

Continental Presidium
of the North American Regions
December, 11, 1970

ON BEING THE MOVEMENT

AS THE LOCAL CHURCH

There's a struggle as to where we need to go as a continental presidium this year. We've heard the task laid out for us by the Council V Policy Statement. We've heard the context of the Local Church Experiment. And here we are. I wish that character who was in my group dynamics class in seminary were here. He was the one who after four or five sessions of blood-letting, letting everybody know where you hurt, said to me, 'My problem with you is that you always act as if you had the world by the tail.' I wish that gentleman could be with me today, and see the description or content that has been placed on that world that I had by the tail.

Or put it this way--I love to go teaching RS-1's and PLC's, particularly with people that I don't know or have never taught with. I love the anonymity of not being held accountable, or if it's being held accountable, only in that time and that place where I know I'll never see those people again. I wish that fellow from my group dynamics class could be with me now as I stand before the man who first created--recruited me for a PLC, before the first gentleman I ever heard stand before this body and give the State of the Movement address, before character who two or three years ago when I got my baptism into this continental presidium function, while I was standing out in the hall trying to figure out whether I was going to stay for that evening's session or not (that's one of the rare privileges we Chicago people take advantage of by our in's and out's), he came up and said, 'We would like you to hold the business session this evening.' And if his name hadn't been the same as mine I might have rebelled, but knowing it was the same as mine I grabbed him by the collar and said in great turmoil, 'What am I going to do? I don't know anything about the function of this outfit. I sit back there most of the time trying to figure what the language is all about--presidium, galaxy, cluster, sector--I don't know what's going on.' But I was supposed to lead a business session. Then I remember the person in the meeting who sat right in front. He was six-foot-six or seven or eight--and I didn't see anybody else.

I didn't have any idea how to run a meeting. I knew I'd taken a course once that said we ought to do it by consensus, but I didn't have the foggiest. How do you take a consensus? So I asked somebody, 'How do you take a consensus?' And he said, 'Well, you just know.' I figured that was pretty good. We were dealing with financial questions. And we went through the kind of turmoil and struggle that was there, and pretty soon it seemed as if we had talked the thing out. So I looked down on the sheet and announced the next subject. Then Art Brandenburg who was sitting in the back said, 'I think it would be a good idea if we said Amen to that to announce our decision.' And it ran through my mind, 'But he said that didn't need to be done.' Finally Art had to go ahead and say Amen. You can see the kind of struggle that comes from making a decision to participate in the movement.

And for me recently that struggle has been intensified--with more new language and some more documents, and not just one more but about fifty more, and not just one word but about two hundred words, in which you and I need

to get on top of the reality that stands behind the kind of struggle that you and I have before us.

I don't know if that's what's getting to me or something else in the times, but I've been having just a terrible time recently getting away from the immediacies. All of a sudden I just can't stand my one-and-a-half year old boy crying. I tell myself all those stories, you know, the ones we teach the kids about 'Life is full of falling down,' and I keep rehearsing that. And I think of a man like Clement Stone who is going to the Bears, of all teams, to work on his positive mental attitude gimmick. And it's not if the Bears lose, but when the Bears lose, how are they going to relate to a man trying to move in on their lives to give them a new image out of which to live.

That's the way it's been for me. All the images have become somewhat sterile. Or I've absolutized them. Or somehow it's clear for me that there needs to be another reflective period, or a rebirth, or a way of getting behind. Or maybe it's this way: we've come to a point in the movement where we've become so clear about the facts of the way things are, that we are people in struggle, that we are lucid people, sensitive people, exposed people etc.-- that we have gone another level but have not stood conscious to the fact that a new reality is upon us, or that we have been impinged upon again by the mystery, or the awe-filled-ness of that life. The symbols in RS-1 are so great, but in one sense one has to say that the arrows representing the struggle in Bultmann symbolize a past struggle for us. Finally, the struggle for us has not been whether that is the way life is or not. The struggle has been standing in a filial relationship to the mystery--there is a mystery, as Bultmann talks about it. You can get the first job done in ten seconds. It's what the relationship to the mystery that's the question, or how do the powers operate in life, and how does one get hold of saying yes every minute of his life, and not just at one time or another.

