

The Forum

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THE FORUM
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PEOPLE PARTICIPATION, EMERGENCY RELIEF,
REHABILITATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
AND THE WORK OF
THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN KENYA
December, 1985
Richard Alton, Nairobi

(This is a talk delivered on December 11, 1985, at an ILO [International Labour Organisation] Conference held in Arusha, Tanzania.)

Let me first thank ILO for inviting the Institute of Cultural Affairs to participate in this conference. I am afraid I am a little overwhelmed with such a high powered gathering of experts from throughout Easter and Southern Africa, but we are extremely pleased to be asked to participate.

First, I am delighted to have a chance to come to Tanzania, the home of your former president, Mr. Julius Nyrere, a man who many, including myself, believe to be one of the key driving forces behind Africa's struggle to identify its own development strategy. Secondly, I am pleased because People Participation and Rural Development has been the focus of our Institute's work for the last 25 years and there is much we can share and learn from each other particularly now that Africa is looking so carefully at its future. My third reason is that in this time of crisis we need to pause and reflect on how we all can do our jobs better.

The focus of the Institute's work is demonstration, research and training in rural and urban development with a special focus on building local self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-confidence. We sometimes refer to this whole process as "human development." Our hypothesis has been that somewhere between 50-60% of the factors in rural development are related to human development. Now, when I use the words "human development," I'm not using the term as World Bank uses it in referring to the non-productive areas such as development in health and education but rather, for us, human

development is referring to the area which has to do with human motivation, the release of human energy, creativity, the releasing of local people's ability to be creative change agents. As you can see, I can talk a little to the issue of People's Participation and Rural Development but I am not so sure about Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation. It might even be that these arenas are not compatible--that emergency relief is what happens when you no longer have self-reliance.

Before I go further in talking about the Institute's work, I would like to give some of my own reflections on the drought. I think this is appropriate since the drought has been an intrusion in everyone's work causing us all to question our work as the very fact that the drought and the suffering has finally caused collapse of the development we have all been about. I was fascinated with a researcher I met in Nairobi who was attending a conference at UNEP on the drought. She said she had just presented a paper comparing matched communities who had received emergency aid and those who did not. The ones who did not receive aid had to work harder and use their own resources while the communities that received aid probably worked less hard to survive. The astonishing thing was that there was no difference in death rates, infant mortality and other indices between the two groups. Maybe this is just a note of caution regarding the use of emergency aid and its effect on self-reliance. More precisely, aid during a drought must be carefully used so as not to block the most creative and effective resource to stop suffering, people's own struggle to survive.

Secondly, I would like to refer to some comments by Mr. Timberlake in his new book, Africa in Crisis. He points out that "there is a temptation to separate the problems and processes of 'normal' times from the problems and process of disaster. In that sense we must always raise the question of how helpful aid is in relationship to the self-reliance of our people." As Timberlake points out, "the

famine and drought are only visible symptoms of the failure of rural development in Africa, especially the ability to engage our farmers in development. It may have taken the drought for people to realise that the system that was initially established was expensive and irrelevant." In this sense, the drought and self-reliance are very interrelated in that we have been shown how far we yet have to go in self-reliance. In addition it raises the question: are aid and macro projects undermining our people's self-reliance?

Thirdly, and I think most distressing of all, is the high lighting in the press of experts from the North who articulate a future for Africa of neo-colonialism. People are saying that since Africa has failed to make any significant development for the last 20 years and the countries have corrupt political officials, and nepotism, and since the continent is on the edge of disaster, we of the developed nations will now not only have to "tell them their problems and give them solutions, but implement their projects for them." With the drought Africa might well be forced to give up the last remnants of self-reliance. If people think Africa is just too stupid to decide its own future and must be put back into a colonial state, this may be the real issue brought about by the drought. This would be the biggest crisis Africa is now facing, that it is slowly being forced to turn over its future and its identity to the developed world.

The Institute has had the opportunity to participate in a series of dialogues sponsored by the International Institute for Labour Studies in which one of the authors, Mr. Ako of Benin made the comment, "It will accordingly be realized that the cause of Africa's problems and poverty is that the concept of development contains something androgenous, autonomous, self-centered and self-maintained. Salvation lies in devising a development model centered on the African, on the African in societies and its needs with the knowledge conferred by its cultural heritage. By reorienting

the present development strategy and putting more trust in the creative abilities of the African peoples, we shall rediscover ourselves and take control of our collective destiny. This leads towards an example of true modernism in Africa," and finally, a way to deal with our drought problem that makes sense instead of a quick-fix programme.

Now, these are just some general thoughts on self-reliance and rural development. Let me tell you about the work of the Institute growing from those concerns. I speak particularly from our work in Kenya for the last 10 years. From 1975 to 1985, we have focussed on the issue of how one goes about a massive catalysis of rural villages to be self-reliant. Our focus has been on empowerment rather than on inputs, people rather than projects. In this period, we have worked with 1,300 villages spread over 26 of the 40 districts in Kenya. With the support of the Ford Foundation, EEC, NORAD and the Swedish Co-operative Centre, we launched the project in 1979. The project up to 1984 has three main thrusts.

First, we trained over 500 young rural workers as change agents, village facilitators, with up to 350 staff at any one point. These field village workers were trained for two months and then located in village centres throughout the country. Second, the empowerment programme introduced planning and village action at the village then the sub-location and finally the location levels. In this programme every village went through identifying objectives, constraints and strategies quarter by quarter. This planning process was seen to initiate self-analysis and investigation as the key to free their creativity in their situation. The heart of the planning process was to continually ask the question, "Is this something you are really willing to do with your own money, labour and time?" After the initial planning, each month our village facilitators would visit each village to review accomplishments and help the village redesign their plan of action for the coming month.

