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The Need For New Myths

—by Gerald Clarke

Across the world today, man is searching for the myth or story that "tells him what his universe looks like and where he belongs in it." The research of Joseph Campbell has provided much historical and contemporary wisdom that will enable man to forge a common "secular mythology"—a critical element of a new social vehicle.

Gerald Clarke, writing in *Time* said "Campbell's words carry extraordinary weight, not only among scholars but among a wide range of other people who find his search down mythological pathways relevant to their lives today. A professor of literature at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, N.Y., Campbell has written and edited some 20-odd books on mythology." The *Time* essay follows.

The latest incarnation of Oedipus, the continued romance of Beauty and the Beast, stands this afternoon on the corner of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the traffic light to change.

—Joseph Campbell

That statement, fanciful as it sounds, is simply a short-hand way of saying that everyone is a creature of myth, that the ancient legends and tales of the race are still the master keys to the human psyche. The science-minded Victorians who sneered at myths as superstitious twaddle were guilty of a kind of scientific superstition themselves: the belief that reason could explain all human motives. Aided by psychoanalysis, anthropology and three-quarters of a century of archaeological discovery, modern scholarship has replaced the Victorians' sneers with respect and even awe. Mythology, its partisans are now claiming, tells as much about humanity—its deepest fears, sorrows, joys and hopes—as dreams tell about an individual. "Myths are public dreams," says Joseph Campbell, who is probably the world's leading expert on mythology. "Dreams are private myths. Myths are vehicles of communication between the conscious and the unconscious, just as dreams are."

The trouble is, Campbell

asserts, that this communication has broken down in the modern Western world. The old myths are no longer operative, and effective new myths have not arisen to replace them. As a result, he maintains, the West is going through an agony of re-orientation matched only by a period during the 4th millennium B.C., when the Sumerians first conceived the concept of a mathematically ordered cosmos and thus changed utterly man's concept of the universe around him.

What is a myth? In Campbell's academic jargon, it is a dreamlike "symbol that evokes and directs psychological energy." A vivid story or legend, it is but one part of a larger fabric of myths that, taken together, form a mythology that expresses a culture's attitude toward life, death and the universe around it. The Greek myth of Prometheus, the Titan who stole fire from Olympus and gave it to man, thus symbolizes the race's aspirations, even when they conflict with the powers of nature. The almost contemporary Hebrew myth of the trials of Job, on the other hand, symbolizes man's submission to a power above nature, even when that power seems cruel and unjust. The two myths are, in effect, picture stories that tell the philosophies of two totally divergent cultures. The Greek stresses man's heroic striving for human values and

civilization; the Hebrew emphasizes, rather, man's humble spiritual surrender to God's will. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac is the supreme symbol of this attitude.

Though not true in a literal sense, a myth is not what it is considered to be in everyday speech—a fantasy or a misstatement. It is rather a veiled explanation of the truth. The transformation from fact to myth is endlessly fascinating. The battle of Achilles and Hector, for example, is symbolic, but there was a Trojan War in which great heroes fought. The psychological duel between Faust and the Devil is a philosophical and psychological metaphor, but Georg Faust, a German magician who was born about 1480, did live and did make claims to superhuman power, including the ability to restore the lost works of Plato and Aristotle and to repeat the miracles of Christ. Yet it was not until poets like Christopher Marlowe and Goethe took up the legend that Faust became famous—and mythic. The Faust story appealed to Marlowe and to Goethe because the times in which they lived, eras in which faith and reason were in basic conflict, called for such a symbolic struggle.

What should a mythology do? In Campbell's view, a "properly operating" mythology has four important functions:

To begin with, through its rites and imagery it wakens and maintains in the individual a sense of awe, gratitude and even rapture, rather than fear, in relation to the mystery both of the universe and of man's own existence within it.

Secondly, a mythology offers man a comprehensive, understandable image of the world around him, roughly in accord with the best scientific knowledge of the time. In symbolic form, it tells him what his universe looks like and where he belongs in it.

The third function of a living mythology is to support the social order through rites and rituals that will impress and mold the young. In India, for example, the basic myth is that of an impersonal power, Brahma, that embodies the universe. The laws of caste are regarded as inherent features of this universe and are accepted and obeyed from childhood. Cruel as this may seem to Westerners, the myth of caste does give Indian society a stability it might otherwise lack and does make life bearable to the impoverished low castes.

The fourth and, in Campbell's view, the most important function of mythology, is to guide the individual, stage by stage, through the inevitable psychological crises of a useful life: from the childhood condition of dependency through the traumas of adolescence and the trials of adulthood to, finally, the death-bed.