It seems clear to me in our struggle as a continental presidium in relationship to the Local Church Experiment that the Experiment is not some kind of absolutistic something that's just there to be marched through; but again, how do we begin to get hold of the impingement of the mystery, the awe-filled-ness of life, that is breaking in upon us in a new way. One of my colleagues suggested the other day that we have not even begun to sense ourselves as living in a time of consciousness of consciousness. We're just beginning again to get a feel of what it means to go below our own immediacies into that kind of consciousness.

Well, I would like to talk about the state of the regions broadly under a term which has been used much lately, the category of PRIORSHIP. Finally, the only thing I want to say today is that the role of the regions on the North American continent in relationship to the Local Church Experiment is one of priorship, not only to the experiment itself but also finally to the Established Church. It has something to do with the question of accountability. I got ahead of myself when I gave the examples of constantly being held accountable. But that's the very gift I want to run away from as I see people from my ecclesiola in the Research Assembly this summer. I danced around over there for an hour in the corner not approaching them because I didn't want to be confronted by them. The anonymity is gone--just the awe-filled-ness of being held accountable by your colleagues.

I want to read you a short bit from one of our meditative friends with whom we are most familiar in his Journey to the East. It's a similar situation

in Magister Ludi. Knecht, Magister Ludi, or master of the glass bead game, which is another way of talking about the Journey to the East, has been confronted by a former colleague who comes back with a whole lot of gripes. And Knecht says something like this:

'My dear friend,' he said thoughtfully 'how much your words remind me of our schooldays and your criticisms and love of your argument. But today I do not have to play the same part as I did then; today my task does not lie in defending the Order and the Province against your attacks, and I am very thankful, considering the difficulty and the strain, that it does no longer exist. It is certainly very hard to parry such magnificent attacks as the one you have just launched. You spoke, for example of the people outside in your world as those who 'live the real life and who do the real work.'

'Now that has such a clear, beautiful and candid ring, almost like an axiom, and should one wish to contest it, one must definitely be unfair and remind the speaker that part of this world's "true work" consists in running a commission for the maintenance of Castalia. But jesting aside for the moment it is clear from your words and from your tone of voice that your heart is still filled with either hate, envy or yearning for us. In your estimation we are cowards and drones or irresponsible children in a kindergarten, and yet there have also been times when you have looked upon us as eternally serene gods. One thing I think I may assume from your words: that Castalia is not to blame for your sorrow or misfortune as you are pleased to call it and that we must look elsewhere for the causes. Were we Castalians really to blame your reproaches and objections would not be the same today as they were in your boyhood days.

'In later conversations you shall tell me more and I have no doubt that we shall find a way to making you serener and happier, or at least to making your relationship with Castalia a freer and more agreeable one. As far as I can see you have built up a false constricted and sentimental attitude towards myself and towards Castalia, and at the same time towards your own youth and schooldays. You have split your own soul between Castalia and the world and tortured yourself unduly over things for which you were not responsible. On the other hand, it is possible that you take many other things for which the responsibility lies entirely within yourself, far too lightly. I imagine that you have not practised your meditation for a long time ..is that not so?'

Designori laughed bitterly. 'How perspicacious you are, Domine! For a long time, you say? It is many, many years now since I renounced the charms of meditation. But how anxious you have become about me all of a sudden! At that time when I was in Waldzell on my holiday course when you snubbed me so much courtesy and contempt and so politely rejected my comradeship, I returned home with the firm resolution of making an end of everything Castalian within me forever. I renounced the Bead Game from that day onwards have never meditated since, and for a long time even music was unbearable to me. In place of these I found new comrades, who instructed me in pleasure. We drank and whored, and tried all manner of narcotics, and we spat upon everything decent, worthy and ideal. Naturally that filth did not last for long, but long enough to eat away completely the last traces of Castalian varnish. And then, some years later when on a certain occasion I realised that I had

abused even these intoxicants and had urgent need of meditation, I was too proud to start again.'