The third thrust of the programme was the training of village leaders. After the initial planning in each village the villagers chose five leaders, and we trained these local leaders in a one-week workshop. Then, we met with them on a quarterly basis. Again, we stressed their analyses of their situation, their solutions and their implementation of their projects.

In this five year period we made many modifications in the basic approach. One was to increase participation of women through a Village Health Care Takers Training Programme. Secondly, to foster the "culture" of self-help, we tried to generate the spirit of co-operation through workshops of village leaders in which they would share their spirit, their successes and failures. During these workshops, they would also discuss the wisdom of African national leaders and use tribal stories to discuss other insights on how to be leaders. These workshops, the village facilitators, the village planning meetings, and the training of village leaders and village health care takers were all part of an effort to build a milieu, an atmosphere of local people doing their own work, a movement of villagers doing their own projects. In the final act of this catalization phase, we conducted three week training programmes to launch the villages on their own as a final sign of self-reliance.

The second phase began in 1984 with focusing on facilitating the rural structures to begin to use the new self-reliance of the villagers. The question to be answered was how can the government, the co-operatives, the established self-help groups be made receptive to these newly empowered villagers. We had energized villagers to speak for themselves but can we also facilitate the structures to listen to them?

First, Kenya is in the midst of a de-centralization scheme by the government called the District Focus Programme. Central to this programme is increasing the participation of local people in the planning, and implementation of local projects.

We have joined with the government in setting up a training school to facilitate the forming of Sub-Location Development Committees in areas where we have worked with villages.

Second, we have begun to work with co-operatives. We are working to introduce participatory planning but have recently begun to discuss how we can put the co-operative movement back into the co-operatives. One has to make a distinction between the Co-operative Movement and the Co-operative Societies; the Co-operative Movement being the activity of people working together, sharing voluntary labour to reach goals commonly set by the people, sharing risks and responsibilities as well as resources. The Co-operative Society has been the structure to facilitate the Co-operative Movement but is not necessarily the same. This, I think, is a critical differentiation since in many instances, if you were to raise the question of where you see the activities of the Co-operative Movement, you would not point to some co-operative societies which have high rigid, top-down institutions with mainly paid staff running an organisation, little of which could be said to be activities of a people's movement. Now we are working to see if we can put the movement back into the co-operative structure through participatory management planning. Also, we are looking into doing a series of demonstrations with large coffee co-operatives that have many factories, focussing on the factories as the place where this movement aspect can be re-vitalised through programmes such as mass mobilization of members for projects, reemphasising volunteer workdays and using individual membership resources for funding such projects.

Third, the self-help spirit or spirit of "harambee" is very strong in Kenya's rural areas. Self-help groups are found throughout the country and are very successful in many cases. It is incredible the wisdom and creativity of local people that is present at the grass roots. In 1984, to tap this "home grown wisdom" we joined with the Kenya National Council of Social Services to identify some of the

most successful projects and share the practical story of their success with other self-help groups. This "sharing approaches that work" programme includes the nomination of successful projects by local officers of the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, selection of the most successful projects based on a questionnaire filled out by the members of each project, and site visits to a number of the projects and then the documentation of the project through writing up their history, their learnings, their future plans and the personal history of one of their leaders. Through this programme we hope to contribute to building the mythology that the way to do development is through self-help and to provide the kind of action-reflection process that is so necessary for development. The leadership profile is seen also to provide a new set of "heroes" to encourage other leaders to come forth. In this project, we are trying to awaken a new self-consciousness of people participation, a new awareness of people's place in development. There is no better stimulant for people participation than concrete demonstrations of people like themselves standing up to tackle contradictions through self-mobilisation, not waiting for external resources or privileged deliverers of outside services.

A spin-off of this programme of "sharing approaches that work" has been a scheme to take one of these successful projects and replicate it over a wide area. We discovered one village that had done a very successful water project through its own expertise, time, resources and labour. We felt this project had great possibility for lateral expansion (by word of mouth or otherwise) if properly catalyzed. This particular village had learned from another group a way to build water storage tanks for roof-water catchment, or what is sometimes called "rain-harvesting." They found that by using a local vine to form the frame of the tank and then by cementing, they could build a tank of 1,800 gallons capacity for \$120. They formed a water group and used what we call a merry-go-round system. They

collected Kshs 50/- (\$3) a month from each member and then drew one member's name every month until each one had a tank. We decided to facilitate the replication of this successful approach by holding workshops with groups that wanted to build similar tanks. When a group was willing to set up a merry-go-round savings programme for tanks, we built a demonstration tank with them on a partnership basis. In the first year, this replication process has been a great success.

I would like to end my presentation by saying that I think Africa has a great role to play in the future of the planet and, as one newspaper article put it, "if you believe that, you know the Gods were not crazy when they placed mankind in Africa."



CONFIRMED ORDER REFLECTIONS
APRIL, 1986
JOHN STRINGHAM, FRANKFURT

Introduction

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- Postscript

Introduction:

This paper is a contribution to the dialogue on the Order forms which has been going on since G.O.C. 1984 and earlier. It is not a direct response to the proposals made in the Hong Kong Task Force meeting nor the letter from Jim Oberg on this subject since it was "in the works" before these came out. The tone of urgency from the meeting, however, has gotten it into this form quicker than might otherwise have been the case (This is to give credit to those events for challenging the author's procrastination not to make the usual depreciatory comments about it being hasty work, etc. though it is that too). But it is an addition hopefully to the dialogue Jim called for and George and Ruthe Yost have already contributed to.

