

CONTEXT

It is probably helpful to trace the corporate thought process which has given rise to this paper. If one asks the question - "What are we out to do with the Year of Order Council (YOC)?", one response is - "To set the directions in terms of identity and task for at least the next 16 years." A scenario of our journey over a period of 80 years has been sketched recently. This fact begins to put into perspective the history-long and world-wide significance of the YOC, and the need for appropriate Order Council Mechanisms.

As we take a look at the sort of group we are now, it is clear that we are pluriform in an incredible way, and of which fact we have yet to take full advantage. Another fact - which is self-evident - is that we are different from the group that articulated the foundational context out of which we have been operating for at least the last 16 years. Many of the questions that are being raised at this time, and the forces which have conspired to allow us to decide to have a Year of Order Council, point to a need for a radical recontexting in terms of our identity and task. This radicality is manifest not so much in the content of the context as firstly, in the need for every order member to participate and make the context their own; and secondly, in our willingness as the global pluriform group we are, to ensure everybody is inside the context before moving on the implications in terms of operational modes, structures etc.

To act out the above, there are some implications for the orchestration of the YOC:-

- 1). Rehearsing our foundational context and adjusting our operational modes and structures will take more than our current image of the duration of the YOC to complete;
- 2) There is a need for a mechanism to enable the deliberative functions of the order to take place across the globe at the local level at all times, and not exclusively at - or at the time of - July and Area councils, or other gatherings of that nature. (One could talk about what the functions of councils etc. are, but that is not relevant to this paper). Much of the current anxiety about representation at "July" would be relieved if the occasion was not considered the one time and place where decisions got made.

It is out of this perspective, then, that the following model is offered. In essence, this model suggests three things: a) that the YOC is devoted to dealing primarily with our foundational context, with the implication that work on constructs and operational modes would take place during the subsequent two years; b) that our three documents - The Prolegomena, The Declaration, and The Construct - are the instruments for initiating that; and c) that we use some interchange model to ensure every area participates in this critical stage of work, out in the field, during March, April and May.

The model was created out of much discussion and brooding and two talking papers which had been written on aspects of the YOC, and which had been shared with the house. We see this model as a viable way of responding to the critical issues of the YOC in the dimension of Order Council Mechanisms.

THE MODEL

The arenas of research for the year are many. It has been intriguing to read the very helpful newsletter put out by the precontinuum, and to see what people are writing about. The issue now seems to be forging common directions, building strong images upon which we can build the future, and at the same time, not biting off more than we can chew. We could have a great time building 4-year and 16-year missional directions, but if they aren't related to our whole thinking about who we are as an Order and what we intend in the Knowing and Being dimensions we will have to rebuild our basic consensus when eventually we do put these things together. There is a similar issue with Phase III of the IERD. To plan that in isolation from the fundamental questions needing to be considered in the Year of Order Council, will only lead to difficulties down the road. All of this reflection has led us to the following conclusions.

It will take more than one year to do the job of futuric thinking and structure building that we see to be needed, if we take that job seriously. The past shows that such has usually been the case. In 1971 we built the basis of our turn to the world but it took another couple of years before we were satisfied that we had the structures and strategies in place to move with power. This has led us to propose that we do ONE THING this year, namely clarify our context. We will do other things around the edges, but if we could come out of the Year of the Council with our context powerfully restated, we would be released to invent whatever is necessary in the years to come. We cannot afford to remain fuzzy about our story much longer. If we are no longer clear about why we are doing, we will soon run out of steam. This year, therefore, we are suggesting the major exercise needs to be the studying of, and creating the updated forms of, our three documents which essentially hold our foundational context:

1. The Prolegomena to the Rule of the Order. The Christian thought-forms in which this statement is cast makes The Prolegomena difficult for the religious in other faiths to appropriate. Furthermore, it is cast within a 2nd Wave paradigm and needs to be rethought to fit our own sociology. Work on this has already begun.
2. The Declaration of the Spirit Movement. This fine - historic - document needs to be unveiled so that the world can understand. Furthermore, we need to check it to see if it really fits our present world, and to be clear that it is now indeed the intent of our Order. For example, the statement of the Spirit Movement probably needs to begin where the 1968 one left off. To rework this document will give us a brand new context, courage, creativity, care, corporateness and anything else beginning with C. The geo-social spirit milieu research and the work on resurgence research projects will feed into this.
3. The Construct of the Movement. This will be the platform on which we base our mission again. It will allow us the opportunity to apply our learnings of the last ten years to our future. The IERD work will feed in here.

