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STATEMENT OF THE MORAL ISSUE

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The great divide in the world today is not so much between the rich and the poor - or between the educated, healthier and wealthier and the illiterate, malnourished and impoverished - as between those who think that humans can shape their own destiny, and those who still believe that fate is decided by outside forces.

Richard Critchfield

The moral issue of our time is manifest in the images that threaten the very existence of the globe. It does not have to do, in the first instance, with any aspect of the physical situation - economic, political, or cultural, but rather with the images that have brought that situation into being. It is embodied in the image that each of us has a sole identity separate from the globe on which we show up.

The prevailing images of the world have emphasized the separateness of each individual entity and each group. The protestant ethic and the capitalist system have emphasized the independence of each individual while communism has defined life in terms of the struggle between various classes (separate groups). Christianity and Islam have both emphasized individual salvation. We have also defined our world in terms of nationalities and race, as haves vs have-nots, developing vs developed, East vs West, North vs South, and Oil Producing vs Oil Using.

While there have been various religious and political movements that have symbolized the interrelatedness of all of life, the prevailing images in the globe today divide the world into many interreacting but competing groups. In many cases a particular group perceives a benefit to another group as being a threat to itself. For example, Christians might view the mass conversion of people in a society to Islam as a threat to themselves. Americans are not relieved by the success of Russian farmers in producing a bumper crop or by recent discoveries of new oil reserves in Siberia.

The prevailing mode of operation is for individuals to align themselves with people who think and act as much like themselves as possible and then to create a variety of protections against the threats (perceived or real) from those in different groups.

A variety of sources have begun to clarify the inadequacy and danger of this prevailing image of our sole identity being that of isolated entities. The ecological movement has pointed out the wide spread destruction resulting from the various ways we are poisoning our air, water, soil, and food. The peace movement has dramatized the possibility of destroying all or most life on the planet in a matter of hours. Scientists and writers like Peter Russell have shown us the ways in which the globe functions as a single living organism maintaining its own delicate balance for supporting life.

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Russell says that we have the possibility of creating a step forward in the evolutionary process through participation in an evolving global consciousness, or of simply being a cancer on the face of the globe with each cell only concerned with doing its own thing.

If the prevailing images persist, there is every indication that we will continue to destroy the resources of the planet if not the existence of life itself. The gap between the rich and the poor will increase as those with access to the resources are encouraged to use them to their own benefit. The separation between individuals and groups will continue and expand.

However, some indicators are emerging which lead us to believe that the prevailing images can be replaced with images that emphasize the interdependence of all of the globe's people and resources. The oil crisis of 1973 showed us that the oil reserves of the planet are limited. While the energy policies of most nations would indicate that their image of unlimited oil for those who control the resources has not changed, some agencies and corporations are beginning to seriously explore alternate energy sources. Others have taken steps to curtail petroleum usage at least to some degree. Still others like J. J. Servan-Schreiber are warning the industrial nations that their own well-being depends upon the rapid transfer of technology to the "Third World".

We are all aware that radiation and chemical poisons can destroy the users as well as the targets of the weapons and chemicals. Again the behavior of nations and companies would indicate that most people have not yet changed their images, but the implementation of a growing number of anti-pollution laws and policies indicates that an impact is being felt. The old images are being continuously bombarded and public awareness is growing. It is not inconsequential that the biggest shift in philanthropic funding in recent years has been into support for the peace movement.

Finally, a small but growing number of modern day prophets are saying that the best interests of everyone are bound together. One such prophet says, "Unless the villages come alive and move the world does not have a chance." We ourselves have said that as long as 15% of the world's people control 85% of the world's resources and decisions, neither the 15% nor the 85% can realize their full potential.

Our image of ourselves as having a sole identity separate-able from the globe leads us in the direction of taking care of ourselves at the expense of any and all others. The "being separated" is not the issue in itself. We all experience and participate in our separation from others and from life itself. It is when our images of life lead us to consciously or unconsciously accept this separation as the desired state of life to be nurtured and expanded that we experience the moral issue. It is only in the resolution of this issue that the next evolutionary step becomes possible. Only through dealing with this issue do we open the possibility for global reconciliation, unity and creativity.

Catalyzing Societal Demonstrations (Catalyzing unity & understanding among others)

To catalyze other groups in society The Order:Ecumenical must be able to stand outside of the special interests and viewpoints that characterize the groups which have formed on the planet. To maintain its ability to stand outside these special interests, the Order must continue to include as wide a diversity as possible of people with various national, racial, religious, cultural, economic, and political backgrounds. This not only important from the standpoint of being a demonstration, but is needed to avoid our being identified with or actually embodying the parochial concerns of any segment of society.