The intent of this paper is to offer some other perspectives from which to view the Order Forms discussion and, especially, the Confirmed Order; **"the NORM for committment and covenant the Order desperately needs."** It examines certain archaic screens relative to society and the human journey in the belief that recent work in psychology and sociology bear them out. In particular, it looks at phasality as that affects both individuals and the community itself. Its thesis is that the "8 forms of

the Order" discussion of GOC 1984 was unsatisfactory then and afterward because it confused forms of engagement in carrying out the common mission with stages in the Journey of Commitment.

In doing so, it should be stated at the beginning that this is the author's perspective that one of the greatest needs the Order has today is to "demythologise itself." And that the analytical tools of the social sciences can enable the Order to see different aspects of reality than what it has seen up to now.

As a precedent for this, there is the financial analysis of the funds that preceded the GOC 1984. Only because the analysis was thorough and found out what the Order was spending money on in detail (what kind of health costs, incurred by whom, where, etc.) was the Council able to see that proposals like the Health desk as well as more income were part of the solution. Individual order members were also confronted, quite objectively, with the fact their collective decisions to be unhealthy affected the financial health of the whole body. A similar job was done that summer by the Health teams relative to the physical health of the Order and where there were structural deficiencies (considerable more anaemia among order women in India and Africa, etc.). Again this permitted the Order to acknowledge the problem, repent, and change.

The hope of this paper is that this self-examination will continue by looking at actual sociological patterns in the Order and reflecting on how they influence its ways of operating including its perceptions of what its "desperate needs" are.

I. The Present Discussion and the Order's Past:

There is a hunger for certainty. We yearn for a sworn brotherhood/sisterhood. Yet, it would seem that a simple declaration of permanent commitment by itself is not enough - or else it would have had more power in the past. Anyone who has been "around for awhile" remembers names of dozens of people who put on silver rings and who are no longer here, including

first teachers, first priors, etc. These people, at least some of them, understood themselves to be declaring their intention to be "the Order unto death." If the goal is a Confirmed order that can be a foundation for the Order, a "let's standup and be counted" is too shallow. It didn't hold in the past and it lets the Order and Order members get away with not doing their homework. Like wanting to have the passing grade without having to study and pass the exam. (Jim Oberg's proposal does deal with this insofar as individuals are concerned.)

What are we after then?

The 1984 Council deliberations were informative here. One of the hot issues the polity group had to deal with was the priorship question. Many aspects were raised - how many singles did not get to be priors, how few third world people were priors, etc. Underneath all of these remarks was the undertone that an "old guard" had been "in charge" too long. It was relatively easy to provide some arguments against one or more of these issues, but they never defused the issue. This was because one of the issues not discussed in this connection was the phasal question. People who have been ten years or so in the Order (whatever actual age they are, although being near or past 40 years of age intensifies this) have no way to measure the Order's awareness of their "coming of age" except through priorship and other symbolic assignments. When a certain phase of people are "in power" and the Order is shrinking, at least as far as the number of "houses," the opportunities for having a "coming of age in the Order" symbolised are fewer and fewer. This should not be confused as it so often is with "power hunger." It is not. It is a legitimate need to be given a chance to grow through assumption of greater responsibility - and knowing that the Order symbolizes that by making such an assignment. All the short courses in the world, "everyone is a prior" etc., don't deal with this. Nor does increasing the number of people marked as priors or on commissions,

etc.: "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." - Gilbert and Sullivan, The Gondoliers. In the early 1970s the number of locations was doubling every year and with them the number of authentic priorship opportunities, opportunities to have one's life demanded not only in terms of programme but also in terms of formation, of "building the order." Currently, the number of houses and number of people in the order are shrinking. So this mode of symbolising transition within the Order is not very useful right now.

The decision of some mature Order members in 1984 to request not to be assigned priorship functions created a little more room for this to continue to function. Their action too is worth reflecting on because it points to the quality of detachment from and security in one's role in the Order that might be the marks of the next transition, to the Elder role within the Order.

The question of phasality in the Order therefore has two points of transition that seem to be important - the transition from initiate to associate and from associate to confirmed. And the apparent difficulty with the initiate phase (who is one, how to symbolise, who decides, etc. - for that matter, the difficulty in North America and Europe especially to get initiates) may be more a symptom of the "pile up" at these other points (if I don't know where I am on my journey through the Order, how can I invite anyone else to participate?), than the root problem.

II. The Archaic Screens"

The Hindu understanding of the Life Phases is a helpful screen for looking at the Order forms discussion. It is psychologically sound, as the West is beginning to find out (hence, the number books on "mid-life" crisis) and reveals a great deal in the inter'ation of the four. The four phases: Student, Householder, Teacher and Wandering Saint are not only chronological passages of time, they are also acts of will: the Student must decide to practice what he/she has learned in assuming the duties of parent, spouse

and community member; the Householders must let go of their children, their possessions, their community status and assume the role of guides not political authorities; the Teacher, finally, lets go of even the role of teacher to be the completely unattached embodiment of what he/she has taught.

The Psychological screen of Life Crisis is another helpful one. The version here is reproduced from The Road Less Travelled but there are similar versions to be found elsewhere.

The examples after each point are from the history of the Order. None of them are bad. Peck and most other psychologists would suggest they are necessary.

