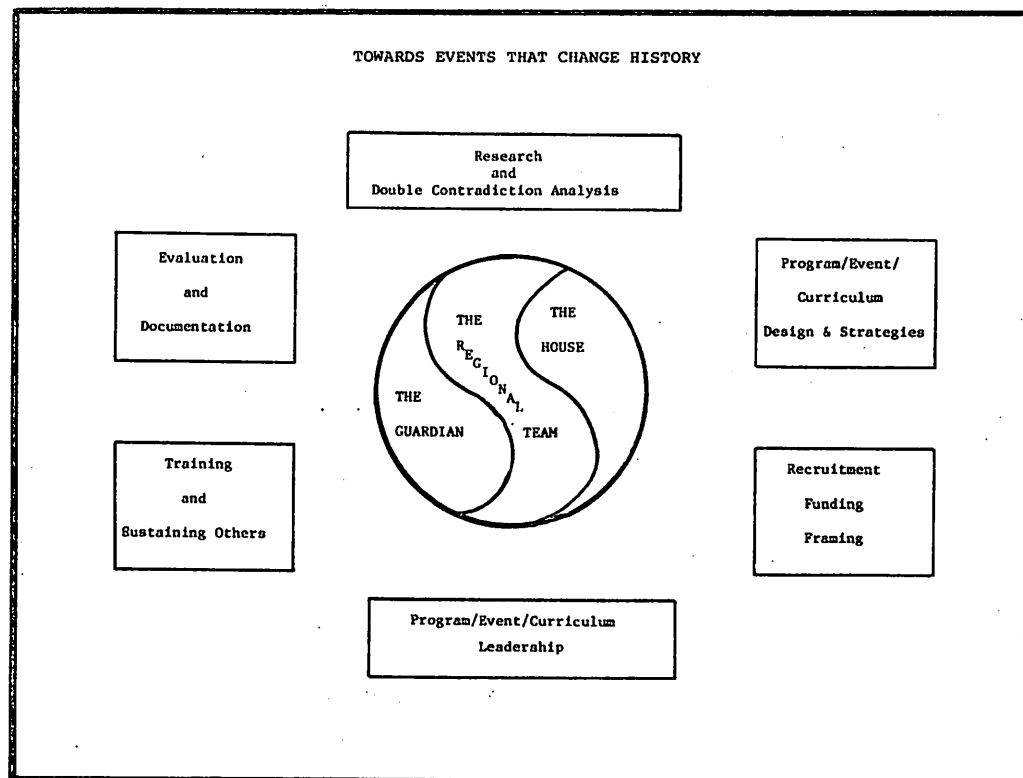


CLOSING ADDRESS

My city is probably a lot like your city and some of the experiences that we as Guardians have had in our area are similar, to those that you may have experienced as well. The following image, which I have titled "Towards Events That Change History", has helped our region to tell the story of this past year.



First, I will walk through some of the experiences represented by this image. Then I will talk about the key struggles we experienced in doing what we did. Next, a few words about the uniqueness of Guardians and the unique things that we have to offer. Then, finally just four words of advice in this Year of the Region.

The round shape in the middle of "Towards Events That Change History" represents the Guardians and the House together forming the Regional Team. All the rest spins off from that core. The entire process begins by doing Research and Double Contradiction Analysis. We discovered that it was important to do Double Contradiction Analysis. All that means is that you do two kinds of contradiction analysis. First, what are the objective blocks in your area. Second, what do the community people feel are the blocks? We discovered that if everything you do is keyed to the blocks that the people see are there, and if your program is working on those blocks, you will get community support.

If, however, you talk about some kind of global contradiction that they have never experienced you will have a lot harder time. That is all double contradiction analysis means. It is important to do our own analysis of the key contradiction because that is why we are working there in the first place. That is part of our global strategy.

