

Order Council
Ecumenical Institute, Chicago

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CENTERING THE PENETRATION SWIRL

1. Nothing, I suppose, has consumed more of our corporate labor than the sustaining of the teaching of RS-I. It is for us, after all, the basis of all that we do. So we will look at penetration this morning, as an orientation to the work we will be doing this year in the religious houses.

2. In football, blocking, tackling, running and passing are the fundamentals; and when a team weakens, many reasons are sought as to what to do in order to win the next game. In this situation it is very common for the coach to say, "Back to fundamentals." That means going back to blocking and tackling and the very basics. This is always cause for great groans on behalf of the team--"Surely there's some other reason for the failure than the fundamentals! Perhaps it was the weather at the last three games. Perhaps it was the fact that our star tackle was out. Perhaps it was the failure of the formation strategies that were worked out." And the coach says, "Back to the fundamental." From my experience, that is not bad advice. So we will again turn to the fundamentals of penetration--schedules, prospects, recruiters, encounters, courses and completion.

3. There is a certain eagerness today to meet the demands of penetration, born of the new overwhelming urgency of the penetration task. Everybody knows that the future of the movement rests on penetration. This is now clear; it has been established. The earth depends on it. At the current rate, it will take 200,000 years to reach everyone and that is too long. It is the key to getting 50 people in our religious houses. This urgency, I think, is our mood. However, there is no new messiah that I know of to lead us to the promised land of massive penetration. Neither fantastic assaults of mass media advertising, nor stirring addresses to hordes of despairing churchmen, not even T-shirts emblazoned in gold with "Have you had RS-I only once?" will do the job. Besides, there is no need for this kind of trumpeteering, no need to sound the trumpet of a new messiah, for the messiah has come, and I mean has come again, as the world has entered upon the Great Turn and the movement has in fact already been prepared to be its corporate deliverance for this task. The urgency which we feel has prepared us for the task that lies ahead. What is necessary, therefore, is to apply better what we already know, to center the penetration swirl. "A man can be a star of the first magnitude in gifts, will power and endurance, and so well-balanced that he turns with the system to which he belongs without any friction or waste of energy. Another man may have the same gifts or even finer ones, but the axis does not pass precisely through the center, and he squanders half his strength in eccentric movements which weaken him and disturb his surroundings."

4. We are going to look first at RS-I and then PLC recruitment in the areas of schedules, prospects, recruiters, encounters, courses and completion, and the aim, blocks we are encountering and the imperative of each.

5. First, the schedule is our basic tool for penetration because that is the way that the consensus of the movement is formed about penetration.

Because of that, efficiency is not the first value in planning a course schedule. This task requires involving the wisdom of as many people as possible, and conducting the planning sessions at well-organized and spirit-filled presidiums on the basis of a four-year time-line which takes into consideration the geographical, sociological and ecclesiastical issues in your particular region. That brochure that is produced then becomes the primary symbol of penetration as part of a continental model. It should be clear, imaginal and a masterful art form.

6. The block we have encountered in the area of scheduling is the tendency to plan out of the immediacies of what is possible in penetration instead of what is needed. This is not adequate, for those engaged in church renewal in the past who have acted out of what is possible have failed, while those who have acted out of what is needed have spread all over the globe. In our immediacy often times we have planned the penetration schedule without the participation of the movement, or, for the sake of numbers and imaginal happenings, have scheduled courses we actually had no intention of taking responsibility for. It is a great thing to say that this is the quarter for four hundred people to go through RS-I; but it is not helpful if that is not really what you intend to have happen. You should plan for what you plan to get. You decide what is needed and you go out and get it.

7. As we move to the future, we need a significant increase in penetration through an uniform schedule of courses. If we were to image this year having one course each week where every religious house is located, or eight courses per quarter, we would have 1,128 courses in the continental United States. At 20 men per course, that would be a vast increase in our penetration effort.

