystery itself, and that is all life is about, period. The reason the Scriptures are speaking to us---and I don't mean to say it that way, it's not a cause and effect---but if you didn't know that the Local Church Experiment was bringing people to marry the Mystery, you'd just have to watch in the Scriptures when Jesus comes back and just goes around dropping the bottom out of everything, and I guess that's all there is to it, he just goes around and finds people having built a platform over the Abyss, and he just goes around with a word or two, and drops it out---and you say, "The bottom has dropped out of everything, hallelujah." That's what is going on in the Local Church Experiment. In the more practical dimension, the thing that happened after Summer 70 was the assurance immediately following Summer 70 of the existence of the Regulation Centrum. As far as I'm concerned, when we do that short course in the PLC and say that we don't like our assignment because we got sent to be the Church in the 20th century, ~~and~~ getting assigned to the Regulation Centrum is what we unconsciously had in mind. Those people sit over there just day after day, with those charts all around them, and just sit there, and create document after document, and every time I go I'm glad to go back to the galaxy---and when I'm out at the galaxy I'm glad to get away from that---but, I don't know how they do it. The first thing I remember that occurred after Summer 70 was the Priorities Document. I don't appreciate their humor,-- tying up all that stuff in blood-red ribbon, I have never been so terrified as I was when I saw that document. I saw it in that room before it was sent out to us, and when it was sent out I couldn't open it. Now, the members of the Milwaukee galaxy who are here don't know this, but I told them the document hadn't come out of the printshop. Actually, it was sitting at the Religious House in that blood-red ribbon. And I very self-consciously didn't open it for a week, and we had to postpone one of the workshops in the study plan for that reason. For when I saw that there is a group of people that will not let us rest relative to time, I knew that the Local Church Experiment was already a success. You know, it would be great for us to have a system of scintillating tactics and we could run over here and do one, and over there and do one that we were turned on about, and people would like it and all that sort of thing. But when there was a rational plan, that you die your death on, day after day after day, - and that happened- soon after Summer 70- then there was no longer any question about the experiment. Those great long pages we're getting this weekend are just further developments of the priorities document.

The next thing that happened, just to rehearse a little more, was the Presidium in December where the galaxy was created. I suspect in the future that historians will

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write about that group to whom the revelation of the galaxy came..

And maybe our authority for being a movement will be just that. It's probably the most crucial thing that has happened to us, certainly in the Local Church Experiment. The names of all eighty churches were up on the wall, and that was an amazing, awesome moment. That configuration of galaxies is a prayer list for those who have decided to win. There have been a few changes since that time, and I don't think I know them all for sure. I don't have the information, and that's not really part of our report because it isn't crucial that we know everything about every congregation. What 's important

is that every one of those galaxies is still decided. They were decided in December, <sup>and</sup> they have never been undecided for one moment. I report to you and give you that accountability. Not one of those galaxies and not one of the congregations in those galaxies has become undecided.

Then of course there was the New Years Eve celebration of the inauguration of the experiment. Our galaxy was late doing that ritual, and we wondered if maybe the whole experiment wouldn't come off, if we got out of sequence. That was a great symbolic occasion from which we can never return.