1. The state of infancy, in which no external demands need be responded to - the early days as a student group.
2. The fantasy of omnipotence - the global problemats, world grid, the songs.
3. The desire for total possession of one's parents - we are the only true interpreters of the 20th century theological revolution, why doesn't the established church wake up and acknowledge us?
4. The dependency of childhood - old financial model, "development raises the money, it goes into the global pot, each child gets an equal, fair share."
5. Distorted image of one's parents - the local church, the body of Christ, the hope of the world.
6. The omnipotentiality of adolescence - we can do anything we decide to do.
7. The "freedom" of uncommittment - don't decide until the last moment, we don't need to be in a project more than two years.
8. The agility of youth - two suitcases, one-year assignments, opening and closing houses, in and out of nations.
9. The sexual attractiveness and/or potency of youth - gatherings of 500 or 1000 people, most under 40, eventfulness, sense of power to do anything.

10. The fantasy of immortality - the Thousand-year Order. The Order is our greatest strategy, we will build now to be ready by 2004 to "be a key player in the reframing of the whole civilizational adventure."

11. Authority over one's children - delaying leaving HDPs or turning over control (including responsibility for finances) for fear they would collapse without us. (Significantly, the oldest child - 5th City - is the one we have held on to longest.)

12. Various forms of temporal power - the power of being a facilitator in a LENS with a large corporation or agency, especially when they invite us to continue as consultants.

13. The independence of physical health - ignoring health issues in people until they become epidemic.

14. The self and life itself - for what would the Order be prepared to go out of being?

The Social Process is another screen that is helpful to use. The Initiates can be seen as the Economic or foundational dynamic. Without constant inflow of new potential order members the Order stagnates and eventually dies. The Associate phase is the Political - the locus of most strategic planning and programmatic action. The "up front" people in most locations. The ones who are best known by power structures. The Confirmed Order is the Cultural pole. They guard, nurture and pass on the context of the Order. To do this they are freer of the economic support of the Order. They are less the locally rooted face of the Order, but its global nobodiness. They "give up" positions of political authority and social significance in order to embody the Global Order.

III. Order's Journey:

Perhaps the Order as a group, at least the core of it as it exists at present can also be seen to have gone through the life phase - now perhaps entering the "adult" phase, leaving behind adolescence, the sense of pride in your energy and

strength, the belief that there are no barriers, the Order's youthful arrogance (e.g. in doing the 232, ignoring the work of existing groups like the Jamkhed). Now, we are aware that we are not able to do everything at least not well. We choose, and work at what we do choose. If this is true, it is worth remembering first, how necessary these stages of the journey were and are for anyone who enters the Order at any time. Second, it will be important to recognize that making decisions when the core of the Order has entered this phase would have to be done in such a way that the dynamics of the other phase are preserved, for the Order, unlike the individual, can only "go on living" if all of the phases have their place within it, and shape it all the time. A visual image for this is that of the representations of Brahma, the god of creation with four faces but one head and the four faces give him 360 degree vision. If this is true then the 4 phases of Order experience need to be present in each Primary Unit - ideally in each location team. Again, this is not chronological age of persons but years in the Order and decision to be that phase (though the 4 phases in chronological terms are also helpful).

IV. Phases of the Order Covenant:

(Note: None of this would be rigid, but the flexibility to waive any of these guidelines for Initiates or Associates should reside at the level of the Priory and Order Life Commission responsible for that Primary Unit.)

The Initiate Phase is one of learning and of obedience. It needs to be long enough for initial enthusiasm and romanticism to be put to the test. It also should involve thorough basic training and global exposure.

This indicates a period more like 4 years than one or two. It could be done through the International volunteer and national volunteer forms as part of the 4 years, but only if these have been followed by two years as one who has declared their

intention to explore a permanent membership in the Order.

If someone is illiterate or without basic (generally secondary) school education, they would acquire it in this phase of the Order. The Order would make sure there was time available for the initiate member to do this. It would not finance such training. The financial obligation of an initiate would vary greatly, but it would at a minimum involve a willingness and the actual opportunity to be assigned to some income-earning activity (a job, a role in a venture, part of a programme marketing team) or the willingness to contribute monthly to the Order from family resources.

The Associate Phase is the period where one has the greatest social responsibilities both in the family and in the community. It is the period when these responsibilities are paramount. For the Order this should be the period when people are responsible for programme development and delivery, priorship in houses, cadres, finance commissions, etc.

People from this phase should be of the Panchayat elected every two years by people from this form and initiates. The relationship of people in this to assignments should be one of *stabilitas* - a willingness to be in one place for 10 years if necessary to ensure the growth of the Order and its mission. Financially, people in this category would be covered by Order funds for health, children's education, etc., but would understand themselves primarily responsible for earning those funds and the support of the Order in general. People who had joined the Order would marry and have children (if they desired them) in this phase of the Order.

People could have personal assets, financial and otherwise in this phase without the Order having to know how much, etc. If a person has joined the Order without post-secondary training, it is in this Order phase that they would acquire such training. The Order would work out with the person a feasible training model. Completion of formal education and

training would be a necessary prerequisite for the Confirmed phase.

The Confirmed - This is the elder role, the point in life when the family commitments are basically fulfilled and social status no longer matters. In Japan, this may be equivalent to the senior company people who are assigned training roles, as are elders in tribes. The role is not one of executive authority but of counselling. As such, people have to be able to take the time to consider what training is required, what guidance can and should be given; time that may be as much devoted to prayer and contemplation as to building constructs. As long as we image the "career" of an Order member as one in which they take on ever-increasing amounts of programme responsibility this care for formation will never happen, and we as an order will continue to suffer.