The churches and synagogues still provide mythological guidance for many, Campbell argues; for many others, however, this guidance fails. The result is that, where once religion served, many have turned to psychoanalysis or encounter groups. "All ages before ours believed in gods in some form or other," wrote Carl Jung, whose theories of the collective unconscious have most profoundly influenced Campbell's thinking. "Heaven has become empty

space to us, a fair memory of things that once were. But our heart glows, and secret unrest gnaws at the roots of our being." In search of something that they can hold on to, many people in the West, particularly the young, are either returning to Christian fundamentalism through the Jesus Revolution (TIME, June 21) or turning to the religions of the East, chiefly Buddhism and Hinduism. "The swamis are coming from India, and they're taking away the flock," says Campbell. "They're speaking of religion as dealing with the interior life and not about dogmatic formulae and ritual requirements."

For the vast majority, Campbell believes, the West's general lack of spiritual authority has been a disaster. Forty years in the study of eternal symbols have made Campbell a conservative of a rather dark hue. Though he is optimistic about the long range, he finds the present bleak indeed. "We have seen what has happened to primi-

his abilities and receive according to his needs, echoes numerous religious beliefs of a paradise on earth or a Second Coming. The Chinese Communists have, in addition, the myth of the "Long March" in the '30s and the subsequent sanctuary of Mao Tse-tung and his followers in the caves of Yen-an. The events were real enough, but for this generation of Chinese, and probably for generations to come, they will have much the same mythological significance that the Trojan War had for the Greeks.

In the West there have been desperate attempts to provide at least fragments of a modern mythology. Churchill brilliantly re-created the myth of St. George and the dragon during World War II: the picture of little Britain, a citadel of justice, besieged by the evil Nazi hordes. The situation, of course, was much as he painted it—Britain was besieged and Hitler was evil—but a Neville Chamberlain would not have been able, as Churchill was, to light up his

THE MYTHOLOGISTS ARE NOT PROVIDING MYTHS, BUT THEY ARE INDICATING THAT SOMETHING IS MISSING WITHOUT THEM. THEY ARE TELLING MODERN MAN THAT HE HAS NOT OUTGROWN MYTHOLOGY AND WILL NEVER OUTGROW IT SO LONG AS HE HAS HOPES AND FEARS BEYOND OTHER ANIMALS.

tive communities unsettled by the white man's civilization," he observes. "With their old taboos discredited, they immediately go to pieces, disintegrate, and become resorts of vice and disease. Today the same thing is happening to us."

Many Oriental and primitive societies even today have working mythologies, and Communist countries have at least the basis of a mythology in Marxism. The Marxist dream of the withering away of the state, after which each man will give according to

people with the basic themes of their culture. Charles de Gaulle, both as wartime leader and President of the Fifth Republic, quite consciously resurrected the ghost of Joan of Arc. "To my mind," he wrote, "France cannot be France without greatness." The founders of Israel similarly evoked, and still evoke, mythic images of the Bible's chosen people to enable Israelis to survive in their hostile environment.

Often, such attempts add up merely to rhetoric or incantation. John Kennedy sought to



revive the American myth that the U.S. was a country with a messianic mission. "Now the trumpet summons us again," he said in his Inaugural Address, "to a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself." A post-Viet Nam U.S. can no longer quite believe in such an American mission. And Martin Luther King, Jr. worked to provide the nation's blacks with a myth of their own. "I've been to the mountaintop and I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land," King said the night before he was killed, echoing the Bible's story of Moses on Mount Sinai.

For centuries Americans were emboldened by the myth of the endless frontier, the notion that a new life could always be started out West, whether the West was Ohio or California. That version outlasted the frontier itself, but no one believes in it today. Campbell hopes that the landings on the moon will reinvigorate that mythic tradition. Only a handful of people can go to the moon, and no one would want to stake out his 160 acres there, but the excitement of the journey itself is infectious, a Prometheus' stealing fire from the gods. Beyond that, Campbell believes, there is an even more durable myth: the "American Dream." That is the idea, grounded in fact, that a man is judged on his own ability rather than on his family or his place in society. "This pessimistic optimist thinks that that myth still works," he says.

