

Summer '72
Research Assembly

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THE PRACTICAL DESIGNS OF THE MOVEMENTAL DYNAMIC
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Today I want to attempt to deal with the very mundane aspects of the Spirit Movement, that is with its structures and dynamics. All of you have been exposed to much of this before, and half of you have been engaged, in this research assembly, in nothing but this. However, I learned a long time ago, praise God, to hope, and I mean that hope that chews up your being. I mean the hope which we have that is God's hope, which is found only in the midst of the boring, nitty-gritty, tactical activities. You show me a man who is not devising dynamics, structures and designs, and I'll show you a man who has never learned what hope is, no matter how much he hopes. Only the man who has his total being concerned with actualizing those dreams that God has given to him can experience hope.

I'm going to read you a poem. I put it alongside Eliot's "The Hollow Men" and Cummings' "Buffalo Bill's Defunct" as three works that have had as much to do with the part of God's spirit movement that I've been involved in as perhaps even the four papers that we read in RSI. I suppose I had read it before, but one day I stumbled across it again and really read it; it is Yeats' "The Second Coming." With the kind of hardheaded realism that is also in Cummings and Eliot, he was the first poet to give me a picture of the fact that hope is possible in the midst of the dark moments of history that our time has been.

Then, three or four weeks ago, when I was reading Joseph Campbell's new book on mythology, he quoted this, and with a kind of shock, I became aware that this hope, which Yeats encouraged us to hope decades ago, was now indeed at hand. I wish he were here now, but I thank God that you and I have found the courage to maintain ourselves during the last several decades. I don't mean to exist, but to be the intensification of existence, when, for the rest of the world, there was no hope. We therefore not only have reached this moment, but we have reached it in the sense of having eyes to behold what is actually happening beyond the veil at this time in history.

Here is "The Second Coming":

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand;
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Any man must be blind in the spiritual dimension if he does not see or sense that this moment in history will be remembered as the moment in which the Holy Spirit broke loose. For perhaps five hundred years the Spirit has been bound by the chains of institutions that have become irrelevant and by hearts which were cut off from the awareness of that other world that exists in the midst of this world. Sometimes I think I don't know much about history, and yet there are times when I think I know everything about history, because by the Grace of God you and I have lived our moment in time. Wesley said once, "Save for the Grace of God, there go I." By the Grace of God scales fell off our eyes, so that we have lived our time with all of its pain, its tragedy, its tears, its hopelessness. It makes you think that you know all about history.

And one thing that I am sure about is that when the Holy Spirit has suffered bondage, his breaking loose, his freeing himself, is a time of painful sorrow-filled wrenching. But knowing the pain and thus the eyes of men at this point, it seems to me possible to enable the Holy Spirit in his break from prison. It is almost as though you can feel him singlehandedly bending the bars, and from the outside, oftentimes it has looked crude and cruel. But a breakloose of the human spirit, or the freeing of the Holy Spirit in our time has come through difficult and painful revolutions. You would have to point to the revolution of youth, to the revolt of the non-Western world against the West; you would have to point to the pain and suffering of the black man's revolution; you'd have to point to the feminine revolution, to the pain of the urban revolution, of the scientific revolution and to the awful pain of the so-called secular revolution. It is as if every time the Holy Spirit flexed his muscles toward freedom, there were upheavals, tragedies, and pain. But the Holy Spirit is free.

It seems to me we know a great deal about history when we perceive that once the Holy Spirit frees himself, there is chaos, and a vacuum, and a swirl. And it is revolutionaries at that moment that experience the chaos most deeply. They no longer know what they are doing; they wonder whether or not they have accomplished anything. They do not know where to go; everything seems chaotic. There is a vacuum of the spirit, created by the Holy Spirit.

On our recent trip to the non-Western world, I was slowly but deeply overwhelmed by the awareness of this vacuum. A funny thing happened that I

mentioned to you before. When white Westerners like myself go to the Eastern and Southern spheres, you can hardly describe the hostility that's been there for the last twenty years since the war. But this time I found no hostility. The sensitive people in the East or South, even when they were hostile, knew that a new kind of global brotherhood was at hand. As we worked overseas, we had no final trouble with any non-Westerner. The only trouble we have ever had overseas has been with white people there who were living out of their guilt.