The Post-Confirmed (the Translated, the Transposed?) Maybe, if only for the sake of following the Hindu model to completion, there is a fourth phase - one where the Order member is beyond any formal responsibility, except perhaps the most practical ones, their health permitting. At this phase, one expects the wisdom of the sage, the wise one, the one beyond the teacher, the Don Juan type. The Order has such people now and in the past. It never gives them the role, they just became it. So, this phase isn't one to worry about, it tends to take care of itself. Hence, the somewhat facetious title what is a name for what is essentially invisible or sheer incarnation?

V. Proposals for the Confirmed Order Phase:

Issues this model attempts to address:

- an order made up of families with children
- pluriformity in regard to education level
- global assignability
- continental team strength
- limited usefulness of the global assignability criteria at present when a sizeable number of the Order do not for reasons of education, visa, etc.

have any likelihood of participating -the difficulty of anchoring the Order (not a programme) in a culture

- Overemphasis on the political dynamic within the order to the weakening of the cultural

- safeguarding the context, the original "charism," of the Order

- ensuring that the status of confirmed is a radical decision of detachment, obedience and single-mindedness

- holding creative tensions within the Order between the "new" and the "old" without allowing either to dominate

- dealing with the question of who gets education and how much from an equitable screen.

THE GUIDELINES:

Role in the Order:

- the primary function of the Confirmed Order would be the formation of order members, hence the restrictions following on priorship assignments and on programme responsibilities

- Confirmed Order would as far as possible, be less responsible for major programme or income arenas, but would be mostly responsible for training within such arenas

- Confirmed Order people would not be given formal priorship assignments, though they could be assigned on a temporary basis to deal with emergencies

- no Primary Unit would exist or be created that did not have 6 (or some other minimum) Confirmed Order members assigned to it. They would not have to live in the same house. There would be provision for them to meet for 7 days annually to reflect on the care of the Order.

Prior Conditions:

- minimum of 10 years in the Order

- Confirmed Order have completed education to a post-secondary diploma or degree level, or the equivalent in socially recognised technical skills acquired "on the job." The key factor would be the personal sense of competence and completion of the Order Member. It would not preclude being assigned

to further training which the Order saw as helpful to the Order, but the confirmed Order member's personal stance would be one of detachment from the possibility.

- disposition of personal wealth. Order members could keep assets worth \$1,000 obtained from family or pre-Order work plus any savings accumulated on the Order savings scheme. The disposition could be in the form of a gift to the Order, or to extended family or to children, including the creation of a trust for children providing it is used for their benefit and not for the parents and providing the assets going into it have been declared to the Order (one way might be for the trustees to be people other than the parents).

Elements of the vow:

- Confirmed Order vow only possible if one has declared their intention never to marry and never to have children or, if married, if both parents are ready to declare it. If there are children, they must be over 18 and the family declare it does not intent to have any more

- willingness to accept any assignment

- declaration of independence from extended family claims

- willingness to declare significant gifts of personal property and other assets, at time of receiving them and to dispose of them in accordance with Order guidelines (no personal claims on lottery windfalls after Associate phase).

Confirmed Role in Order Polity:

- two Confirmed Order maximum on Panchayat, elected for 4 years, one every two years, by those in the confirmed phase. The election would be by maximum of votes cast. Members could serve once in a lifetime.

- Confirmed Order meet every 4 years at end of a global council for one week.

- The Confirmed Order members would be 3 of 5 members of the Order Life Commission in any PU, one of the members of all other commissions.

-These assignments would be made by the confirmed order assigned to that continent.

Care Obligation of the Order for the Confirmed:

-The Order would be responsible for all health costs of Confirmed Order members and would keep each Confirmed Order fully covered for health and hospitalisation.

"Worst Case" Scenario:

-If someone chose to "leave" the Order while in the confirmed phase (for whatever reason, to study, to marry or care for sick parents, etc.) and later wished to rejoin the Order, they would rejoin as Associates and would not be eligible for the Confirmed status until 5 years had passed). A similar rule would apply in the case of marriage, having further children, receiving further assets and not disclosing and disposing of them, etc.

Note: At present I personally would not qualify for the confirmed phase. However those who could be it would have my trust. And it would give both a practical and a volitional screen for me to consider making that decision in the years to come.

VI. Implications for other Order Phases:

For Initiates:

1. Initiates would have access to Order wisdom in any PU, because there would not be one without six or more people for the Confirmed Order phase assigned there.

2. Order Formation would be "handled" - by an ongoing structure that was "built-in" to every PU, people with the vocational responsibility (the will plus the assignment) and the time, experience and training to ensure that Order Formation happened.

3. Initiates would have a symbol of what it meant to journey in the Order.

For Associates:

1. We would stabilize the Order presence in cultures and regions, and permit the broader Order forms to grow and the Order's societal impact to spread.

2. Maturation in responsibility would be furthered as this phase found themselves playing the major programme leadership roles.

3. The sense of failure for not being able to do the Order Training required and carry out societal impact programmes and care for families would be relieved.

4. People with children would be freed of the guilt they have lived under when resisting the "pack your two suitcases and go tomorrow to Rong Rong" demand. They would understand that that is not their role.

Conversely, the tendency to leave a disaster for someone else to clean up, or to run away from the demand to create the global in every local would be challenged by the vow of stability. And the Confirmed Order presence changing regularly, would be the strongest counterbalance possible to the danger of parochial thinking.

For Confirmed Order:

People who have married the Order until death would have a way to express that decision clearly, becoming in fact an elite within the Order, but a serving elite, ones who more in the image of Leo, Francis, Brother Lawrence, Nanak and Gandhi, than Patton, Napoleon, or the Godfather.

