

The Global Panchayat of the Order Ecumenical assumes responsibility for its assigned task and expresses our delight at once again being with our colleagues from around the globe.

I want to report to you first of all concerning the journey of these two years. You may remember that at this time last year these two years did not exist. They were an invention to give us a way to get imaginal distance so we could raise the question of the Council in 1984. And the Council seemed to be the key to our getting most effectively through the turn we find ourselves in.

People have been very pleased with the image of 16 year periods, particularly since 16 years ago in 1968 there was a dramatic shift on our part with the first houses outside of Chicago. This meant an enormous turn for us not unlike 1984 is becoming--and of course 16 years from 1984 is the year 2000. So, it has excited people as a way to make sense of 1984.

After the two year image broke loose, the Panchayat saw that its task last year was to ensure our moving through the two years toward the Council.

This meant capitalizing on the great "catapult" event that IERD has become.

This meant postponing any treks until they would serve to position us for the Council.

This meant enabling the Order to fulfill the intent of the seven labs from last summer. When the reports are done, we will see the heartening victories and the enormous work that has been done even though in several arenas we still have mountains to move in the next 18 months.

Everywhere the Panchayat went this year--from India to Jakarta to Bolivia to Tulare to Washington to Brussels to Guatamala to Rome to Kenya to Chicago--we were encouraged to see that the intent of the seven labs was being fulfilled.

The nine priorities were also fulfilled--with significant success and momentum in each of them. Later in reports you will hear about the New Skills Training which has finished its first term, about 152 new interns at last count, and that Brussels began the Academy with over 90 full or part time people there or coming.

One of the highlights of this year's journey was the priory check signals in Brussels.

.The global priory met for the first time in a location other

than Chicago.

.We were hosted in a facility that will care for the Order for years to come.

.We did our first hard look at a truly global budget and funding plan.

.We initiated work that led to getting wheels under the regionalizing of IERD.

.We created a method that allowed the total group to deal corporately and effectively with the key contradictions facing us at that time.

In many ways the whole year has been a process of preparing for Council '84, but particularly the RDSs and GRAs have played a major role globally.

When you hear the reports you will hear that without exception the RDSs have been phenomenal events that have literally put our regions into the new orbit of our mission.

Three GRAs were held. All of them provide fuel for 1984. The first two in Jakarta and Chicago created long-range grist for the exploding arenas of participation and technology. Because of the presence of the HDZ labs and pilots, the Nairobi GRA was able to do practical interchange and long-range reflection on issues that must be tackled immediately. In addition to identifying nine elements that are common to our work in multi-community situations everywhere, they clearly demonstrated that we are inventing a variety of approaches--each with its gifts--each incomplete--all needing to be pushed because of our need to be effective in a large variety of situations.

In addition to this preparatory work for our Council this summer, the Panchayat encouraged three special PSUs to break open or pull together work that would directly prepare for our Council. These were The Order Funds PSU, the VJL Lab, and the Rome trip. These in turn led to a number of talking papers and PSUs which have contributed to the preparation, and you'll see the results of all these later.

Although you'll get a detailed Rome report later, I'd like to say a bit about why we responded to the invitation to visit the religious orders in Rome. Although we learned a lot about the religious orders there, and all who participated were deeply addressed and honored, our intent was to create a backdrop--and certainly not the only backdrop--for our work on the mission and life of our order. We were amazed at the changes that have occurred in the orders since Vatican II, but it was clear on reflection that we had in fact been playing, with our order, a unique role in our "order invention" in the last 20 years.

We have talked in the past of someday asking for some form of

blessing or recognition from the historical church and possibly the Vatican. I always thought that was far-fetched at best. During this trip to Rome I began to see how something like this recognition was not out of the question--although this would only happen as we and the church both became part of the new emerging religious.

But we are experimenting with at least three arenas that are part of that without which no order will move into the future.

First is our comprehensive missional focus. Traditional orders have often undertaken almost by definition a clearly defined task. Orders of the future must take upon themselves the ambiguity and burden of the world's struggles.

