

GLOBAL ORDER COUNCIL OPENING ADDRESS

We talked about what poetry would be appropriate for the opening talk to this body. It finally became apparent that no poetry, or for that matter no talk, can begin to hold the magnitude and awesomeness of this occasion.

We saw that we could only talk about it as a **METAMORPHOSIS** of the one that has happened in the last two years and is happening this summer.

1. We are undergoing fundamental transformation. (See diagram on page 2.)

We use the word metamorphosis, which is a biological term referring to the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly, to apply to the radical change we seem to be going through. It is as if we have been a caterpillar for some 10 or 20 or 30 years. In this Year of Order Council and the past two years of research, we have entered onto the chrysalis or cocoon stage. We are preparing to emerge as a butterfly.

Let me be clear that it is not better to be a butterfly than a caterpillar. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Both have admirers. For example, birds are very fond of caterpillars, but not so much of butterflies.

I want to focus on the process of metamorphosis. The butterfly comes from the caterpillar, but there is a complete change. I hardly need to illustrate this. It is clear that we are all changing.

Look at who is here; this is the Order. Think of who was here ten years ago or sixteen years ago. Think of our Order and how different was our vision of the future at the Singapore International Training Institute in 1969. Think of the time of the Maliwada consult. Think of the picture of the future and the scope of the mission at the time of the "232" campaign in the 1970's. Think of the first Human Development Training School in the Philippines. Did we have any idea of the incredible things that were going to happen in the Philippines?

2. We are seeing that everything we have been has brought us to this point.

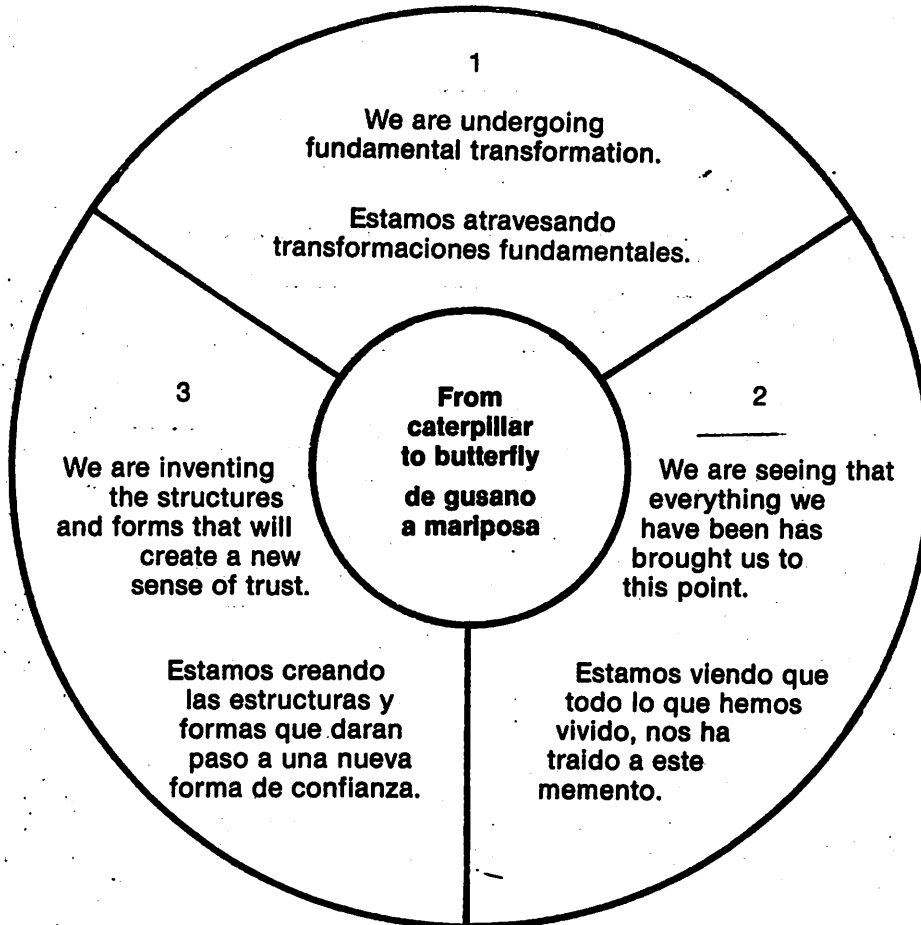
We are beginning a new lifetime of 16 years. Many changes are taking place in our body so that we may become this butterfly. This means giving up parts of our body we have been fond of. Can you imagine a graceful butterfly flying around with a caterpillar body like a fat little hot dog—carrying everything it has ever been?