'Too proud?' asked Knecht softly.

'Yes, too proud. I had in the meantime become submerged in the world, and had become a man of the world. I wished for nothing better than to be as one of them and to have no other life than theirs--that passionate childish, gruesome uncontrolled life that vacillates between happiness and fear. I scorned the idea of resorting to your expedients in order to provide a modicum of relief or to create certain advantages for myself.'

The Magister looked at him sharply. 'And for how many years did you endure that? Have you made use of no other expedients in order to be rid of it all?'

'Oh yes!' admitted Plinio. 'I have indeed, and still do so today. There are times when I drink really heavily and use all manner of drugs in order to sleep.'

Knecht closed his eyes for a moment as though suddenly weary, then looked up at his friend again, long and questioningly and in silence. Gradually his look assumed an even more tender and friendly serenity.

Designori confessed afterwards that he had never in his whole life seen a look in a man's eyes at once so inquiring and affectionate, so innocent and appraising, so radiantly friendly and so omniscient. He admitted that it had at first confused and irritated him, but had gradually calmed him with its gentle compelling insistence. And yet he had tried to defend himself against it.

'You said just now,' he went on, 'that you know of an anodyne to make me serener and happier, but you do not dream of asking me whether that is actually what I desire.'

'Well,' laughed Joseph Knecht, 'if we can make a man serener and happier, we do so irrespective of whether he asks us to do so or not. And why pray should you not seek and desire it? That is why you are here--why we are now sitting opposite each other and why you have returned to us. You hate and despise Castalia; you are too proud of your worldliness and sorrow to lighten it with a certain amount of intelligence and meditation, and yet a secret and irresistible longing for us and for our serenity has guided and nourished you all these years, prompting you to come and try your luck with us once more. And I tell you, you have come at the right moment--at a time when I, too, yearn for a call from your world and for one of its doors to open.

Do any colleagues come to mind?

Hesse is not the only one in our time who is struggling with the role of what it means to be a prior. A number of books I've read recently, and I'm sure you have too, have done this. In The Godfather, for example, the role of Vito Cordone, the head of the Mafia, shows the priorship role that was demanded in that kind of function, that in of operation. Or I think of Tai-Pan where the whole book is devoted to laying out what it meant for a man to take his mission to the Orient seriously, whether or not one agreed with that mission--the kinds of demands that were laid on his life, the kind picture we get as to what it means to be a prior. Or the book, Custer died for your Sins, the struggle laid out there of the Red Man in our own country. The whole book climaxed at one point with the cry from the depths for an Indian prior, for someone to come again to function as one who could play the kind of role which would enable Indian power, or whoever you want to talk about it, so that the wisdom of the Red Man in North America might once again be unloosed to humanness and to mankind.

That's the kind of role I would suggest is demanded not only in relationship to the world but to Church, and within the movement, in terms of the Local Church Experiment. We find ourselves in a time in terms of our own communities when there has another shift. In my community it's symbolized by The Woodlawn Organization (TWO). The Woodlawn Organization was birthed in 1960 with a great rally of thousands of residents to fight back against the University of Chicago which was encroaching upon land and removing residences. Year after year since 1960 TWO has spent its time trying to recreate that even again. Every year its life-blood has had to be recirculated around the gathering of the masses. Towards the end of 1969 and into 1970 the shift of that organization has been a programmatic shift. Now there are almost no rallies. Now there are no gatherings of the people to show that this is a grassroots movement in the sense of a lot of bodies. There has been a shift to the programs, the programs, in the area of the economic, the political, and even in a reduced sense in the area of the cultural. But it's just been a shift that has ricocheted across our whole land. The Black Panthers met last week in Washington in try to make the transition from the initial cry of Black power and the Black Panther stance and to act out the principles that they had in their platform-- now to having to construct the programmatic aspects. We're all familiar with how the Panthers have put in front of us a breakfast program for children, etc., to get across the symbol that what is needed is to build structures. Yet in the midst of that there is a great despair, because finally although one program can boom up, since there is no depth struggling for symbols that hold one over against the comprehensive, which comes shattering in. After the Bears lose, what does Clement Stone say about positive mental attitude? It's not where people are winning but where people are losing that one is able to see the shift that has occurred.

