

THE TASK OF THE REGIONS

THE NEW MAN	THE NEW WORLD	THE NEW CHURCH	THE NEW ORDER
Personhood	Neighborhood	Brotherhood	Fellowhood
1	14 15	25 26	35 36 38

1. What does the region need to be on behalf of the new man, the new world, the new church, and the new order? To begin to get a vision of this, I want to read a couple of things to you:

"This identification of ourselves with the Universe begets the two superior virtues of our ethics: responsibility and sacrifice.

It is our duty to help liberate that God who is stifling in us, in mankind, in masses of people living in darkness.

We must be ready at any moment to give up our lives for his sake. For life is not a goal; it is also an instrument, like death, like beauty, like virtue, like knowledge. Whose instrument? Of that God who fights for freedom.

We are all one, we are all an imperiled essence. If at the far end of the world a spirit degenerates, it drags down our spirit into its own degradation. If one mind at the far end of the world sinks into idiocy, our own temples overflow with darkness.

For it is only One who struggles at the far end of earth and sky. One. And if He goes lost, it is we who must bear the responsibility. If He goes lost, then we go lost.

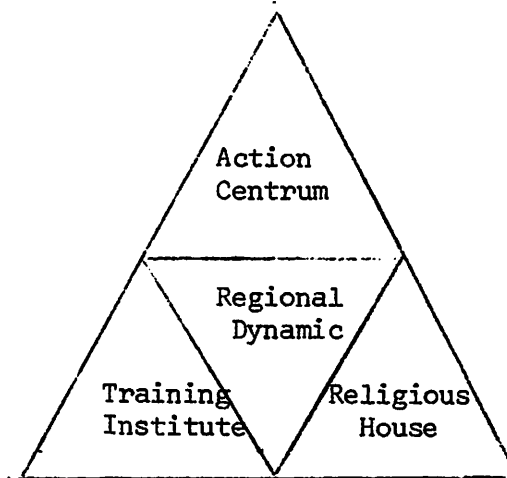
This is why the salvation of the Universe is also our salvation, why solidarity among men is no longer a tenderhearted luxury but a deep necessity."
from Saviors of God, Kazantzakis

2. This one is shorter, but I guess there's nothing like it anywhere.

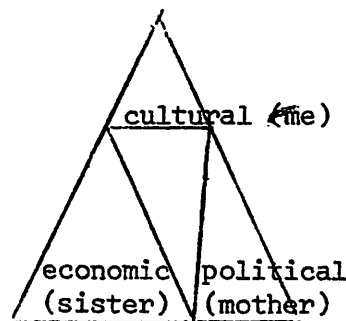
"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had vanished, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice proclaiming from the throne: 'Now at last God has his dwelling among men! He will dwell among them and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes; there shall be an end to death, and to mourning and crying and pain; for the old order has passed away!'"

3. I am going to be talking about structures, but I hope that every step along the way we will remember how Jesus said, "Structures were made for man, and not man for the structures." (Did he really say that?) The particular structure that I want to emphasize is called the region, that dynamic without which there is no

local and no global. It is the tension that creates humanness. I want to talk about the action centrum, the training institute, and the religious house, and attempt to show how these dynamics are able to take structures that are already in being and correct the imbalance that is hindering the new man, the new world, the new church, and the new order from coming into being.



4. For those of you who were in Summer '71, the way imbalances work is that when one of the three poles of the triangle begins to dominate and distort the other two, it is up to the collapsed one to take a radical stance, enrich itself by plumbing the depths of humanness and strengthen the intermediary one so that it can restrain the one that is dominating. My sister is older than I am, and she used to beat me up. At first I didn't do anything about it, but then I found if I stood my ground I could get my mother to help me, and she dragged my sister off and sent her to her room and said sweet things to me. That is something like the imbalances.



5. I am going to use some dangerous words along the way. First of all, for the new man, I would like to use a word like personhood. We have had to stay away from that rather carefully because of the psychologism which has been attached to it, but I want to say very clearly that being yourself is what life is all about. Faithfulness to the self that you are is finally all that the whole process of civilization is about. Coming off with your own life is all that matters. If it does not happen, then history for you just wasn't. We have all kinds of ways of talking about this--the journey into self-consciousness, the living out of your own interior resources--but I suppose one definition of selfhood could be simply gratitude to the universe for having given you this moment, gratitude to all that is for the opportunity to be a self. That is really all that anyone could ever have any business asking for.

6. The problem with personhood is that it is always preconceived. I mean that in my father's seed and my mother's womb and society's early ways with me, the balance was offset. And the balance at any time for any man is delicate. When the spinning of humanness wobbles from time to time, multitudes of individuals are lost, most of them forever.