One illustration I have heard for describing a contradiction is the rock in the middle of the road. I have driven down many roads and never found a rock that actually stopped the car. My favorite illustration these days is something that I have experienced lots of times. It is driving on to a freeway ramp and then suddenly being stopped. You know that there is something up ahead. It is probably an accident of some kind. Until that is moved out of the way nothing else is going to move. Now it depends on the kind of accident whether you need an ambulance, a firetruck, a tow truck, or maybe just a can of gasoline to get that block out of the way. There might be times when you'd need a helicopter or a tank. Wee be unto you if you send the wrong kind of equipment in there to get that particular block out of the way. Everybody on the freeway ramp recognizes there is an accident up there. If you can do anything to get it moved faster they'll be mighty grateful to you. It may be however that you have a little deeper insight. Maybe you are trained as a road engineer. You begin to realize that there is a dangerous curve ahead, and that something has to be done about that curve or this kind of accident is going to happen again and again. That is what I am talking about when I talk about this double contradiction analysis. If you talk to the people who are stalled on that freeway ramp about straightening out that curve they may or may not be ready to listen to you. They will be ready to listen to you, though, if you have a scheme for getting the accident out of the way.

Then I come to Research on the image. The thing that finally broke us loose to discover the contradictions in our area were interviews with people. We interviewed community leaders of different kinds. Some were just block leaders in their neighborhoods, some were acknowledged city-wide leaders in the economic or political arena. We got totally fascinated and caught up in these interviews. We asked these kinds of questions: "What are the trends that you see?".. "What are some of the blocks to progress?"...We practically had a little town meeting with these people. Then, finally, we asked, "What is it that community leaders need in this city?" The answers were really fascinating. We always asked also, "Who would you recommend that we talk to?" We always introduced ourselves as being from The Institute of Cultural Affairs, and stated that one of the things that we do is research. We're doing some research in this community because we would like to make sure that our programs are just as effective as possible. That was all it took to get us in the door. We took notes and we had some great times. After we had had some of these interviews we came back together, and looking at all of the data did a workshop on what the community contradictions are. We had decided that we were not going to do a bunch of programs, but that we were going to try to use all of the resources of the movement to meet the particular situation in our city.

Finally we came up with two events and one ongoing structure that we would work with.

Now let us move around clockwise on the image, "Towards Events That Change History" to the Programs/Events/Curriculum Design and Strategies. We designed programs to fit particular situations. I am not talking about creating something new that is totally unrelated to anything the movement has done before. Please do not let me be misunderstood about this. It is very important not to rush out and think that we can design a new Town Meeting format for every situation, that just is not possible. The question is, how do we take the foundational understandings and methods of the movement and focus them on the local situation. If you haven't ever had the course called Religious Studies-I, RS-I it is usually called, you might want to either take it or teach it this year. In the light of everything that has happened in the last few years wouldn't it be fascinating to see that course not as the foundation for renewing the local church (which was my understanding when I first took it) but the foundation for revitalizing your city. What would it mean for a city to live out of that kind of understanding? And what if structures operated out of that understanding?

The third box of the image is Recruitment/ Funding/ and Framing. Framing means you talk with anyone with a vested interest in what you are doing. Anyone who has any power whatsoever, and give them your story about what you are doing and why. Framing is one of those things that is like housework. You do not notice it if it is well done. But if you do not do it, it kills you. In our city, a lot of controversy in the last couple of years has centered on the different ideas about what the future requires. These are ideas held by the neighborhood groups which are just emerging and just beginning to feel their oats, power and identity. Then there are the ideas of the city administration, in particular, the Community Development Department. That is happening in a lot of cities, it is not unique to our situation. The City Council usually gets caught in the middle.

When we were preparing for a city-wide conference, we decided that we wanted to have a resolution from the mayor and the City Council. The neighborhood leaders helping with the conference said that a resolution stating City Council and the Mayor's support would be really something in itself. We decided this was a sign and a symbol that we wanted to have. We worked out our plan for framing the City Council to make sure that they would pass this resolution. In a workshop we decided who should contact each City Council person and tell them what was going on. Everybody on the planning committee contacted their City Council person and others that they had known and worked with. I went to the City Council meeting that night. It was a beautiful example of framing in action.....and in one case, of not framing in action.

Usually a resolution is a routine thing. It is not something that you would worry about except the climate had been uncooperative. When this resolution was brought up, one man stood and said that this was a fine thing for our community. Everyone agreed except one person. The one who did not agree was the City Council person that I had been assigned to contact. I had been unable to reach him. He stood and said that if people really wanted to get involved in their community there were plenty of ways for them to get involved already. He did not see why we needed something else. He did not finally oppose it, but his questions were a very good lesson to me in framing.