In order to catalyze reconciliation and unity in local situations it is critical that each location create a "neutral sacred space" where people representing diverse groups can encounter each other and new images in a non-threatening way. These spaces might be training centers, demonstration communities such as Fifth City, permeation facilities such as Training, Inc., or the Religious House itself. The events held in this space and the way in which they are facilitated must be such that new images of unity and reconciliation will be fostered. An example of such activity might be the facilitation of a coalition of state, city and neighborhood agencies to deal with the problem of unemployment in Loisaia in New York City. A sign of unity and reconciliation among viciously competing agencies has resulted. The IERD is our biggest example of this catalysis to date. A less dramatic local example is the kind of guild series that has been held in New York highlighting efforts in various arenas such as education and women in development. Our methods of facilitating such events are well-developed and we stand in the unique position of being ones who can establish such neutral ground.

If we find the ways to form ourselves as a body where everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in the economics and polity and if we focus our methods to catalyze the formation of images and demonstrations of unity and reconciliation in society we will find ourselves standing exactly where we need to be to address the moral issue of our time.

Order:Ecumenical Form (Being a demonstration of profound reconciliation)

We have gone a long way to show that people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds can live and work together effectively. We probably do not even begin to realize how much of an impact we already are on those who encounter the Order in various places around the world. Our corporate life pushes hard at the images of all who participate in or witness our daily living patterns. Our corporate economic structures cut across images of individual status and reward. Our assignment structures at both the local team level and the global configuration level create images that help to shatter societal images that only certain tasks are appropriate for certain segments of society.

We are in the unique position of having contacts and participating people from approximately one half of the world's nations. In these nations many of the people that we know are working at the neighborhood level. Our demonstration thus reaches to the grass roots level of these societies. Through the human development projects and replication thrusts we have had substantial numbers of local village people from countries such as Kenya, India and the Republic of the Philippines become part of our local configurations. While it is not an easy task to incorporate these people into the Order as fully participating members, they have made our body a demonstration far beyond what it would be if it only included the middle and upper class, well-educated and globally contexted people of the respective nations. We have come to be a group of people far more diverse in its composition than most of us would have anticipated possible 16 years ago. It is true that we have not yet found ways to allow everyone to fully participate fully in the polity and economic structures of the Order. However, the presence of each of the 684 persons is shaping the very nature of who we are and of what structures will be required for us to exist as a functioning demonstration and servant force in society. Radical model building is required to create these required structures. This is perhaps the greatest challenge before us if we are to continue to be a real sign of global unity and reconciliation.

We must figure out how to practically overcome the economic issues and polity issues which limit our ability to be a stronger demonstration. Additional and more highly developed local economic ventures could allow more people to earn money without formal credentials or work permits. We have experimented to some degree with training programs to develop the necessary marketable skills that would allow more Order members to participate in self support efforts. Perhaps village development skills could become marketable to allow our people in local communities to contribute to the self-support of the Order. The biggest step in this arena may be to find ways in which all 684 people can participate in the struggle to work out the solution together. Obviously we do not have the perfect solutions to equal participation and benefit for all people in the Order. There are many points where new structures are required. However, we are engaged in an experiment that few could even envision, let alone undertake. The success of the demonstration demands that we not lose heart when some of the practices threaten to overwhelm us.

IMPLICATIONS

STRATEGIC THRUSTS OF THE ORDER IN THE NEXT 16 YEARS

INTENSIVE

I. Exposure of the Moral Issue informs the location of the Order.

The Order as a demonstration of profound reconciliation or pluriformity in all its forms--extended, movemental, symbolic--needs to be located in places where the moral issue is most obviously manifested: a) a community isolated and cut off from the resources and decisions of the society around it, e.g. Native American people; b) a community that is usurping the resources and decisions from society; c) a place where there exists obvious struggle and competition among different groups within a community, region, nation, etc.

II. The composition of the Order is a sign of radical corporateness in the midst of pluriformity.

The world does not require the organization of another body of westerners out to help the Third World. It does require a sign of radical corporateness in the midst of pluriformity. In the midst of working through the overwhelming complexity of bringing together people from radically diverse backgrounds into one outfit, it is of the utmost importance that we find a way to symbolize the fact that there are no second class order members. This requires of us that wherever we show up, the movement be a pluriform demonstration representing all classes, races, sectors, and religions.

III. The main thrust of the intensive strategy is to create Reconciliation Tracts.

The function of the Order in these locations is to catalyze unity and understanding amongst others in a focused tract of geography which includes targeted institutions (corporations, education systems, hospitals) and networks (women, government extension workers, international agencies).

