

Ecumenical Institute
Chicago

Order Youth Council

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STATEMENT FROM THE SECOND GENERATION

When you get the document itself, I am certain you will be impressed by its quality, its importance, its clarity. I am only concerned that you will not be impressed enough, because the most important things that the document has to say are the things that it doesn't say overtly -- but they are there because of how it was written and what happened in writing it.

I want to talk for a moment about the methodology in writing the document. But first I want to say that the most important thing the writing of the document demonstrated and which you need to know is that there is a second generation of the order. More than just the children of those who come together to be an order -- but there is a second generation of the order. And there it is in front of you.

There have been times when we have had our doubts as to whether or not that was the case; whether we would have a second generation of the order or something else. With writing this document and being down there in the South House, we do know that there is a second generation of the order.

And then the methodology; the way we put it together. Methodology is a whole different word for me since Summer '71, in that it used to mean steps, mechanics. Now it means what is at the center of what you are doing, when you are doing what you are doing. In other words, it is perspective, or stance or ideology. Our perspective, which is at the center of what we were doing, came out the image of the youth as, I guess, the new of the order. That faith presupposes that we were the new of the order, concerned for the order; standing at the center of our methodology was what permitted us to write what we wrote. There is not one complaint in this copy. Not one. It is written from the perspective of caring that an historical third order be born in the twentieth century.

And then in terms of the methodology, corporateness was the methodology. That was another of the things at the center of what we were doing when we were doing what we were doing. And it is strange the dynamics of how central corporateness becomes when what you are writing about for four days is yourself. You ought to try that sometime. Write about yourself for a period of time. One thing is that the passion flows in an incredible sort of streaks and burps. The passion is there for your selfhood.

And detachment is there. You have the tension in writing about yourself of writing something that has nothing to do with you but a dynamic of which you represent. That's why the detachment was a key. We had to have a way to channel and get detachment on the kind of passion that flows automatically.

Third, at the center was religiosity. I know what I mean; this document is about nothing external. It is about spirit. When you read some external suggestions in this document, you are reading about what an external issue has done to a group of people who have struggled over an external issue, internalized it, and made a decision about it; and you read that external issue. That is what I mean when I say this is a religious document. There is no externality about it. And there are parts that are overtly religious and talk about the spirit journey. But you should understand that experiences permeate and undergird everything that is in it and the depth of the passion with which we wrote about it.

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That is what I mean by methodology. Other than that I would say that the workshops and so on were very helpful. That is the other side of the methodology.

Now, I want to talk about the imperatives. This is so hard to say I am going to do it differently than I had planned. I had a practical-theoretical thing going, but what I remember more than any other thing was this: one time in Cadre Four in the midst of a workshop, when the whole group decided that we had to take enough time out to get clear on just exactly what the story of Isaac and Jacob was, I thought we were doing that as a sort of pause in our brainstorming, but I changed my mind. I want to talk about the imperatives that come out of this for the order itself, and then a little about the imperatives for Jacob here in the middle; because what we were talking about with Isaac and Jacob was that inheritance or that blessing. You will remember that Jacob, for some reason I cannot fathom, decided he wanted the blessing which made him the one who stood before God as the inheritor of the promise of the future. You almost want to say he didn't know what he was doing when he decided he wanted that birthright. But he for some reason thought he wanted it; and he worked, doing everything from cooking stew to putting on hairy lamb's robes, to fool his father when he went in to get it; scheming with his mother to trick Esau off into the desert to get in there and get the birthright.

The imperative on the center table here is to see that birthright. We know that you worked feverishly to receive it; and we should admit that we are not naive about what we are seizing. Jacob did not inherit the promised land. He inherited the promise that there would be a promised land. We know we don't inherit an historical third order. We inherit the right to be the people who build with our lives an historical third order, and there is no naiveté at this center table about what it is you get into when you get into that. None. Naiveté about practical nitty-gritty, naiveté about details; but no naiveté about picking up a religious order, community life style, and the imperative to seize that birthright.

And an imperative on all of us here, and particularly the first generation. We give you permission to bless us. That is to say, we give you permission to lay the foundation; to build the model; to do the life and death work that has to be done in creating an historical third order. You could not do it if we did not give you permission. You would have to wait until a generation from now if you were going to do it. You do -not have a family order until you get the permission of the second generation. And you have it. You have gotten it. You have that permission. So the imperative on you all: build that model; do that job. We will receive that which you do. And on behalf of Lindsay Buss, Jr., our lives are invested in building an historical family order. And I guess I won't talk about what it means to actually inherit the promised land that our children will inherit. You wonder if you want to start off on the journey at all when you think about that. But the inheritors of the promise are among you.

And I am done.