I think the next thing that happened---and this to me is another one of the unbelievable things about Regulation Centrum, or the back-up system---is that they sent us a training construct, To come up with something that with slight adaptation could be used to create and sustain one experiment, out of all different kinds of denominations and galaxies all over this continent is incredible. You might be interested in knowing a little more of what that looked like. It called for a weeknight sodality, a 3-1/2 to 4 hour meeting once a week, where there was just hard study of all these documents, where we caught ourselves up on the documents of the movement that had been revised and made available to us out of the past. The most important thing about that week night Sodality is that it begins with an hour-long corporate spirit journey, where we read one of the Spirit Lectures for meditation, and enter into the exercises of contemplation and prayer, for that finally is all the experiment is about - making spirit people out of those who are destined to be the local congregation. Tactics are something we do of course, just in order to make it possible to be spirit. Then we've had Weekend Councils, five weekends out of the quarter, where as many as 50 or 60 people have been together--smaller numbers in some places- where we get together and piddle a lot, reading Scripture and praying and doing the canonical hours and that sort of thing, but also analyzing the congregation-socio-spirit analyses. Those are really amazing documents, if you have seen any of them, So now having just about completed that construct, we're ready for tactical operation in the spring. The winter quarter has been entirely training, getting ready for doing the tactics. And the galaxies will begin doing the tactics at Easter, the churches beginning at the various levels of their readiness and preparation; and of course this weekend we're deciding just how it is that that's going to be done. And as you think about being here and deciding that, it's very awesome. It's sort of like Kazantzakis' saying "Don't be too worried about it; only the whole universe depends on you."

But what I really want to report for the past quarter is what has happened to people in the experiment, which is the only thing, of course, that matters. The kinds of decisions---vocational decisions---that are being made are astounding. If the angels in heaven do indeed sing over one lost sinner repenting, they

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must be hoarse

over the clergymen who, after having hung on for years climbing into a pulpit with the weight of I don't know what on their shoulders, going out and making calls and not having any idea of what to do, having meetings and going home and almost committing suicide, men to whom that had been their existence for year after year after year--these men have come alive and decided to be the Church anew. This has been amazing. One particular clergyman had a timeline of a year for building his cadre, and after one of their weekend things--it ended on Saturday--it took him until Tuesday to get a cadre of ten people. Another man in that same group was somewhat ashamed that it took him until the following Sunday to get a cadre in being. And of course that's the way cadres come into being--when a pastor decides that they are going to come into being no matter what. One of the most fascinating things that is happening is--this is a little delicate, but people are giving up their psychiatrists. This is happening in more than one galaxy. Somebody heard a summary of the Mediation lecture and just decided right there and then, "Why that psychiatrist is not my mediative friend", and that was it. It's really going to be something when that event happens to somebody when he's on that couch, and he gets up and walks off with it....What's going on with people's lives in the galaxies reminds me---and I've thought about this very carefully ---of what John Wesley said of the people in the Wesleyan Movement that were coming alive. He said "You know, we give them poise, and they don't even need a dancing master," It's unbelievable the changes that occur. You can see it in their faces and in their eyes. As far as congregations are concerned, we are very happy to report to you that the Administration Board of the Methodist Church in China has said yes to the experiment. That's very dear to me because China is a town out of Houston---Houston is where I was ordained to be a minister in the Methodist Church, and China is one of those places where I thought I might be sent. Now I know I don't have to go, because it's already taken care of. Well, in one region, 20 cadres have come into being, because of their future planning relative to the future of the Local Church Experiment. And there are many such cadres as this, but I know of one that has already paid its share of the cost of the Experiment through the month of May. RSI participation is up; recruitment is going better. RSI is a different kind of course, not that we've changed it at all, but there's something different there, because now we can see that that course is a kind of forced labor congregation. You get people together and build a kind of box around them, and they be-- a congregation, whether they want to be one or not. And then when we come along with the Local Church Experiment, the memory of RSI is the common-experience of the reality of the local congregation, and they already know what it is. It's interesting to notice that people are coming right out of RSI and joining galaxies and just moving right along. That says something both about the course and about the experiment. We've talked a lot about the affirmation that's coming from the Historical Church. It was reported that we had a Bishop in attendance at one of our galaxy meetings recently, and that is rather amazing. It's like we're getting mandatory permission. It's not only that we will let you do it, but it's like the Historical Church is saying that you'd better do it.

After all, the question that the Historical Church has given to the movement has not been an unfair question. It has been the question that John's disciples asked of Jesus, "Is this it, or do we look somewhere else?" And you can't answer

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that by sending a bundle of documents or something to prove that this is it. The "this is it" is people becoming new, "this is it" is the reality of the congregation coming into being ; and that, I report to you is precisely what is happening.

