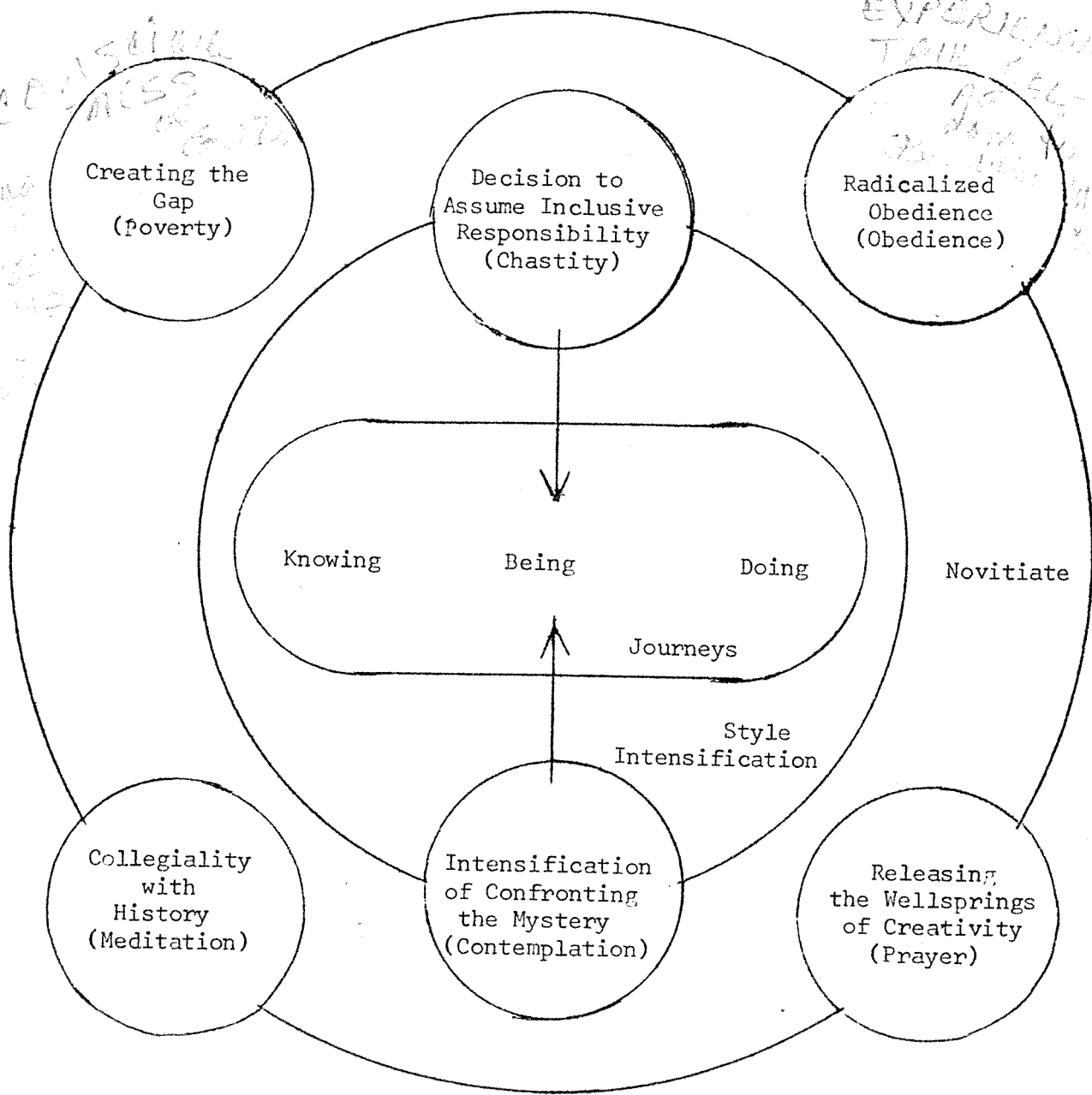


ORDER TRAINING AND THE JOURNEY OF THE SPIRIT



Collegium
 Ecumenical Institute: Chicago
 March 28, 1971

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

You almost have to have some kind of symbolic articulation that gives you the courage to stand before the task of talking about the training of the Order and the Journey. I was deeply addressed, as I am sure most of us were, with the encounter of Gideon with Being itself, and the story of his journey. I think it is particularly significant because this points to a time in the life of our Order where the journeys are coming to the fore. One can not help but read the New Testament and have the journeys just spin it into a whole new existence for us. Something is afoot that is pressing us at this time in our history into revealing the journey of the man of spirit.