Second is our ecumenicity. As difficult as we may experience it on a daily basis, this may be our greatest gift to history. I suspect in 100 years it will be an assumption of all religious orders. The orders in Rome were awed by our tenacity in asking people in our Order to risk swimming apart from the apparent lifeboat of the traditional religious heritage. We become mired in the transitory battles over "this ritual" versus "that ritual" and forget the momentous decisions we are participating in, in our experimentation.

Third, the orders in Rome were addressed by our pluriformity. By this I mean our willingness to involve family units of many diverse forms, married, unmarried, divorced and of a great variety of sizes. By this I mean our willingness to work with people of radically diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. Many of the orders won't consider receiving an intern with anything under a certain level of education. By this, I mean our willingness to simultaneously allow dramatic local autonomy while we invent a new global polity.

The historical orders need our experimentation as do the structures of society. The long range relation to the historical church is unclear, but in the near future it does not appear to mean doing something much different than what we are doing now. What we are doing now is very much appropriate to what they need.

I want to talk some about this July. This July is about one thing and one thing only--the year of the Council 1984. If you think IERD and the Order are in opposition to each other, you probably don't understand either one. The only reason to do IERD is to position us to do Phase III, the HDZ, the next four years or whatever you wish to name it. The only reason to have an Order is to do the mission of Phase III, the HDZ, the next four years, or whatever you wish to name it. We are betting that the IERD will move us into the new orbit of our missional thrust. If this does not happen, then we must invent something else. We are seeing that our internal life

is becoming part and parcel of our mission. We have always intended that. It has become radically true today. But you only have an order--you only have an internal life so that you might more effectively address the deep contradictions of history. This has always been true for us also.

Another way to put this is that we do not live in the Kemper Building because we think it is a neat way to live. We do so to more effectively utilize the financial and human resources we have. And in doing this we are seeing new ways of dramatizing the demonstration of effectivity that our life has become.

So the Year of the Council is bringing both of these, IERD and the Order, together in a new form that we are in the process of inventing.

I want to talk a bit about what this council is not. It is not a time for vision and strategy. Our vision is powerfully before us and we are deep in the process of inventing new strategy. The question this summer is the tactical actions that form the new manifestation of the fundamental strategies that we have been about for years and that continually get re-expressed in new clothes for new times.

Second, this council is not about decision making. That is the job of 1984. This council is about creating a very practical process by which the whole order can participate in the decision making process in 1984.

Third, this council is not about broad consensus. We deeply believe that this is present. What we need are the edge inventions that will creatively attack our major contradictions in a time and situation that is immensely more complex than twenty or even four years ago.

We received positive feedback to the "Year of the Council" balloon that we floated a couple months ago. The questions everybody had were how to actually do it. Nevertheless, we sense a resolve in the Order to address our basic issues such that if we don't decide to do the Year of the Council, then we need to quickly invent something similar so we can be about these tasks.

We see four major tasks that must be done this summer concerning the mission and life of the Year of the Council.

The first of these is working out the details of the three pillars. The first pillar is IERD, which I will come back to in a minute. The second pillar is the July research. We need to decide in these two weeks what the specific arenas of research for July 1984 are going to be. How many locations do we do this in? Would it be one? Would it be six across the

continents? What would we actually do in July? What is the form and design of this work? (Like would it be done during Continental Councils wherever and whenever they were?) And how we would pay for this? The third pillar is the December event. What is it? When is it? Where is it? What do we do? How do we pay for it? And underneath all of this--does the whole order meet at one time in one place, and how might we possibly arrange for this to happen?

The second major arena is consensing on the common glue for the year that will symbolize the unity we actually have. This includes common New Year's celebrations, common songbooks, and common ritual. It is not adequate to have a report come back to our council that a group cannot reach consensus. The question is, "What is the commonness that is our consensus now?" Beyond this, we need to consider other possible aspects of common glue. For example, there has been talk of creating a "symbol" this summer to use all year.

The third major arena is the creation of a continuum for the year. We see this as a group of, say, ten to fifteen "guides" who will oversee this whole year's process. This may be not unlike the Room E dynamic of some of the summer programs of the early 70s. We suspect most of these people would continue to be assigned where they currently are, and then would come together for anywhere from three to nine months of the year in various locations of the globe. With the Panchayat, this group would have the major responsibility for guiding the Year of the Council. We need to make all of these assignments these two weeks so that perhaps they could meet--at least those present this summer--for a few days after the 24th. In this way they may not need to all come together before December 1st.