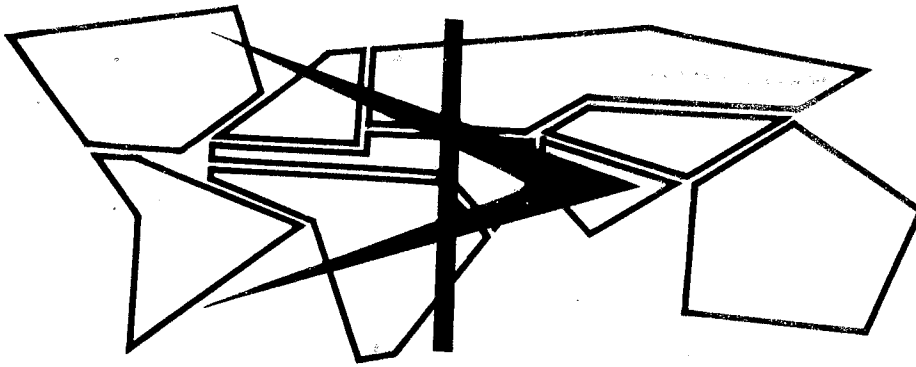
In the final analysis, however, it is wrong in Campbell's view to ask for one grand mythology that will guide people today. Instead there must be many different mythologies for many different kinds of people. "There is no general mythology today," Campbell says, "nor can there ever be again. Our lives are too greatly various in their backgrounds, aims and possibilities for any single order of symbols

to work effectively on us all." The new myths must be internalized and individual, and each man must find them for himself. Some, in fact, are following mythological paths today, unconsciously and without design. The hippie who leaves society and goes off to a commune, for example, is being guided by a mythological map of withdrawal and adventure laid down by Christ in the desert, the Buddha at Bodh-Gaya, and Mohammed in his cave of meditation at Mount Hira.

The man in search of an ideal could at least begin, Campbell thinks, by searching through the myths of antiquity, religion and modern literature. For the elite who can read and understand them, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Thomas Mann, among modern writers and poets, and Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee, among modern artists, have updated the ancient mythological motifs. Campbell and the other mythologists are, in a sense, providing the workbooks for the poets—the modern Daedaluses in turtle-necks. "It doesn't matter to me whether my guiding angel is for a time named Vishnu, Shiva, Jesus, or the Buddha," Campbell says. "If you're not distracted by names or the color of hair, the same message is there, variously turned. In the multitude of myths and legends that have been preserved to us—both in our own Western arts and literatures, synagogues and churches, and in the rites and teachings of those Oriental and primitive heritages now becoming known to us—we may still find guidance."

The mythologists are not providing myths, but they are indicating that something is missing without them. They are telling modern man that he has not outgrown mythology and will never outgrow it so long as he has hopes and fears beyond the other animals.

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movement briefs

The 5th City Thanksgiving Celebration and Feast held in the Great Hall at the Chicago Area House was attended by 400 parents and friends of the Preschool. Highlights of the program: Music by the preschoolers, the Jets, and a guest vocal group, as well as a red-and-black style show.

The Order and 5th City
celebrate
the life and death
of

Allyn Adams

Feb. 21, 1932—December 13, 1972

Allyn Adams, long active in leadership in 5th City, died in his sleep after a year's illness.

Visitors—**Sister Josephine** of Manila on her way to Kansas City to await assignment to Taiwan. **Sister Michala**, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chicago. **Fr. Stephane Valiquette**, s.j., of Montreal, the Associate Director of the Office of Ecumenical Affairs of the Canadian Catholic Conference.

Symbolic Centrum was host to over one hundred people from the Uptown community at an Open House on November the first. Teachers from Graeme Stewart School, members of Peoples Church, staff from the Boys Uptown Commission and local business establishments toured the offices and the Great Hall, and enjoyed coffee and cookies in the guest lounge on the first floor.

The Tainan Religious House on the southern tip of Taiwan reports an open house at which Fr. Ferdinand s.j. remarked on seeing *Guernica*, "That is my home village and I was 10 years old and there when that raid took place."

Samoa Delegates Return from Seoul from *Samoa Times*—6 Oct., 1972

The 1972 International Training Institute, held in Seoul, Korea, ended with a sense of great excitement over the possibilities seen in the work of the Church throughout South East Asia and the Pacific. We are glad to welcome home Samoa's two delegates, Seilala Mapusua and Rev. Fofoa Temese. They, along with Mrs. Titilia Vula, from Fiji, represented the South Pacific in this training programme.