It's the same with the wives and mothers who have been parading for years to get the prisoners back from Vietnam. Did you see any of the interviews with some of those women after our last escapade of finding the prison camp empty? It was the final straw. The hopelessness had bottomed out. For years they had been getting their energy and life out of pretending that somehow they could build a structure with enough women and wives to cry against the government and get their husbands back. That's the kind of situation that we go into--one that is crying out very clearly for structures, yet that has a cynicism because of what they see in the structures that have been birthed in the early 1970's. It's a different kind of hopelessness from that we talked about earlier because it's a level deeper.

My wife teaches school in a ghetto community. The structure that the teachers have, the Model Cities program, is exactly along this line. The Model Cities program for schools has poured close to a million dollars into a complex of schools in that area. If you go into one of those schools and ask for sign, all I can show you is unused television sets and millions of dollars of equipment up in smoke--either it's been stolen, or the teachers haven't been trained to use it, or it's so far beyond where the students are that it's impractical. So the teachers now say very admittedly to my wife, 'I'm just here to get my paycheck.' Those are the kind of human beings who are in our regions now just crying out for those kinds of structures.

And there's a great search going on. One of my colleagues who taught in Seattle last quarter tells about how as soon as he got off the plane people started saying, 'We're sorry you can't see Mount Rainier today because of the pollution. Maybe tomorrow we'll see Mount Rainier.' As he went on to teach the PLC, around the edges and during the seminars people would say, 'Too bad we can't see Mount Rainier.' It seemed to be something people were obsessed with--Mount Rainier. As he reflected about that and struggled with what was going on, he said, 'You know what happened there? Mount Rainier had become a way for the people to deal with the mystery of life. It had become a contemplative object. Once that had become absolutized as that, and once the fog descended and the air clouded that image, they were lost. 'What's life all about? Where is it that we finally contemplate and deal with the kind of mystery which life is, even if it's done unconsciously?' He mentioned that the suicide rate sky-rocketed when Mount Rainier could not be seen.

Somehow people are again crying out for the kind of contemplative exercises which again can hold them and their lives over against the greatness and the mystery which life is. Did you know that 'Amazing Grace' is in the top ten? Would you ever have believed that when you sang that for the first time after twenty years of absence two years ago? The crying out from the youth again for the kind of exercises and symbols to hold one's self-understanding over against. Do you know when Hermann Hesse wrote his books? In the twenties and the thirties. Now he is the latest thing. I substitute teach an English class once in a while. One day I went in when they had book reports, and the first five were all by Hesse. And I asked, 'Why is Hesse so popular?' They answered, 'He just has a way of talking about what's going on inside us.' It's as if we needed Vitler to bring us into the twentieth century. We needed that kind of activity of the divine breaking in in our midst to shake us up to the reality that some men have searched and longed after for a number of years.

One of the young ladies came to see me the other day. She had a beret on, a tight-fitting karate outfit on, and she had every conceivable button--it didn't matter if they conflicted. She had a peace button, she had an 'America, love it or leave it' button, she had a Panther button. She had everything. She was just a walking contradiction of values, and yet it was a symbol. It was like a collage of the struggles of that whole high school, the whole youth, in terms of getting those symbols.

We've talked about these things recently and given them the names of meditation, contemplation, and prayer. There's nothing religious about those things. They're straight out of the gut-level struggle with humanness itself--meditation, contemplation, and prayer. And how is it that you and I who

are the Church bring to self-consciousness the Church's wisdom about those symbols again, those symbols which we know, as Tillich reminds us, were forged out of the depth human struggle and need to be recaptured again by every age in that same struggle.