For Transposed:

They would smile benignly and perhaps laugh a little.

VII. Relationship of the Phases of Covenant to the Forms of Service:

The above discussion began with the hope that it would help to clarify the discussion of the 8 forms of the Order. It put forward the perspective that the 8 forms are a mixture of covenantal phases and forms of relating to the social task. Therefore, it makes sense to look at the 8 forms and see how the understanding might be altered.

If the categories Initiate, Associate, and Confirmed are now seen to be phases of covenant, the remaining forms are clearly something

else. The forms of: International volunteer, National volunteer, Global Advisor, Regional Colleague and Affiliate Order are descriptive of a form of service not of degree of covenant. (The two "volunteer" categories are not necessarily time-limited.) The question of whether someone is within the Initiate, Associate or Confirmed phase within one of these Forms of Service would become something for a Primary Unit of Continental Priory/Order Life Commission to decide. The clear implication is that someone can be in the Initiate or Associate or Confirmed forms and not be residing in a house with others of the Order.

Perhaps at this point it is good to state openly that one of the undercurrents in this whole discussion that the Order still evades discussing publicly is the question of whether or not it is willing to be an order of people resident in gathered communities and "scattered" or not.

This debate is not a new one but there are many aspects to it that make it hard to discuss. More than anything else, there is the memory in some of the older Order members (now less than half of the Order in the assignments book and the 8 forms probably) of the Guardians in North America (later the Extended Order), and of the mixture of motives behind that structure. There is also the memory of comments of Joseph Wesley Mathews like (freely paraphrased from memory, Order archivists please document and correct): "If you do not understand that you have to ask that guardian to pack his bags and move into the house next week, then you do not understand what it means to be a revolutionary. You have to do this to save his soul." This was a powerful statement when made and has an eventfulness content quite apart from the words themselves that it is impossible to convey to someone who was not there or who has no direct experience of the charisma of that man to enable them to recreate the eventfulness. (This is also one of the deep underlying currents in many debates - whether anyone who did not experience the charism of JWM can ever be trusted

with the shaping of the Order, whether in fact they can ever be the Order.)

Maybe here is a point where there is no way out other than to decide: yes or no. If yes, then it has to be understood that living in a house is not the norm of being the Order. If no, then people know where they stand.

However, there are new dimensions to this discussion, that could be considered, because, if it is only discussed in light of the 1970's, largely North American, experience, it could be that it will be culturally and socially limited and out of date in relation to the missional configurations the Order has had to invent as it has become more and more global and pluriform.

One example, but a very important one: the ICA boards in other countries. Especially in countries where there is socially and politically a great sensitivity to a colonial past and current economic and cultural imperialism from Europe and America, it has been impossible for the Order to operate without a public, legal face made of people indigenous to the nation where the Order wishes to work. Often it has been thought to be very important that such a Board be made up primarily or exclusively of people not in the house (if there is a house). In few if any of these cases is there any "veto power" or other legal control in the hands of "symbolic" (to use the old term for purposes of historical clarity) Order members. This is a great departure from the 1970s and the very clear opinion of the Founder that the Symbolic Order should always have actual control of such boards: "the Order must always keep control of the Institute finances. If you don't, you're not revolutionary" (from the apochryphal Sayings of a 20th Century Structural Revolutionary attributed to Joseph W. Mathews). So, logically, either the Order is not revolutionary anymore because in fact many of its national boards are made up of people outside houses, or they are within what JWM meant by the word "Order" and therefore revolutionaries themselves or

JWM never said this or anything like it, or he was wrong.

The reality is that the Order has come to include such people among its members. It has to. As the recent struggle in the Manila PU, especially the most recent letter from J. Armas, indicates, such people in time of major crisis are, well, simply crucial. They can't be mere rubber-stamps; they have to understand fully what is going on and why and that means they have absorbed and accepted a fairly deep context about what the Order is and is about, or else they would never risk their reputations, connections, even legal liability the way they have. How can it be said such people are not in the Order? And if, they have operated this way for years, how can it not be contemplated that at some point they journey to a degree of commitment which they and the others in the Order will wish to symbolize in some fashion?

This has more undramatic, mundane implications. If the Order is pluri-form in this sense, then all of its structures will need to be looked at with the screen of all the forms as well as all the phases in mind. For instance, to go back to the financial question, members of other forms than the Associate and Confirmed cohabiting will have to participate in creating budgets, raising money, deciding how it is spent and spending it. At a "local" level many cadres and regional offices (mostly but not only in North America) have done this for quite some time, usually within an understanding of covenant that had them also contributing to "global fund raising." The question of participating in electing the panchayat, of having a voice in recommendations about purchase of property, of being delegated to attend planetary network gatherings as bona fide representatives of the Order from a location if in the confirmed form the question of the Order's care for them financially, especially if up until that time they have been under another regime - these and more are raised and will not be easy to answer.

VIII. My Own Journey:

I began my journey with the Order: Ecumenical in 1969. It was a time of infatuation with the Order, quite similar to "falling in love" as Dr. M. Scott Peck in The Road Less Travelled analyzes it. This period, which lasted until 1975 or thereabouts, was succeeded by a more "adult" relationship an awareness caused in part by two memorable confrontations with more senior Order members where I was asked to be a "good Order member" by their definition of that term and I, in weighing up the situation, decided that to be a "good Order member" in those situations required another kind of decision. Thus I became aware that the Order is not some "mystic band of brothers" imbued with "magical" powers, but is the collection of each individual's decision to be "religious" and express it in this particular form, and that I am responsible for interacting with all of these other individuals to shape it.