The bottom box includes Program/Event/Curriculum Leadership. Guardians can be very helpful training and sustaining other people. One key discovery we made this year was what I call the importance of the reflective dynamic. It was just key! In the Community Dialogue Roundtables we took about ten minutes at the beginning of each meeting to have a conversation and discussion on something that really had nothing directly to do with our business that day. We joked about it as one of our odd quirks and asked them to humor us and bear with us while we talked together. That was our opening context. They got so they loved those conversations so much, I swear that is all they came for. We had wonderful times! We started with Milagro Beanfield War, and they began talking after the first paragraph was read. They interrupted the reader with comments that went down several levels to get to the core of the situation because they recognized immediately that that was like their situation.

A recent conversation that we really enjoyed was about the Time cover story on Bear Bryant. Some of the things he said about winning, about building a team, and about the style that is required to operate in a community are absolutely fantastic. We had some great conversations.

Finally, Evaluation and Documentation. Here, as in the other arenas, Guardians can and should be participating, but as part of a team. Everything has to be done by a team. The strength of the House and Guardian teamed together are just phenomenal.

In our city we have just had a fine planning conference that really rocked the city. People who had been insulting each other in the newspapers within the last ten days sat down at the table across from each other. The news photographers from the news stations were quite amazed. They kept trying to get these people in the same picture and they did. I went to see the head of Community Development a couple of days after the conference and he said that he had five minutes to talk to me. I wanted to talk to him because he has a lot of power in that city. He started in by telling me what he thought about the conference. He said that the conference was unbelievable and he hadn't believed that those neighborhood leaders would want to settle down and actually talk sensibly. He said that he wouldn't have believed that we could all sit there and really talk about the community issues and not talk about who was to blame.

I hardly believed it either because before we started the Roundtables we had several neighborhood leaders who were dear, but absolutely fiery. There was an activity that we called "deploring." In the Roundtable meetings you had to watch that people did not spend fifty per cent of the time "deploring." It was like pushing a button. Push 'housing' and out came, "Well, they haven't done this...." Someone would be off into a ten minute speech, deploring. They had so much to get off their chest.

It was incredible to be on a television talkshow with one of these neighborhood leaders and hear her say with no prompting from anyone, "We've got to be willing at times to compromise. We've got to be willing to hear the other person's point of view." No one told them that directly, I don't think that would have worked. We would have tried it if we thought it would work. It was the result of a year's meetings, having reflective conversations, and practicing going underneath the situation to see what was really going on. One hour later in that conversation with the Community Development leader, I suggested that we finish our conversation over lunch. He talked with me about all kinds of things that we might do in terms of training people. I don't know what is going to happen there, but the conference was a great event.

A word about key struggles. First, I'd point to ambiguity. This is no stranger to you. At our regional council a year ago it was suggested that we work in our city in relation to the questions that are being asked about the urban situation today. That was all the direction there was. We checked around the continent to see if any of our colleagues had clues about working in the urban. Nobody else knew anything more than we did. We talked together about our images of ambiguity: feeling your way along a high cliff, in a heavy fog, blindfolded. But the thing that brought us through was the transrational plan that brought a team to our city every two weeks for that first quarter. We would try this, and we would try that. Finally it was just the commitment that brought us through.

A second key struggle was the terror of risking new formats for our methods. Again, it is not inventing anything new. It is trying our methods in situations that you haven't tried before. We decided to bring a few of the neighborhood leaders together for some brown-bag lunches. These are tough people who have been in neighborhood 'wars' for a long time. We didn't know how they were going to respond. Some of it they liked and some they didn't and told us so. Starting with a low profile was very helpful. We didn't announce that we were going to do something that was going to change the history of the city or anything. The other thing that saved us was aiming at the contradiction. We discerned that one contradiction was that the neighborhood council leaders could use some training and some chance for reflection. So that is where we aimed our activity.