This means losing legs so that wings can grow, but no one wants to lose a leg or shed a skin. Think of the many skins we have shed in order to be transformed. Over the years we have been a university community in Texas, a lay training institute in Evanston, a Local Church Experiment, International Training Institutes, Human Development Projects, and Human Development Training Schools. These are exactly what have gotten us to this day.

And what we are is what we will become. A caterpillar does not go out and find something new to become a butterfly. It takes what it has been and

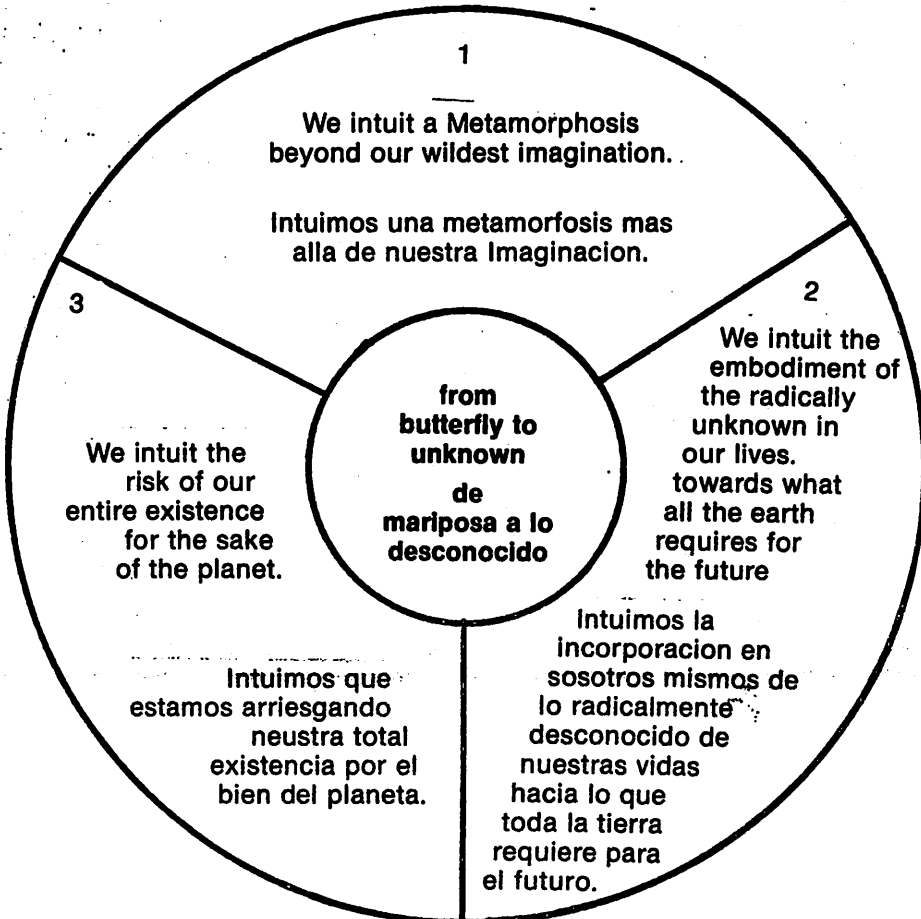
METAMORPHOSIS

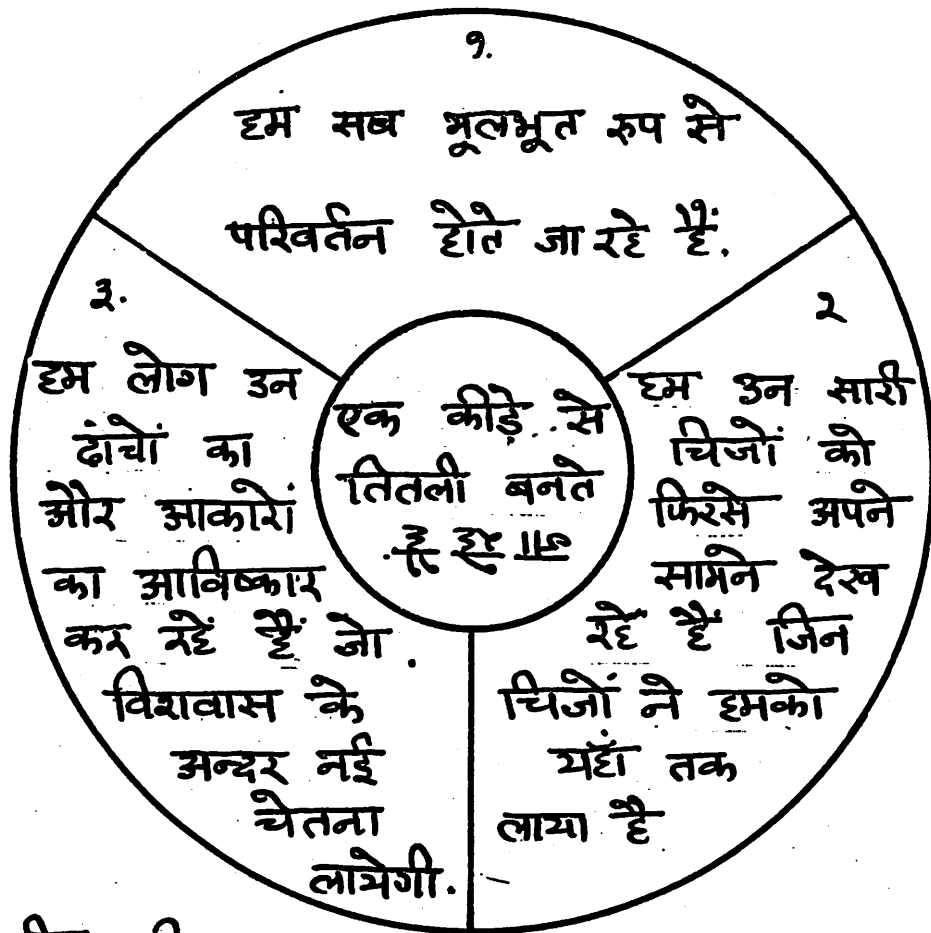
METAMORFOSIS



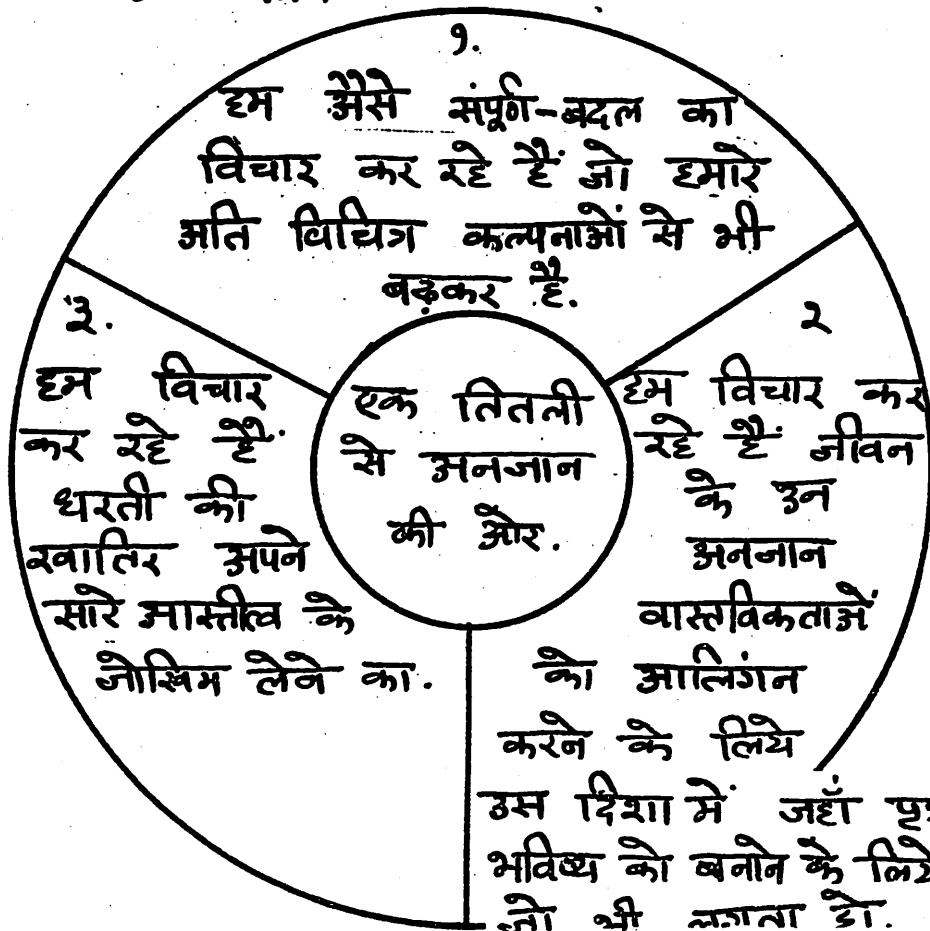
AT THE SAME TIME

AL MISMO TIEMPO





ठीक उसी समय



suddenly finds itself dramatically and mysteriously transformed. The International Exposition of Rural Development (IERD) has been a process of transformation. We now find ourselves in the midst of a whole new interchange network that is making a difference in human development.

These last two years of experimentation and research in finances, house life, polity, and spirit have been a process of transformation. We now find ourselves in the midst of a whole new struggle to create the economic, political and cultural forms that will make a difference in human history.