If this work is done in 1983-84, then it seems to us that in 1984-85 we could put our effort into creating "A Construct of the Order". That would be the year when we really put our effort into our forms, polity, etc. This would allow us then in 1985-86 to put our major effort into Operational Modes and Strategies.

In light of this 3-year approach, we are led to ask how we enable the whole Order to participate in the building of our context for the next 16 years. Without wishing to negate the efforts of committees, etc., it is hard for local houses to get involved in something if it is "sent down" to them for comment. Somehow there must be a way for people actually to get into the creation - the research, the debate, the writing and refining of these documents. We cannot afford spectators. What seems to be required is a way to allow everyone to work on everything. This means a method that will allow the local to dialogue with the global. Someone described it as a "scattering" dynamic and a "gathering" dynamic. Underlying this is of course our mandate to find ways through the issue of participatory decision-making. For us such an approach will empower the representative gatherings. We can't all be everywhere when decisions are made, and there is no need if there have been adequate ways for ensuring all the perspectives have been taken into account. We need a method that will lead us into a common context. Without such a method we could easily fly apart at the seams.

The following model is designed to allow every House to work on each of the three basic documents. They would have a month on each, and the end result would be 12 final draft statements of each of the three Documents for the Global Order Council to consider and work through. The period of three months was chosen for it was assumed that it would be difficult for the task to begin seriously until after the Models Focusing Task Force meeting in February. By working from March through May there would be ample time for the work to be done enough ahead of time to allow preparation for the July GRA.

The design is worked out to allow Houses that don't normally relate to each other to enter into dialogue. One would assume that previous documents would be kept as back-up so that at the end of three months there would be a refined document and two back-ups in each of the 12 tracks. One gets a little excited at the idea of this kind of local research. The important thing to realise is that no serious work could be done without some reading and edge research in the fields of anthropology, sociology, economy, the pluriform religious, mission and everything else. So, in fact, in the course of building our common context we will also have done a good deal of thinking about the contradictions of the planet and our approaches to their solution.

A word about the chart, using examples: in March, guild A initiates a draft of The Declaration, guild B initiates a draft of The Prolegomena, and guild C initiates a draft of The Construct. In the following month, April, guild A would work on the draft of The Construct passed on to it by guild C - and so on. Thus, Area London would work on a first draft of The Declaration in March, pass it on to Bombay Nexus and receive from Lima a first draft of The Construct which they would work on in April and pass to Lima. There would need to be a common date for mailing document drafts to the next location, e.g., the 24th of each month. It would also be helpful if previous drafts were sent on with the new draft, so that each draft would be accompanied by its back-up data for use by the next Area/Nexus in rewriting.

THREE TRACKS OF RESEARCH			
	A.	B.	C.
March	The Declaration	The Prolegomena	The Construct
April	The Construct	The Declaration	The Prolegomena
May	The Prolegomena	The Construct	The Declaration

THE GUILDS (A,B,C) AND THE TRACKS (1-12)			
	A.	B.	C.
1.	Chicago Nexus	Abidjan	Rio De Janeiro
2.	Chicago	Kinshasa	Bombay
3.	Montreal	Cairo	Suva
4.	New York	Nairobi	Caracas
5.	London	Bombay Nexus	Lima
6.	Paris	Delhi	Tokyo
7.	Frankfurt	Calcutta	Hong Kong Nexus
8.	Rome	Singapore	Havana
9.	Sydney	Mexico City	Chicago Nexus
10.	San Francisco	Hong Kong	Brussels Nexus
11.	Edmonton	Buenos Aires	Budapest
12.	Houston	Madrid	Madras