The fourth major arena is the agenda and time-design of the Year of the Council. What are the issues we must resolve and how are we going to do it? What are the "whole order" research and interchange mechanisms? What are the whole order assemblies? What are the special PSUs required? What is the rhythm of time? How is this coordinated with continental, area, and regional councils and with the planned GPAs? Some group could have a tremendous time figuring this out!

The Regulatory and the council need to figure out how to do all of this in the next two weeks. Some of these groups might not need to start next week.

I'd like now to talk some about the three large groupings that the prep team is going to suggest we start with.

The first is the IERD. We need a commonly consensed nation by nation countdown. We need the necessary work on documentation, publicity, project selection and participation. We need a

clear enough picture of the Delhi event that we know exactly what troops we need and when, what this will cost, and how we pay for it. We must make sure we have no personnel or money surprises that will block us from effective use of this great event. In many ways this could be a fine opportunity to make use of our trained colleagues around the world who would be deeply honored to attend, participate in, and facilitate this event. We need the best possible picture of Phase III, or whatever you wish to call it. I know it does not feel this way, to those who have been working most closely with IERD, but we have seldom been so ready this far before an event.

The second major grouping is the Council of 1984. This covers issues as diverse as order funds, when and how we might do 1984 assignments, reconfiguration (the most radical move we've made in this arena since 1968) and vows and classes of the Order. We've received several letters from Order members indicating their life-long intent relative to our order, and we need to begin to figure out how we deal with this aspect of life journey and humanness. In addition to all of this, they probably need to start work on much of the Council dimensions I described earlier.

Two major cautions for this group. Not all of the issues can or should be resolved in a year or even four years. Some of these must be continually re-resolved. Others need to remain in a brooding category till the kairotic time comes. We must discern carefully here when those times arrive.

The second caution is that this group will want to solve at least some of these issues. Not one of these issues must be or should be answered in these two weeks--although some first steps might be determined or taken. The sole task of this group is to figure out the process or mechanisms by which we will work on these issues. We cannot go home from this council until we figure this out.

The third and last major grouping is global finances. I have often joked with people that, regarding our situation in many arenas of the order's life, the rumor is often worse than the fact. This may turn out to be the exception!

There is no question but what this will require a huge focus and a lot of time this summer. We have new economic realities in society. And in fact we will be working on the new global economics here, and may even get some smell of the future this summer beyond the current squeeze. In Brussels we began our real work on budgets. This summer we all need to know exactly where we are.

We are looking at a new style beyond cost-cutting. Part of it may be shifts in program when we consider the financial cost. There is no way we are going to do everything we have always

done in the same way we've done it before.

A major development rethinking has to start. How do we practically get ourselves into new orbits? Great strides have been made in arenas like mass mailings and audio-visuals. But we simply cannot put this off any longer. Finally, self support has to be considered in the same way. The Order is committed to rethinking and reconstructing its whole financial base, and some good beginnings were made this year in arenas like order funds. No one should leave our order because of money, and yet living a life of poverty entails struggling with the real economic contradictions. In addition, we must look again at our stipends and deal with the inequities we have regarding twelve regular stipends.

The long range self-support modes are not clear, and we dare not put all our eggs in one basket. But at least three swirls are starting to emerge and must be examined carefully. First are the computer based and related ventures. We need to look at the skills needed to win here and make sure that we get them in place. Second, concerns our efforts to market our methods. Experimentation has begun here and needs to be encouraged. Third is less clear but has to do with the training ventures. The leader here has been Training, Inc., but it is not clear where to go from there.

Next, I want to talk about eight balloons the Panchayat is floating for this next year.

Our major balloon is of course the Year of the Council.

Our second balloon concerns the invention of a new training track for every member of the Order. We have no illusion about how hard this will be, but clearly we have invented methods that work, that we all can do (some of them almost instinctively), and that society desperately needs, continues to want, and in many cases is willing to pay for. Now, we may not all work with large corporations, but most of us could do some of these methods with some groups under some circumstances. This may even contribute to inventing one of the "wine presses" we've talked about, since this could cut across language and cultural barriers in the order. The issue is how do we get started, since it will not be done overnight.