This time, however, the nationals of these lands in the East and the South reached out with a kind of warmth and friendliness that was so surprising that at first I didn't trust it. But then I began to trust it. And some of them, when I asked, articulated it well. What they said was that the technological revolution had won. That is to say, there is no chance whatsoever of recovering the cultures of Africa or the cultures of the Indians, East or West, in the way that the awakened people of these lands and we ourselves had dreamed possible not long ago. As they put it, the technological revolution has won. And you and I must understand this has been the mightiest, most inclusive revolution ever dreamed up by man or God. It has not only covered the world geographically, but it has covered the universe hidden down deep within every individual. The Eastern people were teaching me a lesson when they said that when fate is fate, there is no possibility of departing from fate, except with respect to the future, and even then you cannot depart from fate until you accept fate. Do you grasp that? There is sadness here, for this means that the cultures of these lands are gone.

Yet it dawned on me, that this is precisely where God's People in the world play a significant role. God's People are one; they are not many. And their task is to take those inventions of humanness that have come out of many places in the globe and distill the very essence out of each, and preserve it. Then, like a factory that spins out the future, they take the distillations of these inventions of humanness and weave them into the future that is now coming to be. In that sense, no grasp of humanness that has been invented through the trials and tribulations of history will ever be lost. But I believe that if God's People do not do that, it will never be done.

Reflecting upon this, I thought of the Chinese communities. I worked for ten years in those communities, insisting that the awakened ones try to recapture their culture and project it into the future. In one sense, I was right, although, in actuality, I didn't see deeply enough. The Asian people pointed out to me that the youth revolution within Singapore or Hong Kong, or any of the other dispersions of the Chinese people, was saying no to the ancient traditions. For example, the traditions of the family, which were firm, and fixed and glorious in their day, now are gone.

What this reflection did to me more than anything else was to make me aware of the fact that the technological revolution (and it doesn't make any difference where it came from) has equally destroyed the culture of the East and the West. Therefore, my cultureless Chinese friend and myself are brothers in a vacuum of spirituality. The Church must play the

conservor and the transposer of the great inventions of humanness out of the West as well as out of the East and the South. But this breaking loose of the Holy Spirit, of the outbreak of the consciousness of consciousness, in a radicality that is almost beyond our capacity to believe, has left this vacuum of spirituality.

I remember talking with one of our colleagues from the Marshall Islands, who urged us, "If you're going to move, you spirit people of other lands, to help us participate in this global revolution, you are going to have to move quickly." And I asked what he meant. These islanders are great storytellers, so he said, "Well, it is as though you were sailing in a big ship when a storm hit you, and destroyed the ship, but you were fortunate to get into one of the rowboats as the ship went down. Now you are out on this endless sea of the Pacific, and as you sit there, you know that you are going to get aboard the first thing that comes along that is bigger than what you are now in. You will not ask what colors they are flying; you will not ask them what they believe in; you will not even ask them where they are going; you will just get aboard."

That was his description of his experience of the vacuum in the spiritual dimension of life. All his traditions are gone, and it is sheer romanticism to think that they shall ever come again. As soon as World War II and technology hit those islands, it was gone. Do not ask at this moment whether that is good or bad; that is not the question. That is just the way it is. Then the man of faith raises the question of what he does about it. The vacuum is here, but the spirit is loose, and the function of a body of people like us is to give form to that breakloose of the spirit. In doing this, pretty obviously, we must stand in both the camp of the pro-establishment and the camp of the disestablishment, but as those giving form to that concern, we create the establishment. And only when you stand in a perspective beyond both, in which you see both as utter necessities for the continuation of the great human drama, can you be the trans-establishment and therefore be of any help. I've often said that people like ourselves do not do the revolution, but we are the ones who give form to the revolution, which enables the revolution to do itself.