7. For example, Western man, as we have often said, is dead. Not only has his individualism passed away, but even his individuality has died. In the dynamic of life called Knowing, Doing, and Being, Western man is "done." He has brought off the most fantastic revolution that has ever happened in the history of mankind, two of them I guess, though they are of one piece--the industrial revolution and the technological revolution--and having done that, he is finished. There is, as far as he can see, nothing else to win. Establishment activism has finally run its course, and individuals are no longer allowed to exist. It never got clear to me until recently why John Kennedy and Martin Luther King had to be killed by this society. They approached being great individuals. They approached being heroes in themselves, and this society could not stand to see that happen, and so they were eradicated.

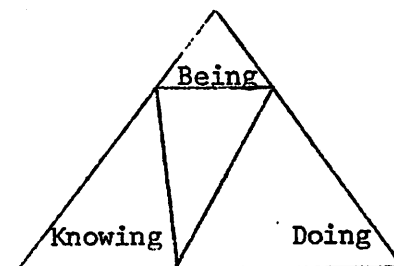
8. Have you noticed how movies are ending these days? It's getting boring to go see them. In the movie Dirty Harry there is a great portrayal of someone who decides to be his Being, who decides to live as an individual and then right at the end of the movie he pitches his badge into the lake and walks off. If you saw Sometimes a Great Notion, you saw a man who struggled and finally won the battle all by himself, or almost all by himself, and the final scene he tells the world, and all his fellowman to get lost, and is therefore finally not an individual at all.

9. The question is, how is it in our society that the new individual gets created? How is it that people are delivered from stoicism on the one hand and gnosticism on the other, both of which are ways of getting out of being one's own individuality?

10. The new man will be one who has new passion to be engaged in all of life. At the center of the vocational crisis is the desire to be engaged. A man was telling me the other day that he was on the golf course with some of his well-to-do friends, one of whom was a very successful dentist. As they talked about their work, it came out that the dentist hated working with people's teeth. The others pushed him, out of their own insecurity, and said, "Oh, you really wouldn't quit being a dentist if you got rich all of a sudden." He just looked at them and said, "If I could inherit a million dollars, I'd burn my building down."

11. Somehow the knowledge is there that life is individually not being lived. Even the desire to win, to win anything, has gone away. What creates the new man in our time is the experience of the renaissance of what it means to be a human being.

12. The imbalance for western man is that the Doing has tyrannized the Knowing and Being as in this diagram.



13. But what does the Being dynamic of life have available to it to restore the balance when it is off like this? The reason the Academy is able to restore the balance to the Knowing dimension of life is because it operates at the Being dimension. I suppose that explains a lot of the reluctance about going to the Academy. There is less reluctance to go into the hospital and have something more reduced done to you. I guess it is clear that in the Academy they take you and scrape the crud out of your Being and that is a painful process.

14. I remember in 1961 I was the dean of the San Antonio Lay Academy. We had about 150 people there for one or two nights for eight weeks, and we taught Bible courses, theology courses, and ethics courses. It was so fine you almost wanted to put B.D. after your name if you were teaching. The fact is that not one single life was changed in that kind of Academy because it did not deal at the level of Being.

15. The Academy for me stands for the whole operation of the Knowing dynamic that goes on in the movement--the courses, RS-I and all the rest, pedagogy, and not least of all the seminary dynamic that goes on in cadres and councils at every level. I don't know how it is in your region, but we have sector groups and metro groups who think that it is not important week by week to ground the Word in study. They think it is enough to spiritize a little bit and then get to work. Well, it doesn't operate that way because if humanness is not grounded in the Knowing, then the Doing will dominate, and finally all will be lost and everybody will be burned out. What I have been talking about here is contextual re-education as a movemental strategy.

16. The second thing is the new world, and I want to suggest another dangerous word here, the word neighborhood. If the world is created for man--and the opening verses of the first chapter of Genesis make that clear--nevertheless, any individual man is created for the sake of the universe, that is for the sake of all the other men. There is no such thing as a whole man without the totality of a universal consciousness. If he does not know in the deeps of his being that he is responsible for all men simply because he dwells among men, then he cannot be whole and the world cannot be whole. Humanness fundamentally is only to be found in global mission. It is not a quantity that can be transferred from one man to another. It is a dynamic by which a man decides to participate. The problem is that the world always comes to the individual man prefabricated. That is, it comes to him always already reduced. In the world-citizen conversation that we use in some of our courses somebody will inevitably say, "Everybody is a world citizen. To live in the twentieth century means to be a world citizen." Well, it would be great if it were that simple.