8. Second, good prospects make good recruits; bad prospects you cannot recruit. That is very simple, but it takes a long time to learn. Prospecting is a continual job that needs to be done well in advance of a course. The best prospects are those recommended by a pastor, who may or may not be a PLC grad. It is best if he agrees either to send a letter informing them of the recruitment which is coming or to counter-sign a letter sent out from the Regional Training Institute informing them that he thinks they will be interested in the course. There are other ways of getting prospects; but that, for me, is the most helpful. The others are recommendations of friends and of course graduates and selected lists. In these cases, data should be compiled on each prospect, and he needs to receive some kind of letter through the mail before he is contacted

9. The block in gathering prospects is that there is a tendency to think that any name on file is a good name, especially those names labeled "hot prospect from last quarter". My experience is that not many of those make it to the course. In Muncie and Lafayette, for example, we called on "hot" prospects from old courses on two succeeding week-ends and with twenty people working we secured three recruits. RS-I penetration is brutal in that sense; the first contact is the best contact. Therefore, there is no point in keeping files around on prospects and keeping long lists of data.

10. The imperative here, therefore, is to gather fresh prospects before each and every course. They need to be recently recommended, which means if a pastor recommended a man a year ago, he is not a prime prospect now. To get the best prospects, I ask pastors for the names of the people who have been the

pillars of their church for years, but are growing tired, who have a story like, "It is time for someone else to have a turn." Those people turn out to be the best prospects for RS-I.

11. Thirdly, recruiters are the key to effective penetration and, at the same time, the most difficult to deal with. Both excited new grads and old hands can be effective recruiters. Excited new grads need a careful context for recruiting and careful consideration in the entire recruiting process. New recruiters should participate in an in-depth training session, which would include a context as to why recruitment is important, a chance for them to role-play a call before they go out visiting, a team assignment to go recruiting with an old hand, and a celebration when the work is done. The key task relative to the old hands is nurture and care; and, therefore, we need to pay attention to the symbolic life in the total happening of penetration.

12. Our blocks with recruiters appear when we look upon asking people to recruit as "doing us a favor", when we are apologetic about our recruitment design, or when we try to make an efficient system for employing people in recruitment and say things like, "Well, this will only take a couple of hours--you can go straight there and go straight home," or "You can go on this recruitment call and you can pick up what you need to know from the person who is with you." There are no short range immediate strategies for training a recruiter or developing a recruiter net. We need to learn that we are building for the long march now. I guess that has been one of the shifts for me this summer to see that we do not do anything that we do not think will allow us to build a movement in the next twenty years.

13. In the future, we can sit on our anxieties relative to recruiters. We discovered this summer that the Mountain of Care is an indicative, not an imperative. It is not that people should care for other people--it is not that people should care for RS-I recruitment--but that people do care. That is just a fact of life. Within every grad there is the urge to tell another man about the story he has heard. It is that indicative which we must sustain.

14. Then the most difficult control component is the recruiter net, and yet in the long run, that is the one thing that is the key to building up massive RS-I penetration. There has to be a building year by year of more and more troops until there is an army. Massive penetration is like building a pyramid. You use 10,000 men. You do not worry about efficiency. Labor is cheap--it costs nothing--so we need not worry about using massive amounts of labor, and that is needed. I have figured that it takes eight man-hours of work for every person recruited to a course. That is just the way it has been, and probably the way it will be. As I have tried to conquer my desire to invent an efficient recruitment system based on some secret, new device to unleash the efforts of a few to produce massive results, I have been reminded of the way enablement takes place around here. We do collating with 150 people doing what one machine could do in five or ten minutes or an hour. Manpower is our gift and our possibility. That is what will do the job in building a massive penetration effort. I suppose if I have any one passion in the whole of penetration, it is the building of a recruiter net, an army. That is the way to create the miracle of increased penetration.

15. Fourthly, in terms of encounters, the most effective and the only proven method of RS-I recruitment is face to face personal conversations. From my experience, the weekend massive penetration has been the most effective tool

in recruitment. Since it requires eight man-hours for each recruit, a team of two people will come back with two recruits, i.e. out of five calls made, one family should register. These figures represent the results of sending out the troops weekend after weekend, With a good prospect system, a data card in the recruiter's hand, and a letter in the prospect's hand before the recruiter arrives. The way that we have been working massive penetration in Cleveland is that we have one big push for each course. On one weekend we invest the corporate power of the region and send out twenty recruiters. You recruit twenty people as the basis of the course, and then leave it for the local people to carry on from there in week-night calling and succeeding weekends. With a base of twenty people there, that course should not fail.