What does that mean? It means bringing together the great complex of disrelated insights, that have come out of twentieth century man's struggle with the deeps, and weaving them into a topography that defines the other world. That is giving form to the Spirit Movement. I am interested in the concrete structures out of which the Movement moves and gives form to the Spirit Movement--which, I must remind you, is not your Movement, it is not our Movement, it is God's Movement. (And when you think of it in this fashion, it is not with any sense of depreciating humility, but in ontological humility, which is to stand in pride before God, not before man.) We have to grasp that we are just one little part of the great Spirit Movement, and even that we are only one of the groups giving form to it. The Movement is God's; it has nothing to do with us, and we are but one among many

manifestations of it. As we serve the revolutionary forces and the forces of the establishment, I think that giving form fundamentally boils down to three things.

Practically, it means that we have to be guardians of the comprehensive, and we have to be watchmen of the deeps. If you have a revolutionary group, you would not be out to change them into accepting some petty ideology you had or some fine hunk of poetry that you dreamed up. What you would be out to do, with your own guidelines of the comprehensive, is to enable them, within their own objectives and operating construct, to be comprehensive. You would be out to take their concepts and their constructs and radicalize them. That is guarding the deeps of humanness. You would set out to be the presence of the eschatological, which is nothing more or less than the intensification of guarding the comprehensive and watching over the deeps. That is to say that you would be out to turn your movement into sheer transparency. Whether you accomplished that or not, would be up to God. So, without trying to say, "Come and believe what we believe," or "Do what we are doing," or "Think the way we think," you would be trying to be an illustration of the transparency through which eschatological reality, or the other world, penetrates into their own being. I happen to be a Methodist, but I am not out to bend Methodism to myself, but to be, the Lord willing, a symbol of the transparency with respect to what I am concerned about so that Methodism can be that which she is concerned about.

When people have suggested that we are dogmatic or superimposing ideology, I never talk back. I do not believe the Spirit Movement should ever answer criticism; it should follow Jesus. When people criticised him, he said, "Look at what I do and what I say, and what I be." That's the answer. We do not have any ideology to superimpose. Our dogmatism--and although we have to be dogmatic, it has to be contentless dogmatism, dogmatic only about the calling--is to be the symbol of transparency which points to the radicality of humanness itself and the comprehensive dimension of temporal existence.

Now how do you get flesh and blood on that? You cannot wait for someone to tell you; you have to begin. The first thing you have to do is take the chaos out of the geography of the world. So you set up three spheres, but not arbitrarily, although there is some arbitrariness in that action. You do it in order to get yourself around every bit of data that you can, but you do not wait until you get your mind around all the data because all the data are never in. When you get on top of your available data, then you move with dispatch and power. You organize the data into a gestalt, and that gestalt then becomes the indicative resolve out of which you build your own imperatives. So, in our grid, there is one globe, three spheres and nine continents; and then fifty-four areas, 324 regions, and 1944 metros, and then 11,664 polises, 69,984 micropolises and 469,904 parishes. That is what you can do.

The reason, in a revolution, that you have to begin with the global--and that is where you begin--is not because you are out to do anything to the globe, but it has to do with yourself. Whenever a man has been a serious revolutionary, he has made a self-conscious decision about his election unto death, and he cannot possibly make that decision unless he is doing his doing in a context that is worldwide and history-long. So it has been in the beginning, is now, and ever will be. At one time, the whole wide world of the Church was the Mediterranean area. When I was a boy, the whole wide world of Ada, Ohio, included Hardin County. But if you are going to have a revolutionary in Ada, he would start with a vision of Hardin County. How could you get some weary and discouraged pastor out in the country near Billings, Montana, to find enough courage to rise up and move if he did not grasp that he was dealing with all of history and all of the universe?

Only then do you grasp the fact that you cannot be universal if you are not particular. Not until then, does the bottom blow out. Then you understand that you have yourself to be the concretion of the concretion of that globality. Two years ago, when we were invited as a body of people to go to the World Council of Churches meeting at Upsala, Sweden, I was asked many kinds of questions, and it dawned on me that the hour had come for a radical particularizing of what we were doing. I decided, inside myself, that to talk to anybody anywhere in the world, two things had to be done.