17. But I will give you exhibit A--myself--as an example of the product by the world of an economic morality. I got here a few years ago with a big truck load of furniture that I was really attached to. The dynamic of my life up to that time was such that I did not just imagine that the economic was important, it was important. Can you imagine somebody going along with those who were carrying it up the stairs in this place, asking them not to scratch it? If you had been brought up in a place where on your walls you had a little placard with glitter on it that says "Bless This House" which means, "We need more money," or if the song you most frequently heard was "Farther along we'll understand why we're not as rich as some of the other people," you would understand. I mean that's the way it was. The economic just had a stranglehold on the family I belonged to and the community I was in.

18. But I would like to say that there is nothing wrong with prosperity. I have no romanticism about living like we do in the order. I want you to understand that when the kingdom of God is fully come, I am going to live in a fancy apartment overlooking the lake, I can assure you, because that is clearly a human style of life. Now the people there probably have some problems, but I would not have their problems if I were there.

19. What I mean here is that in the world of economic, political, and cultural, the economic has a stranglehold on the political. What is demanded is the enrichment of the impoverished culture in which we live. The solution is neither in the aesthetic pursuit of the man of the world, nor the ascetic pursuit of the perverted monastic. The solution is not to find the bad people and get rid of them. The society that we live in is beastly, but not because somebody is bad. It is just that the civilizing process in our situation is choked, and there are destructive trends that have to be changed.

20. In looking toward a new culture, a new culture infused with spirit, I have hope for this world for the first time in my life, really. It is rooted in a deep resolve in myself to create the future, to see a new vehicle of polity created so that the social balance can be restored.

21. When you come to ask how it is that this is going to be done, you see that the action centrum moves directly on the cultural. In the action centrum we are by no means ready to start moving directly on political structures. Rather this is the opportunity to do research in cultural contradictions. And we are going to need regional guilds who will do that kind of research.

22. When I was in graduate school to try to escape the Local Church--that was before I took the PLC--I decided that one way to expend my life respectably was to get into the field of criminology. I went over and had a discussion with the chairman of whatever it was that offered criminology, and it took about 15 minutes to have me headed back in the general direction of the ministry. The reason is that I saw what we see now; researching and laying plans in all the areas of social problems is not going to be easier than what we've been doing, it's going to be harder.

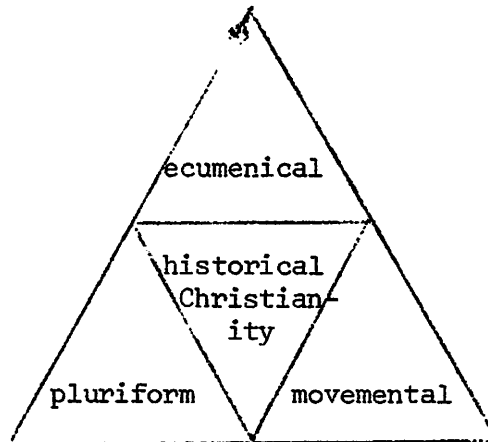
23. Of course, the specific tools what we have for that are the new social vehicle tactics to be worked out in Summer '72. For anybody who is concerned to restore the balance to society, it is frankly impossible to imagine being anywhere else in the world in the month of July, because there is no other place in the world where this is going to be done or could be done.

24. We must also include in the action centrum the sodality dynamic that needs to go on in the cadres and the councils at every level. Sodality is not doing something in the first instance. It is rehearsing doing something or researching relative to doing something, and a great deal of helpful work can go on there.

25. What I'm saying is that the cultural arena must be radicalized in order to restore the balance to the political and the economic. The dynamic I have been talking about is what we call Community Reformulation.

26. At this point we move from this world to the other world, and begin to talk about the new Church using another dangerous word, brotherhood. The Church has always been that dynamic in society which enables man to appropriate his world.

The Church has been a format for saying "Yes" to the universe in which a person finds himself. It has been the locus of rehearsing the way life is. It is a world society, representatively, and that takes at least two or three people. It is always interesting to notice in the Niebuhr seminar how often the world society comes across to people as some great superstructure around the globe. That is not what it is about at all. It is about a couple, or three people, who decide to embody the world society in themselves.



27. In the midst of this world, the church is always preformulated. On a triangle of the historical church, the top triangle is the ecumenical, the bottom left is the pluriform or the denominational, and the bottom right is the movemental. What has been going on for some time is that the movemental has been tyrannized by the pluriform. I remember a situation in which a group of younger clergymen decided to be the movement dynamic in their denomination. What happened to them was that they were all, each one, dealt with, crushed, and sent somewhere else. I say this just in order to note that it is the responsibility of the pluriform dynamic in history to see that the movemental dynamic does not do away with or dominate the pluriform.