Sui Samoa foi mai Seoul

O se aoaoga ua taua o le "International Training Institute i le tausaga nei 1972 na faia i Seoul i Korea, sa faaiuina ma le manuia ona o le galuega tuufaatasi a le Ekalesia aoao i Asia i Saute i Sisifo ma le Pasefika Tatou te fiafia tele lava ina ua talii mai ma le manuia o tatou sui e toalua, o Seilala Mapusua ma le alii faifeau o Fofoa Temese, Sa latou auai faatasi ma le faletua o Titilia Vula mai Fiti, sa, fai i latou ma sui o le Pasefika i Saute i lea aoga.

One of the recent graduates gives his comments on the ITI: "The general idea of this Institute is to develop and create appropriate ways and means for the renewal of the church in the world. It was of course, a significant and important course in which we

studied methods of proclaiming the Gospel. The tremendous ideas from different cultures of South East Asia and Pacifica were shared through discussions in seminars and cultural, political and economic problem area workshops. We found that our problems were the same in many ways.

This year's 102 delegates gathered from over 14 different nations and represented all major denominations. These enthusiastic churchmen participated in a rigorous 6 weeks of study and planning sessions designed to help them be better servants of their own local nations and churches. The programme also included daily worship and occasional trips and visits to local sights in Korea. The South Pacific delegation also had an opportunity to become familiar with Japan and Hawaii as they stayed with friends and ITI staff en route.

One of the reasons that the ITI this year was especially significant was that the total financial responsibility of the course was assumed by individuals, churches and businessmen in SEAsia and Pacifica. This shows the great potential in people deciding to work together even though they have diverse backgrounds.

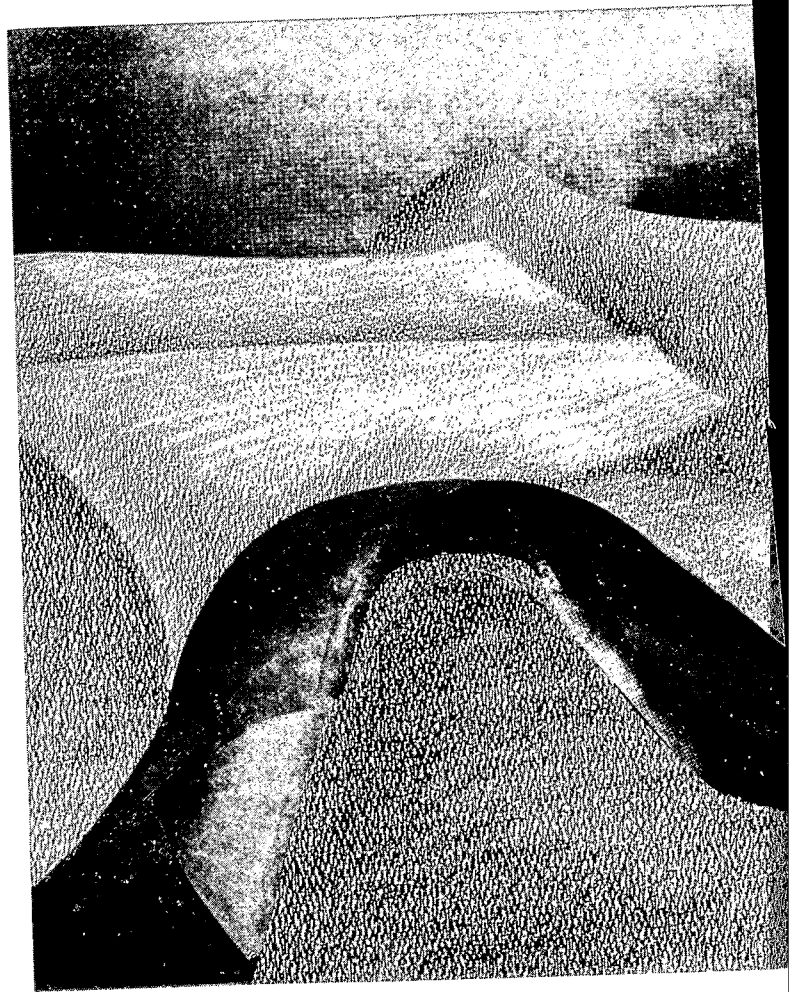
Recently sent out—

Joseph Mathews, **George West**, and **Charles Moore** on a global trip. Bishop Joshi has invited them to participate in a three-week preaching mission in India. The three also will visit in Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong. The **Jonathan Barker** family to Bombay from Sydney R.H. **Joe** and **Joy Thomas** to Tokyo R.H. from Centrum. **Jack Callum** to Osaka R.H. from Centrum. **Bill** and **Nan Grow** to London R.H. from Toronto R.H. **Garnet** and **Lis Banks** from Centrum to Adelaide preparatory to India assignment. **Jim Addington** to Area Sydney for Summer '73 there. **Gene Marshall** and **Philip Townley** are touring—European areas setting up courses.