First, we had to so blow the bottom out of radical spirituality that anybody could step into our midst, and you would not have to make a talk; they would know it was there. So we built those New Religious Mode charts. We build them out of our own being--all of us. You will improve on what we have done over the next forty years, but as God is our witness, we have broken through into an authentic piety, one in which any person across the world could ground his existence.

The second thing that we set out to do in terms of particularizing was to get local congregations who themselves would be embodiments of reformulation. There is nothing that we do that is even as remotely as important as these experimental local congregations in the galaxy constructs. So when denominational officials want to see something going on at the local level that has possibilities for the whole church, it is with no small pride that I can begin to list them: "Go there, go there, and go there." Today, across this continent and in other areas of the world, you can list them by the score. That is what I mean by concretion, or the particularizing of the Movement. You do not have a revolutionary movement save you have both the comprehensive and the particular at the same time.

Now the second thing you have to do when you are thinking about the design of the whole movement, is to begin to work out what your concrete mission is, what your primal intents are, and what your inclusive objectives are. Then you have to deal with effective strategies, with tactical systems and time-designs (sometimes called strategic designs). Then you have to deal with a practical philosophy, and to lay out the actualizing principles and the operating design.

But you are not through yet. Without the grounding mythologies, you cannot have the practical side of a movement for radical change in society. Next you must have motivating symbologies; and last, you have common style designs.

Now I said to myself recently that this statement is our practical mission:

The mission of the Spirit Movement, in obedience to God, to Christ, and the Church, is to serve the needs of man and to defend the honor of God, by the catalyzation of a New Social Vehicle and a New Religious Mode, toward the humanization of all mankind.

Now you may be able to do better than that, and this is fine. But some such statement as that is the beginning of the practical designs relative to activating a revolution. Then we have to deal with the primal intents, and here, as with most of what we do, we are not creating something new, we are creating something that is new out of what we have already created over the past five, ten, fifteen years. The primal intents are: The Great Reconstruction of the Social Process, The Great Metamorphosis of the People of God, and The Great Resurgence of the Human Spirit. The inclusive objectives in this are old too. They are Contextual Re-education, Social Reformulation, and Human Remotivation. Then we can begin on the effecting strategies, the philosophies, the mythologies, the tactics, the principles, and the life.

Rarely in history have people had an opportunity like this to build from the ground up the operating design of a thrust in history, that intended to concretely order the riverbeds of history itself. I wonder about the great movements of history. Rarely has this opportunity come, and to few people. I was also thinking the other day, you could not possibly do a bad job of it--because if there were any guidelines as to how you had to do it, you would not have to do it.

Well, in the broad picture of building these concrete designs you have to remember that what you are out to do is to create something, I like to say, that you can bite into. If it is anything ethereal, if you are engaging one more time in trying to get a 4x4 on some abstraction, you are fools. These have to be tangible things.

And you have to work out the arenas in which these designs are going to operate. In one sense, your arena is only the world. In another sense, of course, it is the Church. And in a third sense, of course, it is the Movement. But you have to look at it this way, I think: the only thing you are doing is bringing order into the Movement, for the sake of the Church ordering itself, for the sake of something happening to the world. The Movement is nothing, and the Church is next to nothing. The world is the only thing there in terms of being the People of God. The People of God are nothing; and those who catalyze the People of God are doubly nothing. It is as if you are out to build a Movement that will catalyze the Church to do the job in the world.

But it is a little more complex than that. The Movement also has to work directly in the world--but only to serve as an example to the Church as to how she goes about working in the world. Do you see what I mean? The only reason you are there is to serve the Church that she might learn how to fulfill the mission of humanizing mankind.

Now, there is something else in the picture, and it is not on the chart. It is there, I suppose, but it is hidden in the Movement. We call it a historical order. A historical order is a part of humanness. I would want to insist that what I mean by a historical order is as much a part of the historical process as something in the economic such as feeding mankind. History has always moved into the future on the back of a religious order--not sometimes, but always--and this is from the primitive times even unto now. This is difficult for you to see at first glance, because if that historical order was an actual historical order, it attempted to be invisible. This means that it took seriously that it was nothing in history. Secondly, it is hard, I suppose (I don't know much about chemistry), to detect immediately the catalyzing agent in a process.