At this time we want to look at four dimensions of the journey in Order training. The first is our History, for I found I was pressed to locate us in the whole journey that we have been as a movement. So the history of our journey is a context for looking at Order training. Then I want to talk about Training, Phase I, Training, Phase II, and then the Temptations.

The journey of our order began out of the World Council of Churches meeting back in 1954 in Evanston, Illinois, but I want to start our history with 1956 and talk in our imaginal four-year blocks. From 1956 to 1960 we were just honing out the whole dimension of RS-1, and working in the university. RS-1 was a practical articulation of the theological shift in our time that would enable the laymen across our world to get a grasp of what it meant to be a man of faith. This was pulling together and putting into a common form the twentieth century theological revolution. There were 13 sessions in RS-1 back there in the beginning. Then in 1960 to 1964 we went to the whole arena of CS-1 or to the arena of the cultural. We saw that if the Church were to be relevant in our time, we had to plunge to the deeps, and out of this was born the whole CS curriculum with the model of the scientific, urban and secular revolutions. From 1964 to 1968 we worked on the Cadre and upon the whole missional focus of a body of people who were out to bring about revolutionary change. From 1968 to 1972, the emphasis is in the category of the Movement and in 1972 to 1976 it will be in the category of the Globe. Of course, often these timelines get speeded up. For example, the Movement impinged upon us in 1964-1968 and the Globe has already impinged upon us. (See Chart I).

If you were to put this into blocks, in 1956 to 1964 we were dealing with the knowing. Our journey here was first getting clarity on the Word and on the World--just practical rational clarity. From 1964 to 1968 we were pushing the area of the Doing. And we did. You can hardly believe it, we were doing about 18 hours a day--almost to the point of nervous collapse. This was a time of doing that was overwhelming. We emphasized the social. In 1968 to 1972 we pushed into the arena of Being, where we were pressed into the whole dimension of the Religious.

To push a little further in two of these four year blocks would be helpful. From 1964 to 1968 we worked in the arena of doing, of getting clarity on the mission. In the first year of that block, 1964 to 1965, we were primarily localized here in Chicago, working with the RS-1 course, although there were explorations out in penetration. In the next year, 1965 to 1966 we pushed in the arena of primary penetration, going to major regional metropolitan areas, covering broadly the totality of geography that we had on our hands at the time. This whole section here would be under the doing of the Word, getting the Word out into history. Then in 1966 to 1967

the major thrust of our time was getting the Fifth City model built. We moved hard into community reformulation and put flesh and blood on that model in terms of social force. In Summer 1966 we had Council I which began to get hold of our posture in the movement. We began to forge the basis for Document I, The Declaration of the Spirit Movement, which was published in 1967 in the next summer session. (See Chart II).

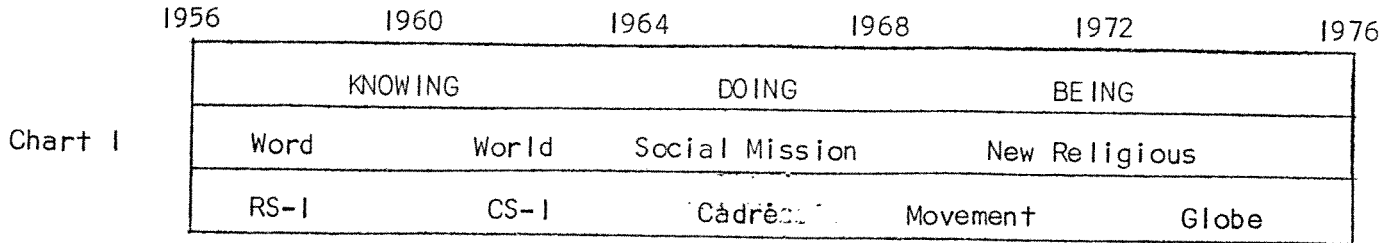
The summers themselves were just great. In Summer 1965 we pushed in just getting ahold of the cultural curriculum with college students. And in Summer 1966, we had a full blown course on the cultural curriculum while in Summer 1967 we pushed out of the cultural curriculum into the social and into community reformulation as well as pedagogical training. We were beginning to build and train the troops of the movement in the basic fundamentals. We were also experimenting ourselves. A strange kind of thing happened right about here after Summer 1967 in our whole journey. It was like we had pushed and pushed in the arena of action and we came up against the fact of colleagues collapsing and the presence of the kind of nervousness that told us unless something happened we were in for the end of our task. As a result, the faucets were turned off and a retreat from Doing was made as we went into the arena of the exploration of what it was to be the New Religious.