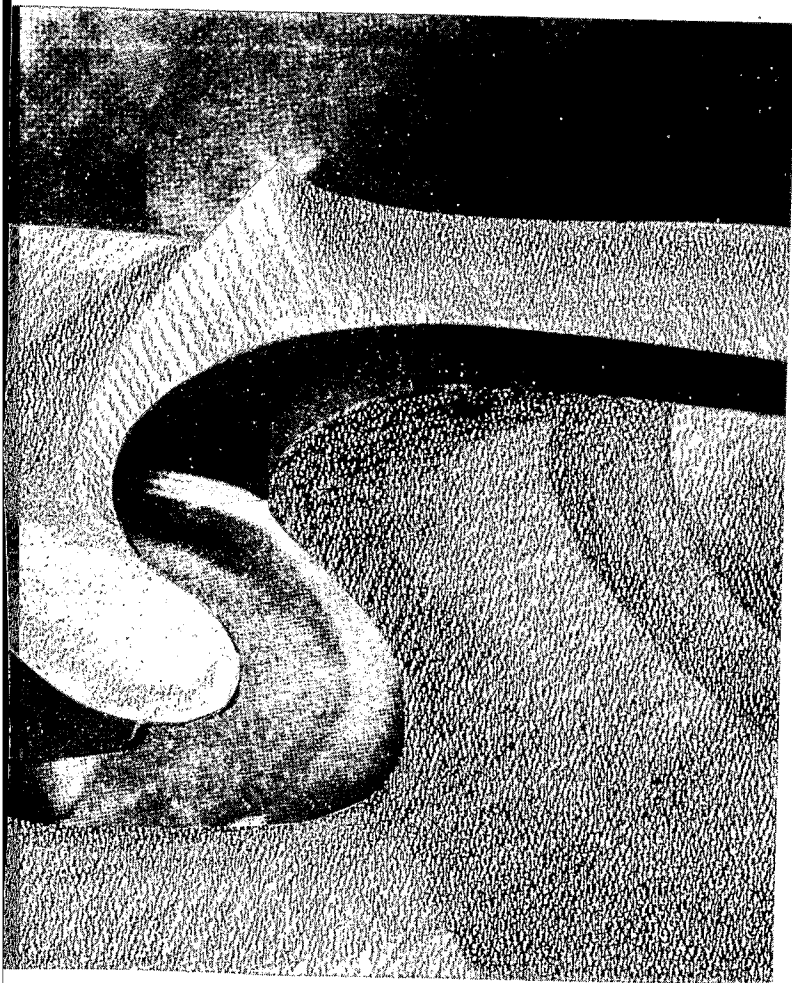
Recently returned to Centrum—**Justin** and **Dolores Morrill** from Osaka R.H. **Bob** and **Cynthia Vance** from Seoul R.H. **Joe** and **Anne Slicker** from Africa. **Jim** and **Lela Campbell** are remaining temporarily in Nairobi.

It dawns upon a man one day
that all is consciousness—
that ultimately he is related
only to no-thing
and above that no-thing
he is suspended forever.
In terror he sees his life
—a fragile paper boat—
journeying the never-ending drama—
creation of the self.
Alone, the naked solitary
sees arbitrary fate
as universal fact.
His decision-making criteria
have evaporated
there is no one to blame.
The dreadful suffocation
discovering that he, and he alone,
creates the universe.
To be alive is sheer invention:
creativity distilled.
And man determines good and evil
in endless ambiguity,
delineating the path
for future generations.
An absurd election
It is his to be pure freedom
amazingly approved by being.
His destiny: to be embodiment
of the divine commission.
The long journey home
is here and now.
Victoriously in
but not of this world,
where every moment of life
appears as relative,
he is integrity itself
and finds the burden light
For finally, man is called accountable
only by mystery,
Submission to the cosmic deeps
his only obligation.