I spoke to you of the early Church, the Coptic in particular, which created monasticism. It sent its missionaries to England, Switzerland, Spain and even to India. When people ask me how the Eastern world is participating in the renewal of the Church, my first point is that the sociological forms of the Church that is coming to be are coming out of the East and not out of the West. The Coptic Church got from India the idea of the disciplined spiritual life. This showed up in the form of monasticism which was the generating power for the operation of the tactical system that enabled the Christian faith to conquer the Western world. You look to the beginning of the Hindu invention of humanness, you look to the beginning of Buddhism, you look to the beginning of the great Chinese culture, you look to the very heart of the African culture--and what you find is the set-apart body.

Now, a historical order in our day must be utterly secular, utterly ecumenical, and utterly third order, that is it must leave room for the unmarried and for the married and for those with families. This is a new moment in history.

Then it has several dynamics without which it cannot exist. You have to have something like a serving order or a symbolic order. In these days I am thinking of those sisters and brothers who worked in the kitchen in order that the other divines could perform their functions, whether it was in teaching or in contemplation or in direct service. A symbolic order would be people like myself, who serve the needs of the other dynamics that constitute the historical order.

The first of those other two dynamics is what we call the extended order. These people have to be under full and total assignment in the historical order: they have to be under exactly the same discipline that I am under. They are where they are only because the mission desperately requires that they be there. For example, one of the members of the North

Shore cadre lives in a palace in the suburbs. It irritates me, but he is going about his job of being a lawyer. He earns thousands of dollars every year, and spends most of it in order that he can keep operating the way he has to operate--if he is going to be any earthly use to the order or to the Movement. Do you see what I mean? But he is under the discipline and under assignment. If he is told tomorrow, "It is time for you to retire and get out of your firm," he gets out. He is there because the situation requires it. I tell you this is just the beginning of his kind. You must understand that that function and that role are, in the essential understanding of them, far more important than ours who serve behind the scenes.

The third dynamic, without which you cannot have your first and second, I might call the movemental order. These are people who would be under a different kind of discipline. Their dedication would be just as complete--you do not even raise that question--but their circumstances of life would require that they be under a different kind of discipline. These would all be on the front lines. Anybody in the whole wide world could be a part of it. I think of the woman who is my neighbor in the next block on the West Side of Chicago. She could not, very likely, due to her circumstances in life, be in either of the first two dynamics, but that kind of woman would be crucial in terms of any historical order.

I am not pressing--everybody has got to keep his own conscience--but I would look for the people in this room, potentially, to be a part of the historical order. This is down under the Movement, and like any order, is the nothing of nothing, but it is the generating power or fire that gives that Movement life, that enables the Movement to give the Church life, and that enables the Church to give the world life.

But what is going to be the fundamental outreach in terms of the practical communication of the concerns of the Movement? Well, it came to me this way, and this is the second thing out of the East: when Confucius thought through a design to further the humanizing process of man in his time, he thought, "The place to do this, obviously, is within the power structures." So he spent, if I am not mistaken, twenty years in the courts of the rulers of China. And after twenty years, it dawned on him that not one thing had happened, so he left, went to the country and began to gather young men about him. He trained them in this vision of humanizing what was for him the whole wide world. Then he sent them into every village in all of China. He began, as you know, the first civil service system of this world. These men took care of collecting taxes for the government, they took care of writing--they were the only people who could write--but more than that, what they were doing was injecting into the minds of man the vision. Those men are called the literati. That is one pole of the movemental order. And my Lord, what a whistle point!

We may not yet know where the whistle point for the New Social Vehicle is, and we may not yet know what the whistle looks like, but as David Scott says, we know the tune, and that is the other world. What a movemental order does, because it knows the tune, is to bridge the gap between this world and the other.