It's interesting that Dick West and Paul Tidemann are up here together today. At our Regional Council here in the Chicago Region two days ago, it was very interesting to see what the galaxy is doing for the Region and vice versa. Paul Tidemann, as you know , has been very active in the Region, and so has Dick West, for years, but Dick has never played as active a role as Paul, and through a strange set of circumstances the Chicago galaxy was meeting at the same time as the Chicago Regional Council. And so Dick West presided over the meeting, and Paul Tidemann just came running in and gave a little contextual lecture, that came off great. and ran off again to the galaxy.

But the amazing thing there was to see how the pulling out of the old leadership enables the new, and I think that's happening probably everywhere across the movement. There isn't any conflict between the region and the Local Church Experiment: they are the same. The galaxy is the regional dynamic which brings the global and the local together. And of course the galaxies are providing new troops for regional work; that may be the most exciting thing. What's happening is that there is a common obedience to a global task, There is no distinction between people in galaxies and people in other parts of the regional dynamic.

Well, just a word about the edge of the movement in relation to the Local Church Experiment. The first great gift of the Local Church Experiment to the movement is tactical thinking. Something in our interior being has changed. It's not that we have a new technique, or that we have better documents than we had before. A new kind of consciousness is happening, and we will never think again in the kind of just sheer goals, strategies, and tactics that we did before. Another marriage I'd point to here, is the marriage of chaos and order. As I look back on my life doing goals and strategies, it was as if you let order and chaos have turn-about. But here it's possible to live in sheer chaos and to move this way and that way and that way and not be hung up on some legalistic set of goals or something. I don't know quite how to talk about it except I just am convinced that something in our interior being has changed. We have a new possibility for being ~~excited~~ excited about the structuring of our tensions and using our anxieties in veritably every moment of our lives.

The second thing is strategic recruiting. We will be recruiting now always with the future of the local congregation in our minds. I'd want to add to that that strategic recruiting also means that there are no courses cancelled. The new troops that the galaxies make available mean that there is no longer any reason for any course to cancel, because when one does people are not going to take the Local Church Experiment very seriously. We have a way in strategic recruiting of rationally structuring the "coming of the Kingdom", to use that kind of language. It's not lo here lo there. It's what we decide for the sake of local congregations.

The last gift could be called individual timelining. That's just a question, how will you relate for the rest of your life to the Local Church Experiment? If you don't now live where there's a congregation in the galaxy, do you intend to move there? Maybe right away. If there's a place where a galaxy is weak, maybe you ought to change your place of residence. Or, maybe that's too hasty. What would your timeline be for receiving the kind of training that would make it

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possible for you to be a galactic auxiliary sometime in the future? And I hesitate to talk about it - but there is simply no way to get to that except a certain journey of training - like attending the Academy, being an intern for a year or more, and that sort of thing. Those timelines have to be worked out. The Local Church Experiment has already gone beyond the North American Continent and in a sense the job is already done on the North American Continent. The work is unbelievable and no one can do it but us. I don't know what we'll say about our lives when we come to the end, if, knowing what we know, we do not plan right now how it is that we are going to participate wholly in the Local Church Experiment. That means---and I think that this is already a sure development---that we need to decide what it means to be one hundred per cent assigned. What does it mean for us to sign our lives over to the Movement, whether we are in that new emerging order of those who give their lives 100% to the renewal of the Church through the local congregation? That's what we now are called upon to decide.

The future, though frightening, is the future of the movement--greater than any other that has ever happened to mankind. The seeds are sprouting everywhere, and one of our most painful tasks will be to weed out and prune and discipline ourselves to the demand of the sheer rationality of what we have to do. But if we had any doubts before, the Local Church Experiment after one quarter of actually being in being, has shown us that our task is forever that of being through the daily expenditure of whatever it is that we have to give, through - how can you end with such a phrase?--through the tactical system.

- Charles Moore