THE RIVER OF



CONSCIOUSNESS



AREA B

**THE
RIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

human freedom

MY RADICAL AWARENESS

ontological obedience

I become a self

TREK V

FREEDOM OF AWARENESS

THE AUTHENTIC RELATION

radical consciousness

TREK VI

FREEDOM OF INVENTIVENESS

THE CREATIVE EXISTENCE

primordial creativity

TREK VII

FREEDOM OF DECISION

THE MORAL GROUND

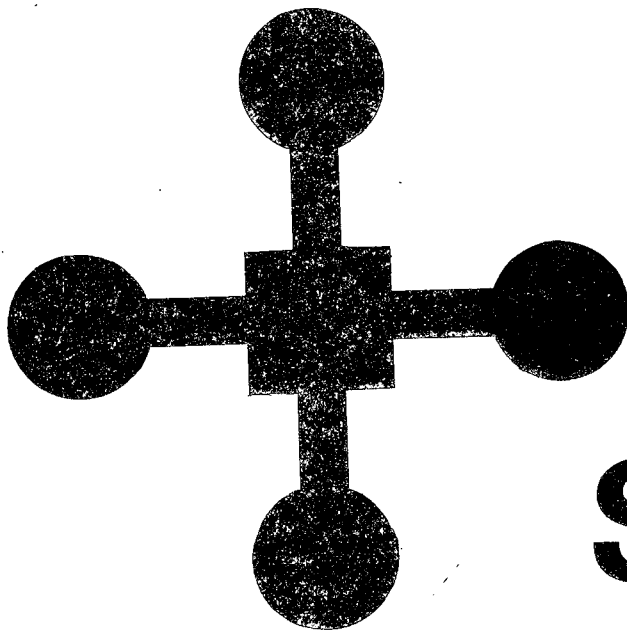
ontological conscience

TREK VIII

FREEDOM OF OBLIGATION

THE FINAL ACCOUNTABILITY

ultimate judgment



Men of the Spirit

A sixth grader remarked, after the introduction and use of rituals in a Madison, Wisconsin, church school, "I don't know whether I can ever just say 'Hi!' again; it sure doesn't do much to help people face the lions in their lives!" An elders' study group in a Kansas City galaxy church corporately wrote the pastor's Thanksgiving sermon while he was on another assignment and then briefed him before he went into the pulpit.

Congregations in the Local Church Experiment are beginning to know again what it means to experience "awe" as miracles continue to happen in the midst of their everyday life. A galaxy church in the Midwest discovered three visiting clergymen present on one Sunday morning. One was from over 500 miles away. Each pastor was seeking confirmation of the amazing reputation this church had recently received for powerful corporate worship and new lay leadership.

A suburban galaxy church in Ohio recently exceeded its annual budget by \$12,000. Its Every Member Canvass was accelerated when the entire youth group of sixty-five pledged a total of \$1300. This in turn initiated the upgrading of pledges by 10% on the part of forty family units.

Within these churches in the Experiment, several trends are emerging. In many cases the membership has grown and the financial base has been strengthened. Worship is being slowly reformulated as it becomes more corporate and lively. A highly trained and motivated lay leadership is emerging in each local congregation. Biblical and theological study life is being intensified for all ages. As more laymen begin to commit their time and resources to their local churches, a new and missional corporate discipline is becoming visible. The parish is being impacted as congregations venture into their geographical neighborhood to engage with new seriousness and vision the sociological needs of their community and the globe.

It is the spirit happenings that have changed people's lives to allow these miracles to occur. And that is what actualizing the tactical system of the Local Church Experiment is all about.

The Local Church Experiment came into being out of the work of Summer '70. Its initiation on New Year's Eve, 1971, saw eighty local congregations enter the project. Sixty new congregations have been added on the first of January during each of the following years. The 200 congregations which now make up the project include Roman Catholic and fifteen