The advantages and opportunities before us are the stuff of our caterpillar out of which our butterfly will be formed. You will hear in the reports over the next few days that we have a chance to be funded by the Ford Foundation to work in human development all across Africa. This is a result of our work in Kenya over the years and the recent IERD. You will hear that the city of Chicago has decided to give the Institute \$25,000 to conduct our community training programs across the city.

You will hear that the nation of Hungary has invited a team of us to visit in late August to explore possible human development work, if we choose to pick up this possibility. And this is only the beginning of a very long list that we will look at in the next few days.

We are facing the mysterious process of shedding legs and arms, and growing wings. This is the process by which we are being transformed.

3. We are inventing the structures and forms that will create a new sense of trust.

Metamorphosis can be a painful and shocking process. Imagine one day the caterpillar wakes up, looks into the mirror, is combing its hair, and sees what appears to be a deformity. In this modern age it worries that it might be cancer or some kind of horrible disease. How easily we are convinced that the Order has a terminal disease, a disease that can only be dealt with by radical disfiguring surgery or death. How tempting to give up, because it all seems so hopeless.

Can you imagine the caterpillar going to its mother and saying, "Mother, have you noticed this growth on my body? Do you think I have cancer? Am I about to go out of being?" "No, my child, you do not have cancer. You are growing wings, for you are becoming a butterfly."

Now we are inventing the forms and structures that we must have for the future. If this is not clear to you yet, just wait until you look at the 70 models and 85 other letters and talking papers that have come in from across the world in the past few months. We think you will be delighted with the report from Continuum, and how it deals with the question of forms and structures.

We are, in fact, experiencing our capacity to create radical 16 and 4 year statements about the world and our vision as well as about who we are and what we see we need to do. We are beginning to experience our capacity to organize ourselves in a new way that accomplishes our task by the very way we organize. We are beginning to create the transformed economic structures that both handle the financial burden and, at the same time, can act as a dramatic sign of hope

for the whole planet. These new structures are the key to a new sense of trust. Our trust is rooted in our common commitment to operate out of forms and structures that we have experienced as effective.