There still are a few who have a "magical" aura about them for me, but most I now see and experience as my colleagues, likely to be wrong often (as I now see our founder was wrong at least twice in my personal experience) and prone to despair, resentment, bitterness and weakness just like me. I look forward to the day when I might be beyond merely the sense of burden and want to share what I have learned with "the newer ones" exploring with them the new Reality (and some aspects of a much older reality).

Postscript: One of the many helpful points in the Hong Kong Task Force's activities was the work that was done on the Core Teams concept. Without commenting on the correctness of any details, it may be that this approach to the Confirmed Order might give another way of approaching the core teams question. It is hard at present to imagine how a configuration/assignments task force could consense on who was or wasn't part of such a core and then obtain the consent of the whole Order. It would require a judgemental assessment not only of Order members' skills, but also of their commitment or else

the configuration would be meaningless. Skills, facilitation, bookkeeping or whatever, that are not accompanied by form commitment mean a team that has breakdown built-in, that means a team that has to come to the Global Order a year or two later (or less) cap in hand begging for more people to replace the "irreplacable" ones who left. And, since these are in fairly limited quantity if Hong Kong's exercise at this kind of judgment was at all accurate, they wouldn't be available without weakening another "Core Team" and therefore the Order would find itself talking about still fewer PUs and the downward spiral would continue.

If the Confirmed Order is used as the anchors of PU, the exercise would not be less painful, but might be more objective: How many people have declared their willingness to be the Confirmed Order and fulfilled the requirements? Divide by 6 or 8 or whatever the minimum number is (it is probably less than 16) and that would give with minor adjustments (the 2 on the Panchayat, a few on global task forces if that Hong Kong recommendation is accepted) the number of Primary Unit cores around which a team with the kind of skills required for particular missional tasks could be built. It would be a much more flexible approach if there were people in other forms of service than the Confirmed residentially cohabiting who were included.

THE ISSUE OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

May, 1986

John C. Montgomery, Chicago

I want to share briefly some of the images emerging in academic circles about the issue of religious pluralism. I will do this in two ways: first, a few comments on the question of strategy; second, an abbreviated bibliography of helpful materials that I have run across in the last year.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the former director of The Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard and Islamic scholar, has described the issues concerning the Christian's relationship to the other great faiths "as bit an issue, almost, as the question of how one accounts for evil...We explain the fact that the Milky Way is there by the doctrine of creation, but how do we explain the fact that the Bhagavad Gita is there?" Nor is this dilemma a of multiple claims to truth solely a Christian's problem with our theological contention of being the "universal religion." For example Hinduism claims to be the "highest everlasting religion" and Buddhist colleagues are challenging our personal images of God as the last stage of idolatry that must be given up before one encounters "ultimate reality."

Pluralism is a problem. The dialogue between adherents of various faiths is no more complex than questions by the presence of both first and third world peoples in the order, of male/female realities or the sexual spectrum that our gay and lesbian friends are trying to get us to see. Nevertheless, some would argue that these religious claims to be the truth are foundational to images that will accommodate such diversity either in the order or the community at large. It is not my purpose to argue this point in this letter. I simply use it as the starting point of my reflections.

What strategy most effectively underlies practical experimentation in spirit life so that a lively dialogue about these issues might be fostered? How do we become open to, even comfortable with

diversity yet not give in to the seductive trap of "liberal" tolerance where everybody does their own thing and we do nothing together. How do we not resort in our despair to the more vicious attempt to force unity by weeding out that which is different.

Several writers have recently attempted to categorize the approaches to this question. Let me highlight three. The most familiar is the "history of religion" approach. Here, dialogue proceeds by distilling the essence of various religious practices and doctrines. Then these are compared and contrasted to reveal the "latent" unity of all religious faiths. So we discover the common theme of "return to illud tempus" ala Eliade, or the common functions of mythology that Joseph Campbell describes.

The advantage of this approach is its illumination of our mutual yearning for the "sacral dimension." We find that we are all "homo religiousus." Yet the vision of unity is eclipsed by these very studies for what is often revealed is not how similar we are but how different. Our work with objectifying Ur images, I take to be an attempt to name this diversity. Similarly, liturgical experiments that take the framework of Christian worship and "flesh it out" with indigenous poetry such as the Tagore ritual work because of the common water table that underlies this poetry. However, this is but the first step. The framework of confession, thanksgiving and dedication is not the only map of this territory. As one of my Buddhist colleagues replied to questions about Daily Office, "Yes he could ground it and understood the dynamics that were pointed to with the symbols and metaphors. No, this was not his worship."

Recently a very different strategy has begun to be articulated, call it the unity of the esoteric religious. Frijof Schuon best represents this approach. It has recently been made popular by Huston Smith. There are two modes of religious expression: 1) the esoteric, which seeks the unity of the self and the ultimate, and 2) the exoteric, which

is faith manifest in forms and doctrines. Unity is found in recognizing the common reality of our esoteric mode of piety. Mystics of the world unite! Our results with the powerful address of the poetry of Kazantzakis is a testimony about this common experience. I take such a presupposition to underline our experimentation with meditation. Its advantage is the simplicity of the spirit life experiment, for it avoids the difficulty of wading through the mire of the exoteric. Writers like Wilbur are mapping this journey. Again, it allows us to "come out of the closet" regarding our religious heritage. However, does it go far enough?