We had the thing that we called the College and it was out of that we moved into our next four years of research and development in the whole arena of the New Religious. So our shift was rather dramatic. When all those people who were engaged in social revolution hit Summer 1968, it was like "What in the world has happened to the movement?" or "What in the world has gone on in the Order? They have gone wackey." and many of us thought we had. We got up at three in the morning and we did a solitary office in which we didn't even know what we were doing. We gave lectures that were in the area of the religious and we were trying to hold the wisdom that we had. You might call this summer the summer of the New Secular-Religious. (See Chart III).

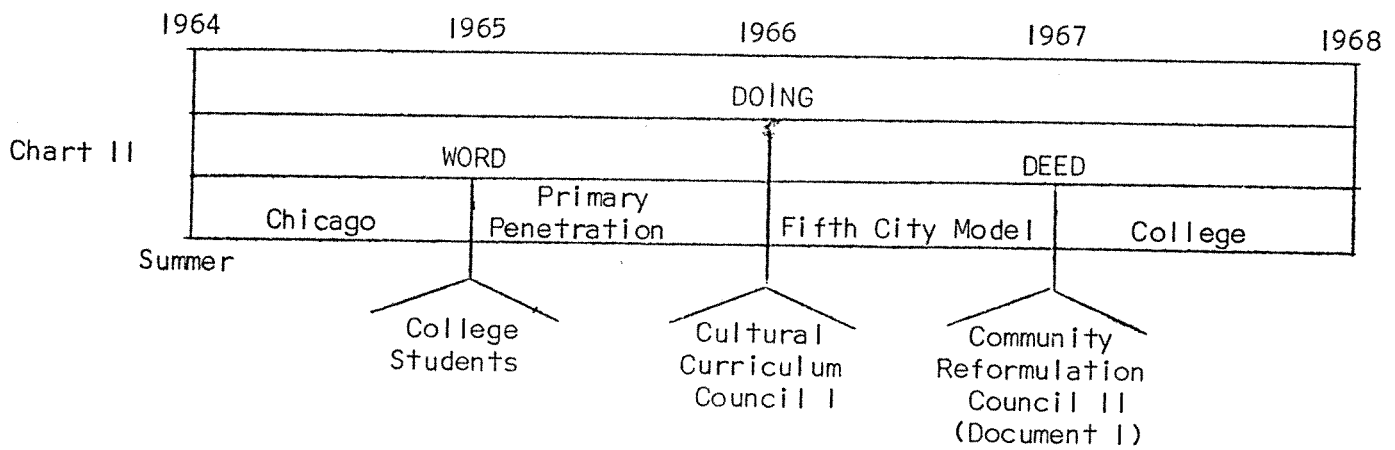
In the midst of trying to meet the crisis that had come in the movement with the kind of collapse came the Religious House experiment in 1968 to 1969, the building of the New Religious Mode, and the creation of the Ecclesiola. It was hard intensification of the religious. As you see, if you are to do any kind of intellectual work, or any social reformulation, only the religious in history are able to stand the overwhelming kind of weight that task brings. For finally, revolutionary consciousness is only born in the very deeps of humanness itself. It was that knowledge that drove us to forge the New Secular-Religious Mode. The Academy also was starting to come into being here and was fullblown by Summer 1969. What we found in becoming the religious was the radical intensification of the intellectual, of getting more completely on top of the whole knowing dimension of our time.

