

THE WELCOME

Good evening to all of you. I am genuinely glad to be here tonight. I'm sure you feel as I do, that there is nothing that fills the heart like seeing colleagues that have been absent from your life for a period of time. It's great to be here. We have come from all over the globe from as many situations as there are souls in this room. Some of you have arrived with the taste of victory fresh in your mouth, and others have come with the taste that comes from standing and maintaining the situation.

As I thought about this evening it occurred to me that I could bring a different view to this research assembly than I may have brought in the past. In the last six months I have been watching all that we have been doing from afar, though not as far in miles as some of you. I think that perspective leaves me with two things to say this evening, one in the form of what we lawyers call a caveat and the other, an admonition. I leave to you whether there is any difference in those two terms.

First, the caveat. We have been a very fortunate people. What we have accomplished would not have been possible in any other time in history. We have lived to see great changes take place in our own time: the disappearing of imperialism from the earth, the rise of Third World nations and even the California tax revolt. What this signifies, as you know, is that we are suddenly in the age of local man. Without this phenomenon, our work in Human Development Projects around the globe would not be possible.

Did you hear what Alexander Solzhenitzen said last week at the Harvard commencement ceremony. I believe it has significance for us. According to Solzhenitzen, we, Americans and the West have turned our backs on the spirit and are headed inevitably toward a Communist state. I believe what Solzhenitzen has not seen and has therefore missed is the profound change in the religious life in the West which we have so fortunately gauged and participate in. There is in the West today, and in fact in the entire globe, those I would call the 'practical religious'. They are the people who are going about setting things right in the world. They look in no way like religious people if you are looking for the old signs with which we used to identify people as religious. I would say that in many ways we have walked hand in hand with this historic trend. And this walk was not entirely by our own design. The age of local man is the new manifestation of the practical religious in our time. Local man is setting things right in this world.

If anyone still questions whether we have been fortunate and have prospered let me tell you of a recent experience. Earlier this year, I was in New York City to accept, on your behalf, a grant of \$600,000 from International Telephone and Telegraph. Can you believe it? At one time, in my own memory, that amount of money would have provided twenty years of our annual budget. This doesn't sound like a caveat and yet it is. It takes no wisdom to say that society will swallow up any institution that it finds troublesome or that will let itself be swallowed up. Everyone knows that if

you want to find those people who were leading the riots in the sixties, all you need to do is go to Washington D.C., and there they are working in the government. I am not saying this is bad, nor am I saying that the Spirit Movement should not become part of the establishment. My only concern is that this not happen to us unconsciously. Don't you remember how clear it all was once? There was the wedgeblade and there we all were out on the point. I guess what I hope someone will do this summer, is to create a new image that makes clear to me just where we are now.

And now the admonition. This summer, as in other summers, will be hard work. But more important than that, this summer, unlike some other summers, must be fun. If you ask me why, my answer is because that is the way it was meant to be. And I speak with some experience in this matter. For the past six months I have sorely missed my colleagues stopping at my office, generally around five o'clock in the afternoon, to discuss important business of the Institute. I don't know why it was five o'clock, but it seemed to be the best time. Now some of you know I have moved and so I miss those experiences. Those of us who become so involved and serious that we don't have fun fall into that old 'veil of tears' concept of life from which we graduated a long time ago. We also have diplomas to show we graduated. Now then, I will leave you to begin this fourteenth Global Research Assembly with the admonition, "Have a great time."

David Wood