Today we sense that our experience of the world and our intuition of our missional task have moved beyond our existing structures. We sense that we can no longer trust only our existing liturgy and symbols because we have moved to a posture so global that no existing liturgy even begins to reflect our current appropriation of reality.

We sense we can no longer simply trust our existing patterns of houses and centrums because the needs of the world and our actual functioning have both moved beyond our current forms. For example, some of our new modes of doing self-support have not been tested long enough that we can predict safely their capacity to provide the necessary income. Another example is the global banding done through the IERD. This was the most comprehensive global banding we have ever done, well beyond our current forms and structures.

The truly astounding thing is that these structures are being transformed and we are experiencing our capacity to direct this transformation. And this Council is the time to reveal this transformation to ourselves.

Now let us look at the second circle on the bottom of page 2. It is as if these two circles are like two lenses. Looking through one you can see clearly but you cannot see depth. When you put both together you see clearly and get depth. It is like the two beams of light that illuminate a hologram. At the same time we are experiencing the transformation from the caterpillar to the butterfly, we are experiencing the transformation from the butterfly to something that is totally unknown.

There is a strange kind of paradox here. The top circle describes what is going on now. It is almost going to be completed this summer. The bottom is more like what is going on now and will last over the next 16 years. The things in the top circle we can work out in the next two to four years. But you sense in the bottom circle it is going to be ten years before we even have a hint of what we are dealing with here.

The top circle speaks of the leap that we know we have within us. The bottom one is like dealing with the demand beyond anything we have known, done or been. The top circle is what we are sure about, while the bottom is where we are not sure at all. Yet we know both dynamics are within us simultaneously.

1. We intuit a metamorphosis beyond our wildest imagination.

I want to look at the "beyond" part of this. Many of us intuit that something is being required beyond anything in our history. The Continuum has spoken of this as being on "an uncommon plane." This is a new posture or approach to the whole universe.

The film "The Global Brain" highlights a "consciousness revolution" that points to the deepest missional longing within us. We know the planet needs a new spirit climate or environment in which our lives might flourish as never before.

It seems that people have broken into this new awareness in vastly different ways. One of our colleagues said it happened to her when she realized that as the ocean approaches a large rock on the beach, it is as if the electrons inside the molecules of the water decide whether to go around the right side or left side of the rock. She said, "My God, if electrons are making decisions, what does this say about the universe? Another colleague said it came to him when he saw the movie "Gandhi" and the metamorphoses that happened to Gandhi throughout his life.

One of the ways it happened to me was while reading the book Wholeness and the Implicate Order by the physicist David Bohm. He pointed out that the radical dichotomy between matter and consciousness does not exist. The difference between a piece of chalk and the idea of beauty is purely one of being at a different point on the spectrum. I said, "If this is true, what a different world we find ourselves living in!"

It is easy to talk abstractly about the new paradigm, but how can we talk concretely about our deep intuition of the metamorphosis that is happening. We finally have no precise images of what is going on, but we sense that it has started now and that over the next 16 years what will happen will be beyond anyone's current imagination.

2. We intuit the embodiment of the radically unknown in our lives towards what all the earth requires for the future.

We find ourselves in a strange paradox. On the one hand the future of consciousness hangs in the balance more at this time than at any other time in history. Total nuclear destruction of this planet is a very real possibility. Or we may destroy ourselves in another way. Just probe into ecology as to what would happen if the Amazon forests were destroyed.

On the other hand, we have never been closer before to being able to totally eliminate hunger. It is within our grasp! It also is possible that war could be structured out of existence, if human consciousness and the adversarial mode were to shift, resulting in new mindsets and new forms.

The urgency is to plumb the depths of this new world. This Council will symbolically initiate this research as we look at twelve arenas, such as health, communities, ecology, spirit, to see the shifts in how life is seen and lived today.

We are being asked to radically embody in our very lives what the future requires for all the Earth. There have been discussions in our Order of whether we are still on the edge. In one sense we are not. We have not chosen to stay abreast of all the developments of our time. Yet you will see in the next two weeks our resolve to deal with this.

In another sense, the edge is not one more book on what the future could be or one more theory on how things function. (Yet I am glad that we have done as much reading as we have.) The edge has shifted to the center, to the practical embodiment of how one lives as a full human being in this world. This is the question of human history.