A third key struggle is the "What am I doing here" syndrome. Again, that is probably familiar to you. You get into a situation now and then, and you really do ask yourself, "How in the world did I get into this spot?" I have already told you the happy ending, but the director of Community Development in our city has been a city official who didn't have a lot of popular support. The Roundtable that was planning the city conference was meeting in his church. His clergyman had a fine member of the church's staff working with us. The clergyman and the staff member were good friends of this city official. They kept telling us that we had to see him. We did not particularly want to see him. Why should we? People did not support him and the neighborhood groups didn't support him. The business establishment was always sparring with him. We weren't even sure we wanted him to come to the conference. But they kept after us and said that we had to go see him.

"What am I doing here" really hit me when I was waiting in this man's office, not having met him yet. Finally we went into see him. He proceeded to take the next two hours to tell us of his frustrations at being in a system where you could not win. He has a rather short temper and says things that aren't always wise. People think that gives them objective reason to think that he is the villain. The basic problem is the system he is caught in. And we knew that. We did not really urge him to come to the conference, but at the end of the time of listening to him, he said that he wanted to give the conference a try. His presence turned out to be the greatest single address of any happening in the conference. Out of the sixty people present, which was a great cross section of the community, he was not only present, but talking with all the others. I guess our learning from that experience is that sometimes when "Why in the world am I here" hits you most forcefully, it is the time when you may be about to make your greatest contribution, even though you went kicking and screaming and dragged against your will into the situation.

Finally, a key struggle was in dealing with opposition. There are several kinds of opposition. Some kinds you really deserve because you have done some dumb things, you have ruffled people's style, feathers, and feelings. You need this kind of opposition or why else would you ever change. There is also opposition that comes when you start to be effective, when you start to shift the situation. There are always people around who have a vested interest in the situation as it is. They will find some reason to oppose you.

We ran into this when a group of five neighborhood leaders decided that it was time to plan a meeting for all of the neighborhood councils of the seven neighborhoods. They said, "People are starting to get interested in these councils and we have to find a way for the councils to work better or these people are just going to get discouraged and crawl back into their shells. The meeting has to be in January, 1980." That was decided in December. Our response was, "Fine. Why don't we help you build the plans. We'll show you how we do our planning." They told us to do the leading and they would invite everybody to come.

On January 4th we went to the meeting not knowing how many people would come. They had done very careful planning. They loved stating the rational objective, which we called "What do you want to accomplish?" and the existential aim, which we called, "What do you want people to experience?" The emcee that night was the president of the West Side Council. He had complained for two months that he couldn't do anything with his West Side Council. He said that they all came in and talked at once. They all had different things on their minds, and he didn't want to cut off discussion, but he didn't know what to do with all their ideas. Here he was, about to emcee the whole thing. We told him that when we used to do really big, super Town Meetings that a lot of times the emcee worked with a script and that it was really the "in" thing to do. He decided that that was what he would do as well. That kept the meeting from wandering off to too much extemporaneous deploring, an ever present danger.

We came to that meeting on a very cold January 4th night. We had not invited one soul. There were sixty people there from six of the seven neighborhoods. They had a great time. It was not a Town Meeting, but a time to reflect on the past year and the future year. They had such a great time that they decided that night that they were going to meet every two months as a whole group. We thought that the roundtable could plan the next meeting and this would be a great way to revitalize the neighborhood councils.

An anti-poverty group in town felt we were intruding on their turf so before we could have the first planning meeting they had sent out a letter to everybody saying that they had planned the next meeting. It was already done and gave kind of a "fight for your rights" agenda for these folks. What would we do? The wisdom that came to our rescue was reading some of Sun Tsu. We decided that the strategic thing to do was not to get into a fight over this emerging neighborhood consciousness, and not interfere with their planning. That was what we did. We could then focus our efforts someplace else. Sun Tsu is helpful in dealing with local opposition, particularly when he says that you are not out to hurt your enemy, but to convert him. The real enemy is a mindset and there is always a possibility of change. We had some good discussions about that in our Roundtable group.