Or if it's not meditation, contemplation, and prayer that has been revealed in terms of the solitaries, perhaps it is in the area of the corporates that we can see the struggle of men. Does anybody here watch 'Resona Street'? There's a character there called 'Cookie Monster.' The Cookie Monster is a fantastic reminder of--I'm not sure which--either poverty or chastity. It's either poverty in the sense that it's a reminder of one not being able to detach himself from something inconsequential that he's wrapped up in in life, or it's a symbol of chastity: absolute single-mindedness. He was offered a thousand dollars or a cookie in one episode, and he said it wasn't even a choice.

That's fantastic struggle in the midst of our time, and many people are picking up the responsibility of being the Church. And we could go on, not only in terms of poverty and chastity, but also obedience. Any operation that's deciding to be anything in the midst of history sees the cruciality of demanding absolute obedience. No serious group anywhere any more says, 'You can be a weekend warrior. You can attend one meeting a week.' Any serious group demands just your whole life, nothing short of that. And there's a new consciousness about what it means to get things changed.

In our journey as a movement we know that we are those who are called to hold up the gifts, the symbols, the possibilities of the Church. There has always been a self-conscious people who have grasped hold of the eruptions of their time. I remember Saint Anthony who finally just had to chuci everything and go to the desert. My favorite out of that tradition is Martin Luther. It disturbs me to think of him as the culmination of something that started a long time before him. I've always lived out of the story that he was the prime mover, or something. But it's really true. Who is going to get credit for the work you and I see has to be done? It's not going to be you and me. Do you understand that? If we have ever had a struggle in status, now is the time to see that what you and I are about is not status. The symbol of this is right here. The Local Church Training School is in one place, the continental presidium is in another place, ITI's were in another place, religious houses all over the globe, a black church thrust. There's no question of status. But we have it in our minds that the Local Church Experiment has all the status now. The rest of the people are the poor slob who gather to be the movement, and finally how do we take a relationship to seeing ourselves in that kind of role?

But remember that this is the Advent season of the year--the great wisdom of our fathers to set aside a part of the rehearsal of our drama, to see that we are the people of the kairos, the fulfillment of time. Those are the people who decide that the future is not out there somewhere. The future is here, and now. That's what it means to be the Advent people, to claim the future as one's own. If you want to know what your future is like, you just have to look at your present. That's what your future is. That's the reality that reveals the Word in Jesus Christ. It's now that we have the decision--I guess I'm so moralistic that I can't say it--that we are called in our time to be the Messiah. You can't even say that, because when the one who applied that role in history was asked that, he said, 'Who do you say that I am?' So it's

finally to decide to bring the saving word to mankind and to understand that we never bring the saving word to mankind in the first instance; it's only that power or that mystery or that awe-filled possibility in life which finally springs any man loose or any people loose to do the task. But it's somehow grasping after the embodiment of that Word, that it's not that a group of people called the Church have the Word; they are the Word. It's not that a group of people called the Church have the life. The demand is to be the life. It's not that the people who are the Church have the way; they are the way in their embodiment of the Word in Jesus Christ.

My experience in being the region, the Chicago Region in particular, is like the character who was standing out in the middle of the road and had about four hundred marbles to pick up. And he just about gets them picked up when a mack truck comes along, and he turns around in time and starts picking them up again, and another mack truck comes barreling down the highway. In terms of our depth consciousness of that situation now, the only change is that now we only have time to say, 'Oh, my God,' when the mack truck comes. . . . That's what it means to be the region. And if you think that mack truck isn't real--well, I don't know what happened to you the first time three or four of your cadre members joined the order. Did you have a little status trouble? Did you have an internal turmoil saying, 'What is this about? They tell us to renew the Local Church and they are stealing all of our people.'