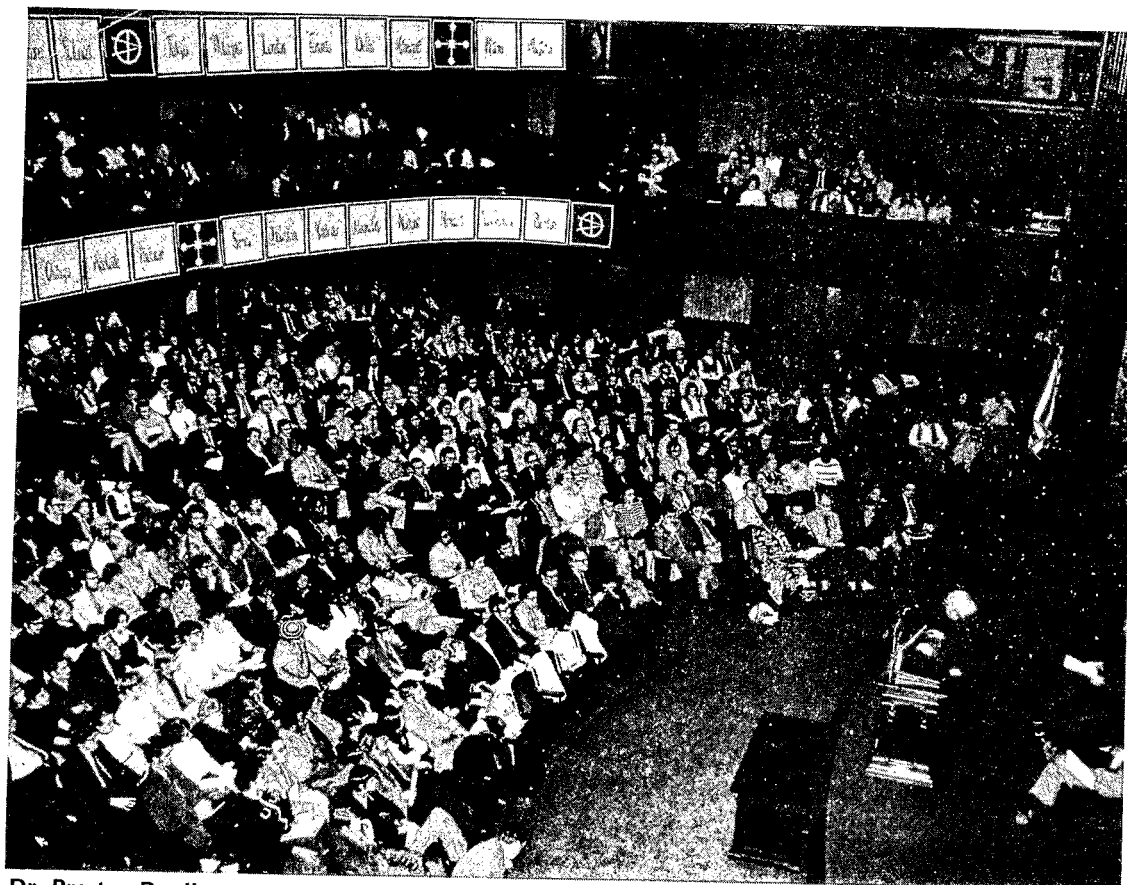
major Protestant traditions. Sociologically, these churches span the urban, suburban and exurban strata of society, with small "mission" churches as well as large affluent congregations represented. Such a varied denominational and sociological spectrum insures that the input of data is both practical and comprehensive and thus provides for a rigorous testing of the experimental model.

From Anchorage, Alaska to Miami, Florida, in forty-seven urban centers across continental North America, Fall Quarter 1972 saw local auxiliary leadership and Regulation Centrum personnel participating in fifty-eight field visits and consults. Practical wisdom from each local congregation was collected by Regulation Centrum and fed back to galactic churches in the exchange of leadership, in the quarterly visits and consults and in a weekly "data-interchange" mailing.

Once a quarter, representatives from the congregations involved in the Experiment come

together at Symbolic Centrum in Chicago for training and research. The Basic Training School is designed to train new auxiliary leadership from the project churches. The Continental Auxiliary, composed of two local churchmen from each galaxy of four congregations, meets to shape the future direction of the Experiment. This is the gathering of grass roots leadership within the Experiment, of those who work daily with the tactical system in their local congregations to initiate patterns of comprehensive care for the the Local Church.

During the ninth week of Fall Quarter, the largest Basic Training School in the history of the Experiment was held at Symbolic Centrum in Chicago. People poured into the lobby of the Kemper Building from galaxy churches across the continent. They came from every walk of life and represented every age group, from youth under twenty to elders over seventy. Their commonness lay in their decision to be the renewed church.



Dr. Preston Bradley, pastor of People's Church, Chicago, for 62 years, addresses 1500 local churchmen at Convocation closing the Fall Basic Training School.

Although the 200 churches are in different stages of their journey, this gathering of the local leadership made it clear that the Experiment is pointed toward the creation of a grassroots ecumenical parish. The trend is toward the formation of galaxies within the geographical bounds of a single parish. And the signs indicate that local congregations which have been involved in tactical actualization for two years are now authentically ready for intensive work toward creating this ecumenical parish. The turn toward the world has begun.

The extensive research necessary for building the new practical model of the parish is well under way. Along with the research of the past summer, Regulation Centrum has accumulated data from project churchmen in such arenas as the new secular mythology, methods for indirect education and grassroots training, and constructs for social involvement and reformulation procedures on the local level. The need for research and guild networks and for highly visible demonstration projects has also emerged from this gathered wisdom. The task of the continental Experiment is to pull together this overwhelming accumulation of data into a rational, inclusive and common tactical system. Thus, the whole Experiment is engaged in background research and initial testing of the parish model in preparation for the Global Research Assembly in Summer '73.