Just before the big conference on September 27th, a newspaper reporter who had written a really fine article which came out before the conference called and said that she had some more questions. She asked me if I was aware of all the opposition across the nation to the Institute. I think the learning from that situation is openness and respect for the role of the press for being the guardian of that community. It was easy to relate to her with openness because she was a very responsible reporter. Three weeks later she is still reading some of the material which I sent her, and she has not yet written the article on the conference. My stance was that the more that she learned about the Institute of Cultural Affairs, the Ecumenical Institute and the Order: Ecumenical the more she would find that is good. In retrospect, I think that was the right stance to take.

Consultation with colleagues has been very helpful in sharing material about this situation also.

I want to say a few things about the uniqueness of the Guardians. I suspect that in the next couple of years we are going to discover some definitions for the different forms of the Order and the Guardians. These understandings always come out of the activities in which you and I are engaged. But let me give you one definition of the Order. The Order is made up of those people who have two great passions: passion for the profound, and passion for concrete human care. Either one of those alone is not enough. Profundity only, without that passion for concrete care, results in a type of mysticism. Passion for the concrete care, without the profundity, results in social activism. Social activism may have a certain value, but it is not going to change history. The Order shows up in three forms: symbolic, extended and movemental. I had the good fortune to be in a taskforce last summer that worked on the understanding of the Order. We became a lot clearer about the chaos of this particular universe. I am not ready to state any final ideas or any consensus about this, but one statement that I heard about the extended and movemental order made sense to me. All three forms of the Order feel this double passion, but the extended order is perhaps a little more global while the movemental order perhaps has more passion focused on some particular structure in society, either a corporation, a health structure, political or school structure. I suspect that Guardians are a special people that span both the extended and movemental Order. Guardians are people who have clout and use it. Now if you are a CEO it is obvious that you have clout. But if you are a school teacher you may say, "Goodness, I'm not the president of a corporation, what clout do I have?" Then let me introduce you to some of the school teacher or housewife guardians that I know. As Guardians you have a credibility within society's structures that our friends in the symbolic Order can never have, because they don't stay still long enough to get it. There is no way that you can spend your life being on the pioneering edge that is beyond what anybody else is able to see the value of yet, and still have that kind of credibility with society's structures.

Now I hope this gives you a clue to why I am absolutely sure that regional teams in this Year of the Region must include both Guardian and House members, each has strengths to bring to that team. As a Guardian there is a good chance that you are going to know your immediate geography better than the House does. Not only because there have been a lot of moves this year, but because the House schedule and timeline calls for a lot of circuiting around the geography. That has some very important implications. It means that you need to speak to the regional team on behalf of your community, on behalf of your network. You need to make sure that they know how things can be done most effectively in your geography. It is the simple things that make the difference, like the fact that you are there to read the newspapers every day. You know when some controversy is about ready to explode, what is on people's minds, and the style that is needed. These House

circuiters are fine people, but when you think of the schedules they keep you realize there is no way they can keep track of all that data. That is your job!

Conversely, you speak to the community on behalf of the programs and events of the movement. You need to articulate what is being done and why and the significance for that community. This happens when you make a recruitment call, a funding call, or a framing call. It happens when we talk to the press. You are the local interpreter of this great global thing that is going on. You are the one that picks up the local illustrations and says it in a locally effective way. Part of your responsibility is to make sure that movemental events that happen in your geography are effective and are significant for that geography. Sometimes part of your role is to speak back to that regional team, or to speak back to the House. You say, "I think you are out of your minds to do this." And they will roar right back. That is a great thing. The one thing that always gets me and for which I have no comeback is when they say, "But if we don't do that here now, how will the globe come off?" That is their job, you see. When they convince me of that, I don't care how kooky it seems, I will go out and do it with all my might, because the globe has to come off. That is true, but it is that by-play, it is that creative tension between two points of view that is absolutely needed. The yin-yang is absolutely right as a symbol to project this.

I have four suggestions for the Year of the Region. When you get back home with all these mandates, calendars and things take the initiative on suggestions for programs in your area. That is one-half of it. The other half is just the flip side of the coin. Let your suggestions be modified by the regional team. So often we fall into one trap or another. We either stand back and say, "Why didn't somebody think of this." Well, you thought of it, so you say it! Or else, we suggest things and if everybody doesn't run with them exactly as suggested, we get hurt from that too. But you know better than that, so I won't say anymore.