IV. The role of the House is to form and train the Spirit Movement in depth.

These tracts of reconciliation would be limited in number and would have within each a Reconciliation Center (House) which would be a center for formation and depth training of the Extended and Movemental Order. The center would have the personnel, capacity and space to do HDTI's, academies, retreats, etc.

V. Those Who Care will be linked together.

In every dimension and sector of the designated tract, the Order would provide forums and vehicles which link the concerns, successes, and care of "Those Who Care" about unity and understanding in that tract. The activities here are concentrated the orchestration of "sharing approaches that work conferences", health care takers assemblies, showcase forums, organizing 4-sector coalitions, working with the networks of the international development communities (UN, PVO's and multinational corporations).

ORDER STANDING POINT

We have stated the moral issue as being the way in which the human inhabitants of the globe perceive themselves and the groups in which they participate as having sole identities isolated from the rest of the globe. If this parochial outlook is in fact the paramount contradiction threatening our world, then The Order:Ecumenical stands in a unique position to catalyze constructive change globally.

If the images that foster parochialism and isolation of individuals and groups from the globe itself are to be changed there must be some entity which can stand outside of the various individual and group viewpoints and interject images that can break through the barriers around these "isolated entities". The Order:Ecumenical has already been able to function as such a group in many ways. However, if we were to stand before this new statement of the moral issue as the one issue to be addressed, there are at least two pillars upon which we might build our standing point for the next 16 years.

- I. Being a demonstration of profound reconciliation (pluriformity).
- II. Catalyzing unity and understanding among others

The emphasis here is in the practical models out of which people's images might be changed. Obviously there are many strategies to be created within the pillars for seeing that the practical models get spread to the masses of people. Media, "global posture" curriculum, regional impact centers, etc. might be considered. Our purpose here is to try to state the standing point itself from which the strategies can be built.

The Order:Ecumenical's standing point is therefore to stand as those who create the concrete models of global unity and reconciliation. We will be ones who forge ourselves to be such a model and, at the same time, catalyze the emergence of other local models in targeted locations around the globe.

EXTENSIVE

I. An impact system is needed to address people's parochialism.

The extensive strategy would be implemented outside as well as inside the designated tracts. This strategy would center around a formal curriculum or impact system that would address people's parochialism regardless of their background. This curriculum would include seminars such as the revised UR Images course and Nation and World as well as audio visual presentations with contexts and reflection that expand the narrow horizons of people's worlds. Our intent here is to provide a "global posture" or global understanding for masses of people. There are not training sessions. Each will be a profound event which enables people to "pass over" or empathize with an alien context, understanding or set of beliefs. Hopefully, in an event such as this one could enter another culture or go on a global odyssey without leaving one's own neighborhood. Examples of possible events would include showing The Global Brain and following it with a reflective conversation or engaging in role playing constructs such as the Reconciliation Game. Such an impact system would require a teaching system at the area or region level or an organized system to get the trained facilitators of the Symbolic, Extended, and/or Movemental Order to the necessary place to conduct each event.

FLANKING

I. It is necessary in society to create a climate where unity, cooperation, and understanding of others are modes that are encouraged.

This strategy has to do with influencing the mass media to put forth new images that promote global interdependence, creativity, contribution, and success of local people. This would highlight and accelerate the development of the global consciousness on a physical, mental and spiritual level. The powerful influence of the media in formulating public sector and private sector policies cannot be overestimated. The media actually creates as well as disseminates a multitude of images. And as we know, our images are what control our behavior. Therefore, we need to enlist in this campaign prominent authors, poets, directors of films, and publishers. The utmost influence is needed to tell a story of humanness that defines life as more than the ability of people and groups to control as much of the world's resources as possible. We must plan this aspect of our life very carefully and coordinate our thrusts internationally. We must learn how to interweave the networks themselves. One glowing example of Training, Inc. by itself is of no use, if its story doesn't get shared. An urban demonstration in Calcutta or a national development demonstration in Kenya is little help in reshaping the environment of the globe unless the stories of local people's efforts get big publicity. We are not just dealing with ICA projects here. Our role is to literally put local people and "Those Who Care" in all of their forms on global billboards. It is only when their stories are seen and experienced that new hope can be released in others.

PROBE

I. The Reconciliation Center would accommodate all of the above functions and would serve a larger geography with movement formation and training support.

There would be at least one such center in each area.

SYMBOLIC

I. Being a demonstration of profound reconciliation as a profoundly pluriform body of people is the strategy in this arena.