Then we moved in 1969 to 1970 and 1970 to 1971 to the re-entry plan for the local church. That decision came out of the conclusion of Council IV which wrote the theoretical model of the Local Church. Out of that corporate push, work on the re-entry plan went on during 1969-1970. And then Summer 1970 came last year and that was intensified doing if you ever saw it. We worked on the local church practice model--but what happened was that we literally had a religious revival. This was the first religious revival in the 20th century that was genuinely rooted in the reality of our times. Then people went home and collapsed--you could hardly get them on the phone. It was such an incredible impact.

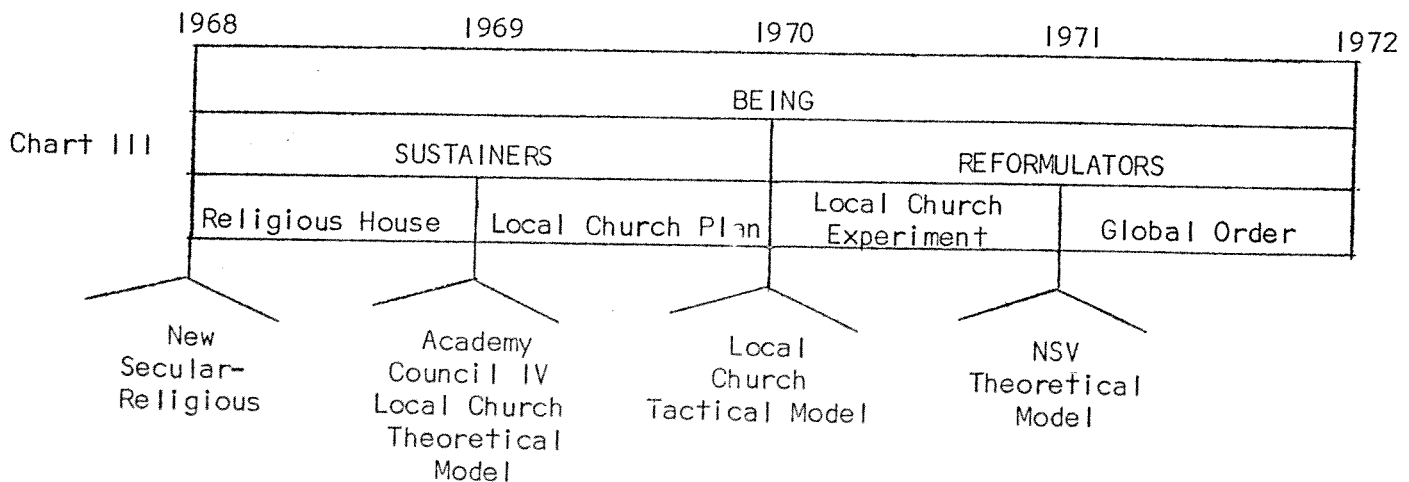
TWENTY YEAR TIME LINE--1956-76



FOUR YEAR TIME LINE--1964-68



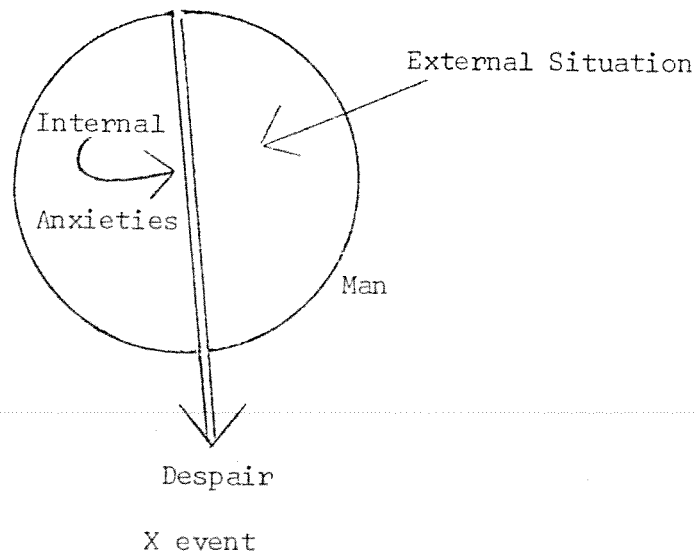
FOUR YEAR TIME LINE-1968-72



Now we find ourself over against intensified doing in the theoretical dimension of the New Social Vehicle. But in the center of this, I would say, is a whole new demand. To get the full impact of that demand, let me add something between 1971 and 1972, in which I anticipate our task to be that of creating the new secular religious global historical order. This is our task to have done by Summer '72. We are in the midst of a kind of explosion of possibility. Everything is beginning to break loose: only ten courses cancelled last quarter, fifty the quarter before; we don't have places even to put bodies here or at the Religious Houses; the movement is alive and flourishing; the local church experiment is coming to life; we can't even begin to supply the overseas situation. We are in the midst of an overwhelming kind of troop shortage. We are at the point where we are blowing out the seams but that is a drip in terms of the faucet we need to be turning on. We are, at this moment in history, called to radically intensify our life in terms of the religious, in the area of the spirit dimension of life, if we are going to even have a chance to meet the overwhelming kind of demands that the future brings upon us. That is why it is appropriate at the moment to speak of the journey in Order training, for we must raise up giants among us quickly. We must intensify our lives in a way that I can hardly imagine and yet we do not even know how you do that.

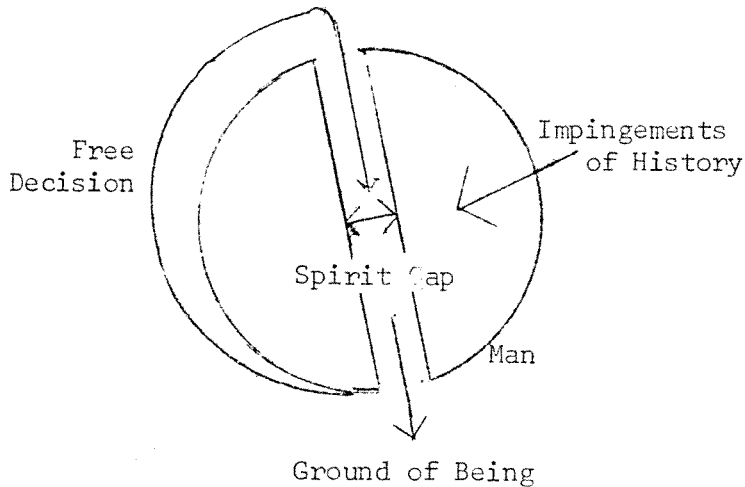