16. Now the biggest block a recruitment coordinator runs into is making it clear to recruiters that the object of a recruitment call is to get a recruit. We all know that you are not trying to get the prospect to like you or to show him how great the movement or RS-I or the Ecumenical Institute is. Yet despite all the lucidity we have, we need to focus our minds on how you practically develop chastity in the midst of the actual recruiting situation so that a person can always be about his one task in that room. Thus on every recruiting occasion, someone must prepare the recruiters in such a way that they understand their task that day is to recruit the people that they call upon for Rs-I. He must brood, "How do I motivate them? How do I remove the spirit blocks? How do I give them the practical training that develops a sensitive ear to what is happening in the recruitment conversation?"

17. The recruitment of the future requires a disciplined recruitment force on assignment in objective regional structures. A systematic regional penetration net is far more effective than solely local recruitment. Data needs to be collected on group recruitment, but for now the massive penetration effort will proceed on the basis of personal encounter in face to face conversation.

18. Fifthly, courses are the crown jewel of penetration. A course can be a well coordinated, highly styled event. It needs to be held at a symbolic location such as a key church or a retreat center, and it needs to be designed in such a way that the entire event is orchestrated from the time that the pedagogues arrive to be picked up, to the set up of that course, to the receiving of registrations, to the invisible enablement. We know the pedagogical importance of the style in which a course is carried on, and that style is also a source of morale for the total penetration effort. One can not long continue recruiting for courses that do not come off as highly significant events. I need to know that the person that I recruited and invested my life in was at an intentional highly symbolic event.

19. Though we know its importance, in my experience it is still difficult to maintain the style of a course, particularly where you want to raise up and count on local responsibility. For example, this past year in Lafayette we had a course at a retreat center in which the kitchen was in the middle of a seminar room, there was no host at the Indianapolis PLC, and in one of our RS-I's in Indianapolis, our sector coordinator, who has not had RS-I, enabled his own course. Things like this happen, and yet there will be no future to the penetration effort unless we can have every course be an intentional, highly symbolic spirit happening.

20. Practically speaking, the course location needs to be secured well in advance; enablement timelines are needed with clear assignments at every point;

and only one person should be in charge of the course. The religious house needs to see that every needed model is provided, that the models are simple, and that there is a way to see diagrammatically which step comes next.

21. Sixthly, completion means that the course is not over when the meal closes. The report of the pedagogues needs to be received, and they are to be taken to the airport. There is the clean-up of the location and that is crucial, for here we dramatize the style with which we have decided to impact the historical church. There is a letter of appreciation to the host church, materials to be returned, bills to be paid. Contact is made with new grad colleagues, and their experiences of the course are affirmed. They are invited to a follow-up meeting and the names of new prospects are secured. The pastors are informed about which of their laymen attended the RS-I and told about the kind of event that the course was. Running courses, it seems, is kind of like running a Model T. If my father's stories are correct, Model T's apparently had a way of stalling periodically, and like the Model T you have to crank the course through each one of its stalls to its completion.

22. The religious house is the one who finally cares for the style and spirit of the penetration effort, and people will invest themselves only in worth-while events in a contemporary collegial mode. Our goal is to build a growing penetration system, but the power goes out of a system when ruptures are left unattended. Therefore, the task is to build an ongoing well-styled, thoroughgoing, completed penetration system. That, I would submit, is our only hope for the future.

23. PLC recruitment is a different world from RS-I. It is a more sophisticated task, at least in the context of the tradition and history of the church. It requires a different kind and degree of intentionality. The clergy is the key to the reformulation of the church, and therefore the task of PLC recruitment rests on the back of the priors of the religious house. Unlike RS-I, it is not necessary in PLC recruitment to have a burgeoning recruitment force. What is essential is a steadily increasing, hard core of recruiters, who know the church inside and out, and who get to know the church by going on hundreds of PLC calls. This core of several key pastors works with the religious house as a cadre operating out of the image that PLC recruitment is the movement's way of taking responsibility for the historical church.

24. In PLC recruitment you are dealing with a fairly limited number of prospects. Therefore, a core of people working one day a week, week by week, quarter by quarter, year by year can impact a large geographic area. For instance, last year we called or at least phoned every church and every pastor in Indianapolis. I can assure you we did not call all the laymen in Indianapolis for RS-I. The PLC is a different animal. The job here is nurture and sustaining, not only grads, but prospects.