A colleague was searching after curriculum for a certain age group that reflected RS-1. And I suggested he call a woman in a Church which had been very active in the movement two or three years ago, but now was not heard from as much. He called there and talked quite a while. When he called me back to tell me about what the woman had told him, he said, 'Do you know that that Church three years ago was where we are saying today a signal Church is supposed to be. And when you think about it you start wondering why that Church couldn't stay in being. They would have been three more years down the road by now. Then you start thinking that there would never have been a religious house in that region without that cadre deciding to assign certain people there. There never would have been sign after sign in the movement if some people hadn't decided to take that step and say in a sense that that was not the time for the Local Church project. And that's a hard thing for me to deal with. I can't say that easily, because in our own situation we have been through the same kind of struggle.'

Maybe a quick history will hold for us where we've been as a movement and regions. The first experiment that I was conscious of was the experiment in being the ORDER. I knew that there were some people who decided to set themselves apart, that a group of people needed to be set apart on behalf of everyone to decide what it meant to be disciplined, to decide what it meant to be trained to the bottom, to decide what it meant to be obedient to the bottom. Out of that came the experiment--and I want to emphasize that--the experiment we now call the order. Had somebody not made the decision for the order to come into being, you and I would not have the wisdom we have today on what it means to be a CADRE, because everything you and I know, in one sense, about obedience, about being trained, comes from the experiment done in the movement which we call the order. All the experimentation is done. And there came a point where there developed a mutual flow. That dynamic was never something that was static with the flow only one way. I remember right before the religious houses came into being the question around base was, 'Have you been out in the region lately? Have you been in a Local Church

lately?' People from the order began to bring back wisdom that the cadres had developed. The whole concept of what it meant to be the order shifted.

That's what happened in my situation. The first image of what it meant to be the movement was to be a cadre. We had forty-five people at one point who were in what we called the parish cadre--people who had had RS-1, Black Heritage, taught Black Heritage practically every weekend. I ran up a total on one woman once. As you think of the demand that comes with the Local Church Experiment, this is even more relevant. In the weeks when she taught on the weekends, which was almost every other weekend, she spent 70 to 80 hours in recruiting and courses, etc., in addition to her 40 hour a week job. That's not an exaggeration. That's a concretion. Why she's still with us today, I'll never know, but she is. But that was what was going on. That was an iron cadre.

After a while the Lord demanded something different. The whole FIFTH CITY experiment began to impinge on the consciousness of cadres across the nation. 'What should we do now that we're a cadre? We're great, we study, we build models.' But Fifth City kept holding the necessity of community reformulation before us. Chicago, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Los Angeles--people started playing with the Fifth City model. But the work we did in the PARISH could never have come off without some people having been set aside on behalf of all to experiment with what a comprehensive experiment in a geographically delimited area would look like. That's where the initial springboard for the work we did in the parish came. Again there was mutual feedback going back and forth. Compared to the parish, the cadre was easy. We ran into monsters and snakes that we never imagined. With the cadre we were involved in the knowing, and with the parish, the doing. We had activity after activity after activity, but we finally realized the problem of how one sustains himself in the midst of that, of what the depth push is of what it means to be a religious man, of how the 'parish' is different from a community organization, of how the parish is different from anything anyone else is doing.

That pushed us to a new experiment in the movement called the RELIGIOUS HOUSE. I would suggest that since that is the most recent of our experiments, that that is where the depth push in what it means to be the LOCAL CONGREGATION pole was forged, what it means to be the seminary, the sodality, and the college. We see in all three experiments unfolding that the Lord has pushed us through many kinds of inadequate experimentation, many kinds of failures--experimentation and failures which were absolutely necessary to push us again to see that another experiment is needed--not wild experimentating, but an experiment; in which some people--not everybody--are set aside to do the LOCAL CHURCH EXPERIMENT.