We find ourselves very much at the heart of this kind of work. First of all, in our Order people are working, for one of the first times on this planet, on

creating practical planet-wide forms of pluriformity, including all of the issues of strategy, organization and roles. It is not a theoretical question for us. It concerns whether to have air conditioning or not. It concerns past images of what it means to be human. There are those in our body who, out of religious concerns, do not eat meat. There are those who, out of cultural images, find it hard to imagine life without eating meat.

This question concerns values and standards of effectivity and human responsibility, which get grounded in the ways elevators are run and what space looks like. We have worked on this for years, and yet we have only begun. We all have to be willing to allow ourselves to be pushed in this arena.

Secondly, in our Order people are working, for one of the first times on this planet, on creating practical planet-wide forms of participation. For years corporations have shared financial data world-wide, but only with the executive cores, never with the newest employee. We are struggling with involving every single person in our Order with the decisions of our Order, and therefore of the whole planet.

Thirdly, in our Order people are working, for one of the first times on this planet, to create practical planet-wide forms that provide adequately for our economic needs, and involve every member of our Order in ensuring that our financial needs are met.

It is obvious that we must be willing this summer and over these next years to experiment on ourselves, precisely because we do not know where it will it come out and precisely because we deeply intuit that this is what the world is requiring of a group like ours. This means risking even if every aspect is not clear. This means working out of a whole new posture. We need to discern when we know the answers and when we don't. We need to identify when to talk and when to listen. We have to be willing to push others and to allow ourselves to be pushed.

3. We intuit the risk of our entire existence for the sake of the planet.

We are becoming clear that this is not a theoretical caution. We have risked and do risk everything. There is no way that we could simply pull back after this Council to where we were and what we were thinking and doing before. Yet at the same time there is no way we can be certain that the way we choose this summer will be the way history will go.

In a way this has always been our approach. We have an issue with our funds because of our willingness to risk. We took money that we had set aside for our children's education and the care of our elderly, and used it to provide the money to do our experimentation with houses, community forums, and human development projects around the world, and to do this Council.

But we should not stop undertaking risks. As the Ecumenical Institute, we went for broke on the Local Church Experiment. As the Institute of Cultural Affairs, we put our whole life on the line for the whistle points without any picture of what we would come out with. We risked ourselves for the community forums and human development projects, without any guarantee that they would make a difference. A similar radical risk of our whole future lies before us in these six weeks.

Finally in the midst of the risk and journey of this summer, how do we recover and in fact, invent for the first time, the capacity to enjoy being in each other's presence. The Continuum had a great breakloose in creating the climate and the structures for creating consensus that allowed this to happen. It is more than having a good time, although we certainly need to do that. It is basking in the sheer delight of having had the opportunity to be our Order. It is the joy of directly experiencing the awesomeness of shaping the future of this planet. At bottom it is what we have known as forgiveness and reconciliation.

Clearly, if we were all to disappear tomorrow, the planet would go on without us, but we have decided to make a difference with our lives. All of history and the whole planet are waiting to see what we do. A banana walla in Byculla in Bombay is wondering what we will decide. I suspect that Ellen Rissky and others in our Order who have died over the years are watching us this summer. The babies who were born into the Order this year are dependent on what we do. Perhaps even Mahatma Gandhi, Karl Barth, and Patrice Lumumba may be waiting to see what we will decide this summer.

It is increasingly obvious that in the midst of the many incredible organizations we have come to know across the world, the planet still needs a group like us. You sense the Order is deeply appreciative of the decisions people are making. People are deciding to enter a new lifetime over these next 16 years. People are deciding to re-enter our covenant anew. As we invent the task of the next 16 years, the Order will be deeply appreciative that those who are inventing this task are doing so with the decisions of their lives.

Of course, we cannot ignore the doubt, anger and laziness in us all, but in the midst of that, a new covenantal decision is being made. A new deep excitement and passion is filling our body. We are looking forward to this Council and the next 16 years. This finally is what the metamorphosis is all about.