28. Everybody is clear that there is nothing wrong with pluriformity. As a matter of fact, there is no way for the church to be the church without that kind of variety. However, when it dominates as it does now, then the ecumenical thrust is lost and there is a horrible fragmentation of energy. So the balance between the pluriform and the movemental has to be regained, and it is done through the re-development of the contentless ecumenical dynamic, or mission. That can be done only in an ecumenism of spirit, not some kind of camaraderie. Ecumenicity occurs only in the commonness of the Word and nowhere else.

29. The function of the religious house is to strengthen the movemental dynamic in order to bring it into balance with the pluriform through the creation of the authentically ecumenical church.

30. It is amazing how the Local Church Experiment does that. We used to muse about what it would be like to work with several congregations together. Now it is so clear that the galaxy is the only way that that kind of ecumenicity of the spirit can ever be turned loose. This does not happen, however, without the Knowing dynamic, or in the Word. But when those two things are there--when the Word is commonly heard and the spirit is there in common--then you have authentic renewal.

31. These galaxies are the embodiment of the new religious mode and at the very same moment the embodiment of the new social vehicle. That is the secret of galaxy participation. You are sitting around envisioning the new religious and the new social, and all of a sudden it becomes clear that you are sitting right in the middle of it, and that is what it is going to be.

32. But I want to say something very carefully here. I have heard people talking about the Local Church Experiment as being the only thing there is, and that if you're not in the Local Church Experiment, then all you can do is just hang on in anticipation of it. I do not think that is true. The Local Church Experiment is, for the time being, a highly controlled experiment in order to demonstrate to the church and the world that the church can be renewed and that it can be the vehicle of social reformulation. For years, even though we made mistakes, we have been forming cadres and renewing congregations, and there is no reason why that formulation cannot continue. As a matter of fact, it must.

33. The religious house dynamic is a structure to give form to the movemental, not to--God forbid--do away with or start new denominations.

34. The religious house is and always should be thought of as a regional dynamic. We have houses in metros but we are primarily interested in the region, because the region is the contentless link between the global and the local. It is the tension between them. It is going to be the key both to the renewal of the church and the reformulation of society for as long as we are able to see. The region is more clearly the glue of the movement than any other dynamic we can mention. What I have been talking about here, I am sure you realize, is what we have called spirit remotivation, as a movemental strategy.

35. In the case of the training institute, represented by the academy and courses and things like that, we already have the tools of formulation that are needed. They can be improved upon, but they are here and they are effective. The same thing is true in the case of the Religious house. It is interesting to notice that the academy and the religious house have been structures for four years now. The experimental phase is over, and it is very clear that they are structures that are needed. The action centrum is something that we are just beginning to work with. What its relationship will be to the ecumenical parish and the region is by no means clear, but what is clear is that we are ready to begin exploration of that dynamic.

36. Now, finally, just a word about the new order. The word here is fellowhood. I do not know much about this except that the order as a total dynamic--the historical order that we have started calling symbolic, intended, and extended--has come into being. It always has to be in being, for there has to be representative care for all mankind. Only the people of God, by nature and by definition by function and by role, take that responsibility on themselves. You have to talk about such people as those who live in another country, as the communion of the saints, as creatures from a distant planet. But they always have to be in history.

37. At the same time, always, Lord Chaos is powerful. We saw a play the other night, where Lord Chaos was a major character. It was the kind of screaming psychotic chaos. I don't know about you but that's no problem for me. I did my best for a while to go to pieces psychologically and I did not make it. So that is not much of an issue any more for me. There's another kind of chaos now. It is

just a kind of warm undulation. It is a glistening serpent who says, "Obligation to God and neighbor as they confront you in Jesus Christ may not be what freedom is," or the notion that I can do it with just a little help from my friends. That is the kind of chaos that we need to formulate against.

38. The new presence is here. The League is self-consciously forming itself again in our time. There is a holy conscription going on in the world, and the People of God are going to win. As a matter of fact, the war is finished, the victory has happened in us. As a sociological, historical, verifiable fact, the victory is ours. But it could be lost. The next twenty years, no the next four years, may well be the most critical in the past or the future of this movement. The formulation that we are called on to do is life or death. The kind of order that we are talking about is not a conformity to natural law. It is the decision of sacrificial offering. It is finding a structure of servanthood that is appropriate to the needs of our time. It is the question of what form will set civilization free, now. It is the question of what the regions need to be on behalf of the new man, the new world, and the new church, for the next thousand years.

--Charles Moore