

STATE OF THE MOVEMENT

We welcome each other in the awareness that the invitation to be in the movement comes from the Lord himself. In that name, we know we belong together, whether we have been here every Presidium since they began, or whether this is the first time we have been here, it does not matter. For none of us has been at this particular Presidium before. It is a brand new one in the midst of brand new life, and we are new like we have never been before. Whatever we have been about this group has changed our life forever. That is just to say that we are welcome here through the invitation of the Lord himself. We have been invited to give of ourselves in responsibility to a time we can enjoy in ways we hardly believe ourselves.

At three o'clock this morning, or perhaps it was a thousand years ago, mystery dropped into my life again and I became aware that I really have only one thing to say to you today, and that is—be present to the Word. Be present to the Word. That is all you can hear; that is all I can say. Just be present to the Word.

Mystery came to me another way, and that was back in July when our good prior, George Walters, brought back the 20 Programs of the Movement. We sat there one morning reading IRA, CCC, LENS and ...what do you say to Mystery? I began to see that these were talking about globality and global care right down in the Local Congregation. Thank God that is where my heart is. That is where it is at for me. I was beginning to see that that globe out there was what he was talking about.

This shift we have experienced is meaningful. For a couple of years I have been wrestling with the mystery of the triangles. The shift seems to be moving out of the Knowing pole into that Doing pole, or to engage authentically in the humanness by picking up every human resource. It is moving from the intensiveness of humanness over to the extensiveness of humanity. So that light, or that shift, is shining through the stream of the 20 Programs.

I have my story of the State of the Movement to tell you. I'm not sure what Impact is to you, I know what it was to me at age thirteen or fourteen when a number of us won a trip to Yosemite for two weeks, all expenses paid. It was the first two weeks of June, the snow was still high in the mountains and the river was being fed by the melting snow. And we got up on the bridge that spans one part of the river and jumped off. That water was about sixteen degrees below. If you don't think that wasn't impact!...Perhaps Impact is like that, I'm not sure.

It seems to me that it has to do with the grid of where each one of us lives. It is an impact coming in on those parish grids. It's like St. Paul when he staked out those pieces of turf, God said to him, "There, impact those!"

Well a hundred and five years ago a group of Presbyterians, who were in the process of being weaned from Calvary Presbyterian Church, moved way out south of town, set up shop, and opened the door that turned it into the Trinity Presbyterian Church. Eighty-five years ago a little congregation named Stuart Memorial Presbyterian Church was born; and they set up shop. In the long course of history these two congregations produced 190 years of history together. Three years ago, they were merged into the Mission United Presbyterian Church.

Or maybe the Impact comes in the Clergy Collegiums or what we have been experiencing with PLC's where we recruit and recruit and recruit and nobody comes. Impact comes in the Clergy Consult. We worked on a corporate model for recruiting. It was like everything I have been experiencing in the Movement. There are no models for it. You are out there doing what has to be done without knowing how to do it. But I know the experience of watching the impact of a Clergy Consult come off. You see that, for the first time in Reno, all the down-town pastors meet who had never met to even say "Hello," have coffee, or care about what's going on in their own churches. Through songs and the service you watched those churches begin to come alive, begin to impact each other. Then we have what is called a mobile House. Impact is through LENS Consult recruiting, pulling together for a luncheon 65 people out of an area, who have been spread apart by ethnic mindsets and other barriers, existing for years with political jealousies that had been ripping people apart.

Yesterday, while sitting and brooding in the Editorial Office I looked up at the wall and saw their ritual. It said, "We bring to the world a new tongue, to give words to the urgings of it's soul." Perhaps that is Research. It is finding out how the Ecumenical Parish begins to bridge a gap by breathing through the Local Church and the Parish. It is hearing people cry out for that Word needed to be said. It is being confronted with the demands of replication. It is the urging of the World to be heard; straining to articulate its deeps. The Ecumenical Parish begins to look like that Research center, where we will discover where those urgings are. Maybe it's just the mission parish itself that needs to be researched. There you will find troops — a thousand people with all their biases, with international strains, with all the reduced images, with all the collapsed structures, with all the pain, and all the suffering, and all the jealousy, and the usual kind of cut-throats, and people trying to get their own vested interests into history.

I saw 5th City in Summer '72, and I experienced climbing down in the basement of an apartment on the corner, shoving garbage and dirt out the window; and a young man coming up to me, about twenty years old, saying, "Just what are you doing here?" I knew why, but it was an experience to have a whole model come alive, as he listened to a design for global possibility. I went home from Summer '72 knowing that that sign of possibility was for now. Somehow or other, the Lord is saying that that is what must happen now.