For me, that is probably the nub of the issue you and I have to deal with in the movement today. For one, how is it that every one of us is involved in the Local Church Experiment? We see how historically, ~~the~~ the tactics would not have been built without all the previous experimentation. Yet, the other side of that is the one question that maybe some of us will not be participating in the Local Church Experiment at all, in the limited sense in which that project is described by itself. You and I may not be part, and probably will not be part, of a congregation that will be pointed to as a signal Church. That's a hard thing to say, but that's to face the reality that this is an experiment, an experiment that has limitations on it. It's not wild experimenting, just hit and miss trying to discover what you can get out of it. It's taking the wisdom from the earlier experiments, and going through a step by step controlled experiment so that signs can be held up in the Local Church as

signs had been held up in the other areas. If that job gets done with the Local Church Experiment, you and I will not have to worry about not participating in a signal Local Church, because one can anticipate the shot-gun mushrooming that everybody is going to be crying for participation in that experiment as history goes forward.

but now the demand is to enable this actually to come off. We've had a lot of serious questions as to the role of the region. What's the role of a local cadre that's not in a local church experiment? What's the role of RS-1? How about the PLC? How about cadre formation? There's only one way you can answer that: none of that has changed. It's all still there. It all has to go on--not for its own sake, for the sake of the experiment and for the sake of the renewal of the Church in our time. Without regional development being hammered out in a way that we have not yet imagined, to a depth that we have not yet imagined, there's no way that the Local Church Experiment can possibly come off. The movement is a dynamic that is so intertwined that no part of it can be left out and have another part of it come off.

The role of the region as a prior becomes so clear to me there. There are going to be times in the midst of that experiment when the regional structures will have to provide both the spirit and physical support that will be needed in the midst of the struggles that will be going on there. I have searched for an image and I'm not satisfied--some of you will have better ones. But it comes to me that the regions are the NASA behind the astronauts. Everybody in NASA, everybody in this country could not take that flight to the moon. Some people had to be set aside on behalf of all to make that journey. Yet, others had to be set aside on behalf of all to be the network behind that journey, so that that actually could take place. That's not adequate, but that's the direction I would want to take.

Towards the end of the book of Samuel the Israelites are going to go out to fight the enemy. Samuel turned around and said to them, 'Some of you will have to stay here to tend the baggage.' They had all come to fight. So maybe it's the baggage-tender kind of image which will hold for us at this time what the regional dynamic is.

The cruciality of the region is as that which holds the tension between the global and the local. The concretion on the local is just overwhelming. And the content on the global in the ITI's and so on is so concrete that the demand to be the regional dynamic which holds that tension and spreads it across the continent is obvious for the kind of depth push which must go on now.

Our first presupposition, you know, in the movement has always been that every man has to hear the Gospel. You don't stop teaching RS-1. You don't teach RS-1 only in places where follow-up is guaranteed, although we're all clear who crucial follow-ups are. But getting the Gospel out across the whole continent and across the whole world is still the demand. We hear reports of people saying, 'We don't get ministers to PLC's any more.' Maybe back in 1967, but not now. Well, over in the Des Moines metro there were 31 at the PLC last quarter. In Milwaukee there were 40. And does anybody here have a surplus of clergymen in your region? Or maybe it comes in the form of the Local Church Experiment: 'All our regional leaders are clergymen and their churches are going to be signal churches.' Right. But we can never have an order that's big enough, we can never have enough people in the religious house, we can never. . . . It's just demand upon demand. There's no top lim

limit that we can see to any of those functions which we know as the movement. They all have to be filled. So the demands are still there.

Finally we know that recruiting is prior to RS-1. Maybe that's why the ministers don't want to take a PLC. And that comes down to our decision to recruit. We've got all sorts of gimmicks. But finally we know that none of those methods is the key to recruiting. The key to recruiting is the decision that another human being has to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's the decision. We heard a course was going to fold a couple of weeks ago. On Monday the Metropolitan Council asked who would take responsibility for that course, and one timid woman raised her hand. On Wednesday she had six people. On Friday she had twenty-four. One person had decided that that course was going to come off. When she came back to the metro cadre people congratulated her and she got mad. She said, 'If that's all you are about, you are not taking that task seriously.' They said, 'You pulled off a miracle.' She said, 'You think that was a miracle? That was a decision to call on a number of people and confront them with their lives. That was no miracle.' All of it has to go on and on. There are no short cuts.