25. It is important for PLC recruitment that the schedule be as regular as possible, so that PLC's can be anticipated within a local area the same week every quarter, year after year. The schedule is planned a year in advance, and a copy is kept in each pastor's hand. Also, to increase the number of grads in your PLC, increase the number of courses, rather than trying to increase the size of the present courses. It has been my experience that by having one and trying to increase the number, you will have 25 people.

26. Every pastor is a prospect for a PLC, and that includes lay non-pastors. Therefore, it is not much of an exaggeration to say that a directory is just as

good a source of prospects as the names your friends give you. In my experience, one out of seven pastors visited registers for the course, and one of ten will come. That means that if you are starting with new prospects you have to call on 200 to get a course of 20, and that means 200 man hours of calls alone, or 25 man days of recruitment.

27. Since it takes many people a year or two years to make it to the course, we have to maintain contact with prospects, to sustain them until the moment is right for them to come. I have not had a great deal of success with this, at least in the space of a year, so you will probably still have to make as many calls as you would starting with all new prospects; but we need to develop ways of sustaining prospects for courses a year or two or three later.

28. Pastors need to be encouraged to give one day per week for PLC recruitment. It seems that a pastor can sustain himself in his decision to be the historical church by participating in this activity regularly by which he seeks to renew that ailing institution. Recruitment is the pastor's primary missional task in the movement, and many pastors will be sustained by engaging in no other self-conscious movemental activity than just going out every week and making recruitment calls. A kind of clergy collegiality develops around PLC recruitment more so than in any other movemental activity.

29. In making a request of a pastor to be a recruiter, it is necessary to present him with a comprehensive and intentional format for his decision. That means you do not say, "We are going recruiting next Tuesday afternoon." You say rather, "If you want to recruit for a PLC we are having a training meeting next Wednesday morning, and then the following week we will go recruiting." That way he understands that it is a very serious task. Unfortunately, there are no short cuts that I know of to increasing participation in the movement. Probably the only people who do participate do so because they have seen seriousness represented, and have made an existential decision to participate in that seriousness. All too often I suppose, it is our own apologetic efforts to see that people are efficiently employed that stifle their decision to participate.

30. Now, not everything has been said here about recruitment. Nothing has been said directly about the course drop-off. Nothing has been said about cancellation, because I have no plans for failure and neither should you. There are just not any cancellations. It is very simple to understand that, and it allows you to make all kinds of decisions without worrying very much. If your course is being cancelled, you do not worry about it. You go out and pull it off. That saves all kinds of time worrying about whether it is going to cancel or not. Nothing has been said in the first instance about recruitment and the Other World. We have a new movement, and we have a new spirit screen; but this is no messiah. It will probably be crucial in sustaining our recruiters, and enabling them to understand themselves in a new way; but it will only be indirectly helpful in the recruiting itself. Nothing has been said about the enduring values of the course, because it needs no defense or tribute.

31. The demands are great now upon us, but we must learn as spirit men not to live as the great imperative, but ever to invest ourselves more in the indicative reality of RS-I. This is the form in which the spirit explodes within us; this is our life. In the local there will be no sudden increase, no sudden miracle, no sudden quantum leap in recruitment, but there will be, there needs to be, an incremental growth every quarter both to increase the average participants per

course in every course, from 17 to 18 or from 22 to 23, and to add a course every quarter. When that happens across 47 religious houses, and across the globe, there is a miracle, there is a quantum leap. We will not see it, but we will participate in it as a corporate body.

32. I suppose if there is a key to recruitment, it is the decision to see that penetration is the basis of our life. The house priors are a sign of this. Most priors will find it necessary to spend two days a week PLC recruiting, and two weekends a quarter RS-I recruiting. The religious houses and other movement leadership impact the movement with the priority of penetration as they demonstrate it in the way they train themselves and constantly rehearse their concern.

33. I heard a story last week, about an old District Superintendent in Indiana. He said he was of the old school, which he thought was better than the new school, because when he went out to care for his pastors he never pressed them about their doctrine of the church and never questioned them about structures. He just asked, "How many conversions did you get?" That is our final task: to ask "How many conversions did you get?" I think conversions is a good word, for perhaps we need to emphasize that there are no gimmicks. There is only a change of consciousness, a change of mind that will allow a man to go to RS-I.

34. RS-I is recruited not by trickery but because there are people with a real need to be filled. If they are made aware of that need, they will come. They are the ones we want, and there are millions of these. This, then, is the necessity and the possibility of centering the penetration swirl.

Herman Greene