Secondly, decide what you can give in time and activities. And let the House know. Do not make them guess what you might be willing to do. Any regular amount of time you can give, even if it is one Tuesday a quarter, needs to be announced so that they can depend on and think how you can be most effective in what is going on. A couple of examples of that kind of thing happened when we were working on the conference in our city.

A top business planning group in town is called the Valley Development Foundation. They were established not so much to funnel business funds into community life, but to inject business expertise into a wide range of community problems, including neighborhoods and housing. The executive director of the Valley Development Foundation was really excited about the conference and played the classic guardian role in a way that needs to be emulated in this Year of the Region. One day I received some material in the mail from this gentleman. It was a letter he wrote and sent to eight people

highly recommending the conference. He wanted to know if there was anything else he could do and for us to let him know. Now these eight people represented a fantastic cross section of people: a bank president, the city superintendant of schools, and others. It was a great list. I didn't immediately have anything to add so I didn't say anything to him. The next week he calls me up to say he would be willing to answer phone calls and questions that anyone has about this program because he thinks that it is just great. He had been to one of the noontime Roundtables and could see how it was working. "So if you run into any trouble with anybody," (and I knew when he said anybody he meant people in the top echelon) he said, "You just refer them to me." So I did. That was an extremely helpful thing that I never would have thought of.

On the other hand, there is a neighborhood lady who has spent most of her life on welfare. Her whole style is very different. She used her clout with neighborhood people. She went around and visited them and twisted their arms in her own style. It would not have been the same conference if she had not decided to use her particular clout and her particular influence.

This movement is a genius at putting together all the different gifts people have. Don't waste your time and energy lamenting what you don't have to give. If you are the president of General Motors you probably don't have a whole lot of time. If you have full time to give, you are not the president of General Motors. Wouldn't it be great to have one of each in every region?

Finally, let the symbolic Order be your symbol. Now a symbol is never your symbol unless you allow it to address your life. A few years ago I thought the world was going to be changed by more and more people joining the symbolic Order. Do you remember ever having thoughts like that? Finally half the world would be working to support the other half of the world so that they could go out and do the "mission". I don't think that that is going to be the way it happens. Those people who are able to see the miracle of what the symbolic Order is are you and I. But I believe that the first miracle that the world is going to see is you and me. As we allow the symbolic Order to address our lives it is tough and we want to run from it. Who is there here that has never wanted to run from the address of the symbolic Order on your finances, your time, your decision making, your house, your lifestyle. You want to escape, you want to get away from it. But hang in there. If you allow that address, you and I will be inventing something new, and I think it will be the first miracle that people will see.

At one point in time I thought it would be fun to do a litany on this last word of advice. The phrase that keeps recurring over and over again to me is "hang in there." When this and this happens, everybody says, "hang in there." But you can do that litany on your way home if you want to. Get angry when you must, take a vacation when you must, and of course, spend time with other convenants, but don't let anything allow you to lose the League now! Why?

I can imagine that about fifty years from now, in the year 2030, your children or your grandchildren may be talking to their children. I can hear their kids saying something like, "Tell us, Daddy, about the olden days. Is it true that in the olden days most people in the world had very little chance to share their hopes and dreams? Is it true that a lot of people just sat in their individual houses wanting to do something but not knowing how to get together with other people and get started? Is it true that youth were full of despair because they couldn't imagine how their talents were needed? And elders felt left out and useless? Is it true that millions of people were crippled by malnutrition and no education? How did that all change, Daddy? Tell us again."

"Well, children, it changed through people's own efforts. Somebody found a way to release people's own sense of confidence and give them the skills to be self-reliant....to work out their own plan. It started back in the sixties, children, but by the 1980s you could really begin to see things happen. It was sort of like I told you about oil. We used to have oil. When they drilled for oil they had to go through a lot of hard rock....and rock....and rock.....and then sometimes they hit oil and they hit it big. That is the way it happened in the 1980s, children....with people's confidence and creativity. They hit a gusher and it changed the world."

I would like you to join me in being the Order, in being the Guardian in the Year of the Region. It is a year you do not want to miss.

Jan Ulangca