The third balloon is tied closely to this. The Panchayat has hoped for a year that someone would pick up and do a major pilot effort that would market our methods for money for self-support. Now we realize this is being done in various places in various ways. The time has come to figure it out and make it part of our intentional strategy. Work and thinking on such an effort is being done in many quarters here in North America, and a number of recent meetings have been putting together a proposal for the Council. The Panchayat's

interest has been on self-support money, but we have hopes this might give us a way to begin to redo the image of self-support as permeation

For a long time we've talked of being paid to do what we do. Maybe that time has come. And this would allow us to continue to do our methods in groups and communities who cannot afford to pay us what those methods are worth. Some of you you remember this was part of our original intent with LEMS and the 15% of society.

Our fourth balloon is that there be no assignment shifts this summer. This was well received and it appears we may have far fewer moves than you would expect. We have seen this as a guideline--not a goal--so this will allow us to make the missional moves necessary to position us for 1984.

In accord with this, our 5th balloon is that we not make any special assignments this year. We created this category several years ago to deal with several unique individual situations that clearly required this measure for a short period of time. In recent years, special assignment has come to mean something else and is no longer helpful to either the Order or the family. I think we all are clear, though, that the Order will look carefully and seriously at any future request for participation from any family that no longer feels they can remain in the symbolic order. Finally, each situation needs to be looked at as the unique situation it is.

Our sixth balloon is that there be no configuration shifts this summer so that we can begin the discussion we need to have in order that we can make the radical shifts in '84 that we deem necessary. We are recommending we neither open nor close any houses this year, yet we would be fools to leave people isolated in small units that are structurally and financially untenable and do not allow people to operate in the order context. Therefore, we would not be surprised if we had a number of houses this next year where no one was assigned. Some of you may not know we did this with Winnepeg this last year. This is not a joke if you see that on the one hand we have not decided our next four year strategy, and you hold that over against the spirit drain, the troop availability, and the financial costs of maintaining some of our current houses.

Our seventh balloon is that we do a special one year Nexus-Centrum configuration experiment. Every nexus reconfigured internally this year to get its mission done. We cannot go back to four centurms, though maybe we hold our global prior assignments this way for next year. We are asking the Council to convene a group in some fashion to create a one year experiment to free us so we can do the major work in 1984. It is life or death that we have common

elements in all our nexuses (including the specialized functions in Chicago like the Student House, the print shop, and the large number of university students). Without these common elements, we'll destroy our bands and our global tension with the areas will no longer be present. We've considered a commission experiment to go along with this, but it is not clear yet.

Our eighth balloon is that we do Panchayat treks in quarter II to every house in the globe for two days in each place. We would likely do four simultaneous treks, using several of the deputies. We feel it is crucial that every order member be present for these treks as the intent is to literally involve every member of the order in building the multi-faceted consensus regarding the Year of the Council and our whole future. We plan to begin these by September 25 in order to finish by the first week in December. This way we would have adequate time for debriefing before Christmas, and could tie this into the Continuum's work early on. We'd like to get the budget and schedule clarified before you leave and are hoping the area priors would use this as one of their trek times and would travel with us in their areas.

This morning I also want to talk about the indicative of life as we are facing it these days. The mission and life of our order has been predicated on being faithful to the way life is--rather than chasing after either the way life should be (in either idealism or moralism) or the way we want life to be (in either simplistic solutions or some form of the good life.)

The imperatives coming out of the pain and suffering of the world as well as our own deep struggles constantly tempt us to turn from the radical task of dramatic human change without which mission there is no need for our order.

The way life is often disappoints us. Our dreams and objectives seem to be thrown aside and neglected by history. Nevertheless, history clearly has things in mind and they often fly in the face of our carefully laid plans.

We become confused as to what our response should be and are tempted to reduce our efforts to something manageable or something where we feel we have some chance of seeing results. We strongly suspect we will not live to see the fruit of our long years of work.