I experienced Summer '73 producing the materials on the Guild and the Ecumenical Parish, reading it, and in coming back to San Francisco, finding out that now the possibility is the sign.

Spirit people are out to recreate the Local Congregations on behalf of all the world. It is as if this is the primitive Church all over again, recreated. In the movie, Cool-Hand Luke, remember that fight, when he is out there digging that grave for the coffin, and how he died his own death. Maybe that is what the Church is doing. It is digging its own grave on behalf of all men. In Dying you have re-creation. That is what Demonstration is all about. It is the Hunter Warrior. Our House and Galaxy priors would ask us again and again, "What does the Hunter-Warrior look like?" I think I know. Yesterday, as we sang again, "To Dream the Impossible Dream,"—well, the Hunter-Warrior looks to me like the Incognitor. To dream the impossible dream is to become an incognitor. That is, that last demand of that song is that my life is to be that incognitor, to enable other men to become that incognitor. Maybe that is what Demonstration is all about.

In our Local Church experiment we have been meeting at a building every fourth week in which we are jammed in with the Housing Committee of the Mission Coalition Organization. We kind of got under each other's feet, though nobody seemed to mind too much. When it came time for the Sodality Celebration, somebody said, "Why don't we have a fiesta?" and someone else said, "But in this situation, how can we have a fiesta?" "Let's invite the Mission Coalition Housing Committee—they'll go." So we did, and I declare to you that that fiesta turned into the greatest happening. Here was a group of all kinds of people who didn't know us. There was a great dance where everyone danced together, and some lovely Peruvian ladies danced their beautiful dances—and the barriers began to crumble. There is not a one in that Galaxy who will not say to you that it was at that moment the Ecumenical Experiment was born. Here was the secular world, and that Local Church Experiment went on and on and the birth of that Ecumenical Parish began to happen.

Two of our galaxies—one from Oakland and one from San Francisco—at their last meeting, invited the community to see what the Local Church Experiment is all about. About thirty people came in for supper and the meeting. That is Demonstration. Demonstration is having four races gathered around a war board. If you want a thrill then let that secular man who's got some spirit come in to help you build that warboard and you tell him about the Parish, and the Congregation, and the Cadre.

What does the revolution demand? It demands the presence of "priests" who care about your whole situation more than numbers or budgets. When a colleague deals with your life, that sense of presence gets demonstrated.

Demonstration is the first miracle story told by Mission Five. There were people raking and chopping, kids and soft drinks and coffee and doughnuts and everybody gathered around the fire and folks dancing all morning. What that took was the lives and the spirit of the people on those blocks. Kids came over and asked, "Can we help?" Neighborhood women came over, bringing coffee. Miracles happened. It came off. That Guild is in the process of being that demonstration—not doing it but being that demonstration.

Remember how the Lord said to Phillip, "Get you down there and baptize that eunuch." So, he went down and baptized him, but afterwards he hung onto that guy's chariot saying, "Hey, wait for me; I've something to tell you!" I am not

sure but what Training is like that. For me, to talk about the Local Church is to talk about the cell, that core in the Local Church which is always hanging on, always running, calling, "Wait for me, I've got something to tell you!" The Church is that of great spirit people with great spirit wisdom, experience, and most of all, commitment, who are fully alive to the indicative to live these times. A 75-year old spinster, who was a secretary-file clerk for most of her life, sat across the table from a brown ur man of about 35 years of age. This is what I would talk about as training. That man and that woman are the Corporate Clergy. Training is when the pastor lives out the tension of his commitment to Christ and the exemplifying of that by becoming the Local Congregation.

On the other side of that commitment is the global context, that global sense: and tension exists there. There is training need here— not to relieve the tension, not to resolve the anxiety, but to get some clarity on how that local parish priest and pastor is necessary.

I can not tell my story without the final chapter of enigma -- that looks like the fifteen years I spent in Texas when every once in a while I would get an aroma of the Austin, Texas Faith and Life Community. But I never went near the fire. Now, twenty years later, after ten years of despair, those acres of anguish, the Lord of history has blown me rapidly into a new fire; he put me over against the white heat of missional engagement. And I find myself among a host of colleagues. (One of whom is Keith Packard who was in my first Communicants' Class in El Paso.)

Now I suddenly realize that there is no way I can talk about the State of the Movement, because I am that Movement. I am that Movement. There are countless others: Julio Valdivieso, is that movement, Rosa Marie Avilar, Marjorie Jackson, Edward Vega, Victoria Ayres, Bruno Antoni, Elba Tuttle are the movement.

--Charles Schindler