

THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE: CHICAGO
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MANIFESTO OF THE SPIRIT MOVEMENT

I. The Present Situation

The World

For the first time in human history, civilization as man has known it has entered a radically new stage where all the existing patterns of life are being called into question.

A. Cultural

The dawning of human consciousness began as a struggle by man to become master of his environment. Out of this struggle emerged the fundamental images of life which thrust forth into history the great classical cultures of the world.

Introduction. In the modern era technical man has not only completed his control over nature and expanded his communal settlements, but also has forced a global clash of cultures and given himself mastery over the process of history itself.

No longer can the structure of cultural superiority be maintained in the midst of the explosive power of universal self-consciousness.

Sense. Whereas man once lived in a closed world whose shape was predetermined, the great intellectual disciplines have now given man the tools to construct temporal models which enable him to forge out new worlds and direct the course of evolution.

Style. Whereas man once knew only the rural life of the village into which he was born, he now lives in a world city which has made possible the cosmopolitan man whose comprehensive outlook and wealth of choice have enlarged his vision and deepened his freedom.

Mood. Whereas man once lived by the given images and symbols of religion, he now has the possibility of understanding and appropriating that fact, and thereby the opportunity to affect all of life in its profoundest depths.

Conclusion. The cultural shift from consciousness to self-consciousness has thrust man into the midst of a universal revolution.

B. Economic

In the sweep of human history, the struggle for survival has been the constant theme of consciousness, and hence the economic revolution of the modern era and the emergence of the tools necessary to conquer nature has eliminated the necessity for this theme. Yet man is faced with an apparent scarcity of natural resources even though there is plenty. He is faced with a major industrial failure to process the new materials even though industry can accomplish this task. He is faced with an accelerated widening of the gap between those for whom the struggle has ceased and those for whom it has become an even more intense and bitter reality. Man is faced with a struggle for economic survival; knowing that the present arbiters of economic power have not met this radically new situation, he demands a new response to complete the revolution.

C. Political

The emergence of consciousness pushed man into the creation of societies and in the great upheavals of the pre-cultural era of the world, new tools for the structuring of society were forged out. These tools gave man the techniques for creating just orders for the well being of all. But in the post-modern era, man knows that the orders of society have cut across the well being of multitudes of people, that injustice has robbed man of possibilities and that the failure of the great systems has excluded major segments of humanity from participation in the general welfare. Man knows the impoverishment which the political power structures have foisted upon him and he demands a radical revolution to bring in universal well being.

II. The Possibilities

Man, living in the 20th Century, has possibilities present to him in ways never before imagined. These possibilities are here, and cannot be denied.

A. Cultural

The major shift of our times is in the cultural area of life, in the way in which man senses after himself, in the style of life in which he participates, and in the way in which he pictures himself.

1. Man lives today in the World City. All of life is urban, even the most distant village, thanks to modern mass communications. This opens the way to a cosmopolitan approach to

life, far broader than ever before thought possible, with a wealth of choices enlarging the field of freedom.

2. Man has the opportunity to order his world today in a new way by constructing models. Recognizing that man's mind works by projecting into the future, the intellectual disciplines have given us this tool to construct the future, and thereby control the direction of evolution.
3. Man grasps himself by means of symbols and images in a unique way. The understanding and appropriation of this fact on a universal scale gives man the opportunity to affect life to its profoundest depths.

B. Economic

Growing out of the major economic revolution of the middle ages and the lesser revolution of 19th Century industrialization, economics is open to man's direction and well-being today in a new way.

1. Man today has technological knowledge which has progressed further in the last 25 years than in the 2500 before that. It means that for the first time in history, man has the capability to overcome all the barriers to the good life.
2. Man uses electronics to multiply his efforts to such an extent that man no longer need be primarily involved in wielding the tools of production, but can be primarily concerned with the direction the economy is to go.
3. Man has within his grasp the possibility of equitable distribution of all goods, and the beginnings of the understanding of the universal participation in the ownership of resources and the fruits of production.

C. Political

With the development of rapid transportation systems and instant communications, the world has become one globe in a way that opens before man the opportunity for universal order.

1. Man has been experiencing the movement towards universal institutions of government which hold the promise of global, ordered interrelatedness.
2. Man brings self-consciousness to his actions which open the way for a new world justice which transcends the

pottiness of nationalism or even regionalism.

3. Man grasps his interrelatedness as the demand to see to the welfare of all mankind which is within the power of his intentional decision.

III. The Vision

A Human World

In appropriating the world as it is given, and the possibilities which are open to the man of the Twentieth Century, the Church has laid upon it the moral imperative to forge new models for life. Out of the conviction that the primary shift in our times is to a cultural revolution, these aims will focus primarily on that pole of existence. We purpose:

- A. That all men be able to appropriate the benefits of the revolution in the common sense of our times in terms of a comprehensive view of life as well as a share in the material abundance now available in the world.
- B. That all men be enabled to appropriate the city as their style of life, with all of its limits, but more, with all of its possibilities for humanness, as well as the opportunity to participate in forging human structures for the city, so as to live as a future-oriented person.
- C. That all men be freed to participate in universal images and symbols by which he can understand himself and accept himself as the intentional director of his evolutionary destiny.

A Missional Church

EPILOGUE

The Exhortation

Self-conscious men of the future merge from history to live your lives and die your deaths for the sake of all which shall be.

July 31, 1966