The traps are real and have not gone away--whether the search for a new profound understanding of the radical revolutions of our time, or the retreat into the comfort of the secure life, or the pursuit of a simple contribution to the historical task. We all struggle in the face of these temptations to remain faithful to our task. Now, as I said earlier, the key

to living through these temptations is to keep your eye on the indicative of the way life is.

I want to talk about how that indicative comes to us these days under the categories of the world, the movement, and the order.

I. The indicative of the world seems to be that the practical working out of the paradigm shift and the revolutions in this world is still underway. We continue to experience the 85/15% gap as probably the most determinative ethical question facing the globe. We participate in the continued unraveling of traditional social structures like the family with little likelihood of any dramatic reversal in the next twenty years, and the new structures are not yet formed. There is an intensification of the economic crisis as we move into new financial and economic realities. Clearly, the rug has been pulled out from under our decision of the 60's to base development on charitable or benevolent giving and our self-support on the abundance of individual employment opportunities. They simply aren't there anymore in the same way. The explosion of the communications and computer revolutions boggles our imagination. The screaming needs in education, combined with the pivotal crisis in literacy, is especially relevant to participation in the third world. Finally, the continued momentum of local resurgence--though sometimes unguided or negative--is still an undeniable trend.

II. The indicative of the movement seems to be that the master strategies for these four years of manifestation, declaration and formation have succeeded. Certainly not in every way we longed for, but it is there in the given realities.

In Manifestation we have the HDZ labs and pilots as well as a number of other national projects. Every area has at least one or more long term demonstrations of new life and a number like Training, Inc. have networks across several areas.

In Formation, we are seeing that "order formation" goes beyond recruitment of new members and beyond concern for the journey of individuals toward the creation of the vehicle of the Order Ecumenical that will carry us from a temporary mode of existence to a mode of longer duration. And our work on funds, self support, order forms, the VJL and in many other arenas are certainly at the heart of the formation of a new people.

In Declaration we have, in many ways, experienced the greatest breakthroughs. The IERD with its RDSs and follow-up forums has been breathtaking. The Delhi event is strangely fascinating in its immense possibility. We've had a new surge of audio-visual materials from the new Indonesian film to the

fund-raising video as well as a necessary push on the story we are telling.

III. Finally, the indicative regarding the order is that the world desperately needs the order the way it actually is. The fragility of each of us--the sense of being at the end of your rope--may well signal a time of metamorphosis and radical decision for the order. We are tempted to see the negative aspect of trends only. We see trained people leave our order, and even if our overall numbers increase, we are pained by the loss of trained priorship. And yet we are entering a time when no one is really trained for the mission we have ahead.

The fact is, concerning our order, everyone sees and agrees we must change our economic life--to what, and how we do that are our issues. The fact is everyone sees and agrees we must redo our polity and configurations--to what, and how we do that are our issues. The fact is everyone sees and agrees we must take the next step in forming the order--to what, and how we do that are our issues

What we often overlook is **"What a powerful demonstration of profound humanness we already are."** We weep over our own imperfect manifestation and yet we have exactly the gifts the world needs. The world needs our gifts of global unity--and the gift of profound corporateness. We must watch the trap of regional autonomy. The world needs our gift of forging fundamental social change--the gift of profound care. We must watch the trap in talking of shared approaches. The world needs our gift of total life decision--the gift of profound commitment. We must watch the trap of part-time volunteers. I deeply believe we **have come through** the temptation of these traps in our HDZ experimentation, in the IERD, and in our work with our houses.

Finally, underlying all of this--and in fact underlying our entire lives and our total mission--there is a fourth indicative: the indicative of forgiveness. The only way any of us is able to come here, and to stand here as many will have the opportunity to do--is because of the fact, the reality, the indicative of forgiveness. And of course that is way beyond any notion of us forgiving each other.

I am convinced that in a way perhaps not so obvious in the past, all of us this year have felt ourselves inadequate to the task before us. All of us have felt reluctance to trust the indicative, to trust the great trends of history, to trust events in our order. We all--and **how do you dramatize** that all of us come seeking the forgiveness that standing before the way life is, brings. How comforting it is to see that our corporateness and unity flow out of our common willingness to seek this forgiveness. And this, my colleagues, is our **absolution** and our permission to receive this great year and

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to move boldly into the future.