Australian colleague Brian Stanfield imaginably explains the basic dynamics of the Experiment at the Basic Training School.



Mrs. Laura Diffenbach demonstrates vigorous style of 77-year-old churchwoman at the December Basic Training School.

The decision to begin replication in each of the six areas of North America was announced in the Guild Hall as the Fall Auxiliary and Basic Training Schools came to a close. What this means practically is that there will shortly be two galaxies around one religious house. The religious house prior will work with the new galaxy, while a local pastor from the existing galaxy will assume the priorship role within that established galaxy. The decision to move in this direction was precipitated by an obvious readiness in several local situations for immediate replication. This replication comes three years ahead of the original schedule, but such representational experiments will provide the practical experience necessary to begin massive replication as scheduled in 1976.

The third year of the Local Church Experiment is now underway. Across the continent, in every religious house as well as at Symbolic Centrum, New Year's 1973 was ushered in by celebrating the coming into being of the new galaxies and the continuation of the already existing ones. Yet even in the midst of celebrating these continental pioneers, reports from colleagues across the globe were received which indicated that it is now possible to begin the Experiment globally. It is not surprising then that these local churchmen rehearse together

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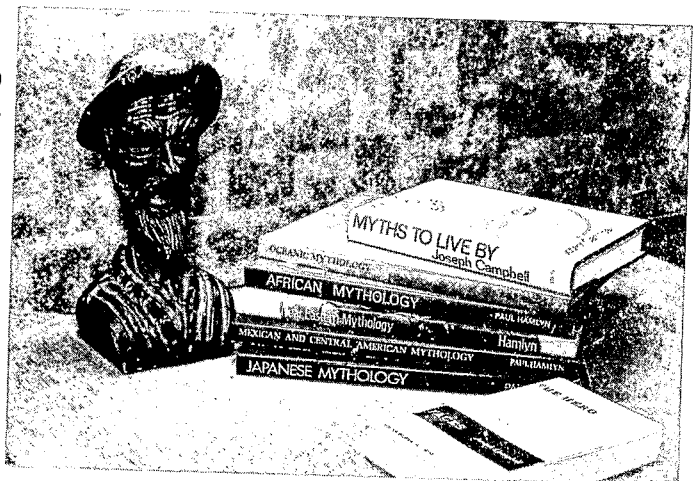
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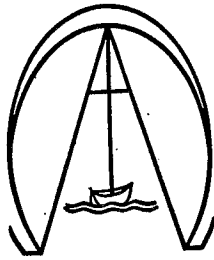
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SUMMER '73 — GLOBAL RESEARCH ASSEMBLY — JULY 1-28



February, 1973

Dear Fellow Churchman:

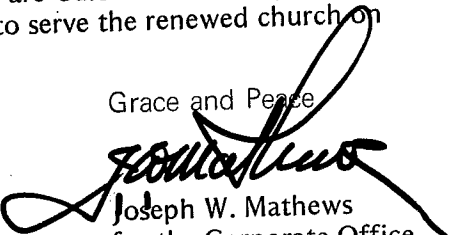
The year 1972 has disclosed remarkable signs of the Lord's activity in history. A great resurgence of the human spirit is at hand, whose signs we are just beginning to discern. The recovery of an authentic way of speaking about man's experience of the "Other World," or his interior states of being, has pointed dramatically to this resurgence. A consequence of this has been the possibility once more of knowing how to use words like "vocation" and "integrity."

We continue efforts to give powerful form to these insights, to the work of Summer '72, and to the concrete signs of resurgence which mark our time. This has led to exciting developments in the LENS course—*Living Effectively in the New Society*—formerly called *The New Individual in the New Society*. Nearly one thousand people participated in the revised form of this course during the fall quarter, and plans are underway to offer it every weekend this winter across the North American continent.

It is increasingly apparent, in the midst of all this, that the local church is destined to play a major role in the creation of the new society. As the local congregation is empowered to engage its catalytic role within society, the depths of human existence are made visible to everyman in the ordinary experiences of his life.

We stand in awe of the demands and possibilities that are ours in this new year. We continue to need your regular financial support, as we seek to serve the renewed church on behalf of the breakloose of spirit throughout society.

Grace and Peace


Joseph W. Mathews
for the Corporate Office

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