How long can we put off dealing with the mire? Paul Knitter reminds us that the Eastern fascination with the Western mystics such as Meister Eckhart reduces the dialogue with Christianity to its heretics. John Cobb, in the same vein, comments that even Thomas Merton was ambivalent as to the function of such practices.

Another strategy is found in the writing of Wilfred Cantwell Smith. He also would want to avoid the exoteric, as accretions that are not essential. But the focus of his work is in shifting perspectives. We must move beyond the image of "religion," to a colloquy (he prefers this to dialogue as it implies a wider conversation) which proceeds with sharing our faith. We discover that the test of the truth of the Qu'ran or Jesus Christ as revelation, is its capacity to speak to us in this moment. I can't be both Christian and a Muslim at the same time. But perhaps I can be Christian and Muslim-like simultaneously as I live my life in a basic faith relation to creation.

I am particularly drawn to Smith's work for it deals with the issue by exploding our traditional images. We should imagine history in the singular, or religion as an adjective rather than a noun. With these shifts of paradigm, we begin to create the environment for healthy sharing. Nevertheless, the sharing will finally have to face the questions of

diversity or miss the opportunity to mine each others traditions for rich treasures.

Such sharing must find a way to discover and celebrate the uniqueness that such diversity highlights. Such sharing must also, be willing to raise the hard questions of the adequacy of the "mode of being in the world" that the symbols and metaphors reveal. Such sharing is dependent on each participants' willingness to witness to ones' tradition. I recall John Donne's poetry of the necessity of having a homeland before one can journey to the wonderland of the other.

At the same time such sharing requires that one is willing to critique that tradition as well. What are the criteria for such evaluation? Sally McFague in her Methaphorical Theology identifies two issues today in relation to the task appropriating tradition. One is the question of idolatry, that is, first the tendency to reduce a tradition to its dominant metaphors and then impose a literal meaning on its interpretation. The second is the question of irrelevance. Here she means not simply the kind of degeneration to which all symbols are subject, so that "each generation must discover their meaning anew," but the fact that many groups feel left out of the common life by the choice and hegemony of the metaphors used within the religion. So, continual reliance on patriarchial images creates a male religion, first excluding, then finally failing to relate to women's reality. It is not enough to change the pronouns, although that must be done. One must search the archives of the heritage and discover alternate images that are more inclusive. It seems to me that such a screen of questions is helpful as one confronts the adequacy of truth claims, and such a discussion entirely appropriate, even necessary for the agenda of the dialogue between world religions.

I don't know what has become of our talk of "transposition." Could we build a Buddhist RS-I etc? Are we discovering that one has already been built, for example in our willingness to be taught in the research assemblies. But the conversation must go

both ways. What a wild time could be had if, for example, 10 order members spent a weekend at a sufi retreat, then, 10 sufies came to RS-I. What a great reflection could be held, after those two weekends.

In these comments, I have not tried to present a program, that would be both arrogant and premature, rather I have tried to frame a question. Let me close with the following list of books that I have found seminal to my own brooding. Thanks again for the willingness to keep this discussion going.

Cobb, John. Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Buddhism and Christianity. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982. Excellent book that moves beyond simplistic images of unity, also uses John Donne's "passing over and return" as his framework.

Coward, Harold. Pluralism: Challenge to World Religions. MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985. Surveys the issue from the perspective of various religious traditions, not just Christianity.

Hick, John. God Has Many Names. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982. Theocentric Copernican revolution in Christology.

Hick, John and Hebblewaithe, Brian (eds.). Christianity and Other Religions. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980. Includes articles by Barth, Moltmann, Rahner and others, a good primer.

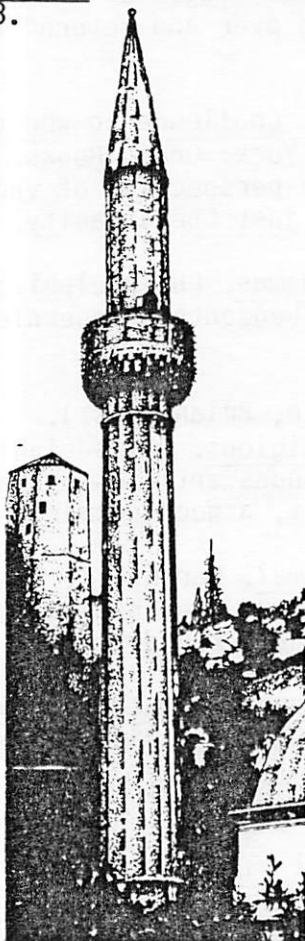
Knitter, Paul. No Other Name?. MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985. Best survey and critique of current discussion that I have found.

Panikar, Raimundo. The Unknown Christ of Hinduism. MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1964. He released a new updated edition last fall.

Schuon, Frithjof. The Transcendent Unity of Religions. New York: Harper and Row, 1975. See especially the Introduction by Huston Smith.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. Towards a Global Theology. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1981. His latest of numerous volumes.

Tillich, Paul. "The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian." in The Future of Religions. edited by Jerald Brauer, New York: Harper and Row, 1966. His last series of lectures before his death, delivered after several months work with Mircea Eliade. see also Christianity and the Encounter with World Religions. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.





Dessin: Hector Catolico

*«La mère constitue l'agent de santé par excellence -
non pas en termes de formation ou de qualification
mais en termes de temps et d'amour,
par la connaissance intime qu'elle a de ses propres enfants,
ainsi que par la diversité des «services intégrés» qu'elle leur offre
et la présence permanente qu'elle apporte dans leur vie.»*

— La situation des enfants dans le monde 1985 — UNICEF