And we hear a lot of cries about the extended order. Well, I don't know what that means, except that it is birthed out of a struggle of a lot of people where their spirit depths have been drained to nothingness. And how is it that people in local congregations all over the globe participate in religious depths that will enable us to get this job done? But if we're ever going to get concretion on the extended order, it's you and I here in the regions that bring concretion to that. That's the dimension that's missing, what it means to hammer that to the bottom. There shouldn't be an Odyssey held that has fewer than sixty-five people (one Odyssey recently had sixty-five people). Every one has to have sixty-five people, at least. It's that kind of image that is being demanded. If you don't like the work of having to recruit for RS-1 or Odysseys or academy, or whatever--well, that's what's demanded. My wife and I just finished a year of internship at the religious house, a way of just tooling up for the hard rugged task of the region. It's as if everyone has to have it on his timeline. I didn't even know what a region was--I'm not sure I still don't. But participating in the religious house activities shoved me over into some of the realities, or gave one the best of both worlds (that's probably revealing a spirit struggle), but whatever it is it's being impacted for a time from both dimensions, the disciplined order dimension and the regional dimension which enables one to move forward.

It's so clear that we could turn the whole of our regions into development in terms of getting the finances demanded. No revolution ever came off on somebody else's money. I don't need to say that again, it's so obvious. That hit us in my region last weekend in a way that we won't forget. We stood before our colleagues in the movement and had to say that we had a \$12,000 debt, for bringing the religious house into being, for courses that weren't paid for going back to 1966--\$12,000. We went to the regional council meeting with some of us having decided that the council was going to deal seriously with that mess. We had figured it out. We said there are about 7,000-8,000 grads in the region, and 1,000 of them would be in one degree or another of awareness. If we just go to those 1,000 grads and ask twelve dollars apiece. . . . Have you ever had a model like that? It worked--to the tune of eight hundred dollars. There we went with that beautiful but crushed model. Then a colleague had been in a church where they had lived from week to week

They said, 'The choir's going to sing until we get X number of dollars.' You hear the minister saying to them, 'Keep singing, keep singing.' Well, we tried not even very much of a variation on that. And I would want to announce as a symbol before this body that the \$12,000 debt of our region was gone as a result of the meeting. When I told the cadre, they asked, 'Were a lot of rich people there?' And, you know, we wouldn't have even thought of that two years ago, and I don't even recommend that as a tactic. That's the only kind of experience I would share. And it's a sign of possibility for every region to take up that financial responsibility for the revolution that we're about in our day.

Someone said last summer that the movement is sure a rotten organization. By all standards, it doesn't stack up to the Better Business Bureau. But it's that lousy organization and that bad investment for which you and I in our time are called to bear responsibility. I wanted to spend more time on that being a spirit task, but we'll have time to reflect on that, that it's a spirit job.

The bishop of our denomination preached a sermon two or three years ago, and I never thought he knew anything about the Church, but his sermon was called, 'A Time for Christian Privilege.' It has developed in the midst of our times that to pick up the task of the Church is a privilege that comes to all men all the time, and we are at a time in history when that task has been presented before us. I don't know how you finally get an adequate image of that, but one of my pastor friends was counseling with a man who was giving him all sorts of trouble and he didn't know which way to turn. He and I talked a little bit, and finally I suggested he use a little reality therapy. I thought that might be one way to move with the man. And my friend said, 'If I do that it will crucify him.' I just smiled and said, 'Yes. But, you know, that's a privilege.' I swallowed and he said, 'Yeah, a privilege, like going to the cross.'

I don't know the struggle with status the movement has in relation to the Local Church Experiment, but I know that you and I dare not see our task as any one other than the privilege of the cross, and one which is absolutely necessary if we are going to have anything that even resembles a sign of the renewal of the Church in the twentieth century.