To begin to push in the arena a bit, I would like to call Phase I Training in the Order something along the line of Initial Training. What is the training in the arena of the religious that whenever a man decides to be the new secular-religious in history, and particularly those within the radicalized form of that in the Order? Or how is it that we ground ourselves in the fundamentals of the journey into humanness? How is it that we carefully enable the journey to be intensified?

I would like to talk about Phase I Training in four ways. The first one is creating the gap. When you talk about taking the journey of the religious in history, no one can take that journey apart from what I would call the spirit gap. Maybe a picture here would be somewhat helpful. Here is a human being. His spirit is glued to his immediate sensory apparatus. The impingements of history move in upon him, push him over against the insecurities of life, and he literally feels his being is being attacked. Or his job caves in, his health goes down the drain, or his marriage collapses, or his son gets into trouble, and he is all through. The contingencies of life floor him.



Those who came this summer said, "I never even knew I had spirit before." That's right, they didn't. They were glued to their immediacies. They were attached to their external attachments. When any kind of a wind blew, they fainted dead away.

What I mean by creating the gap is (I call this the graciousness of the Lord) when the graciousness of the Lord so intrudes upon your being that you are driven to the very center of despair and either die in that despair or you have a birth of spirit. This is when the gap appears. It is blown wide open here for a while. What you found



your grounding in, is not the immediacy, but is no thing or nothing, and it is out of that that the gap of spirit is invented. There can be no religious in history without that gap. When my status drives get itching at me, then the drive comes from the other, from the interior. But, in the midst of that gap, you can stand back and watch them struggling to get their status and you laugh, or you get a lousy Order assignment and it is about ready to drive you nuts. In the midst of the spirit gap you look at that and laugh, knowing that your being is not attached to any assignment, is not attached to anything. Your life is not rooted in anything except no thing, except the Mystery itself. I would have to say that the love of God finally drives a man to see that his life, his genuine life is rooted in nothing, is rooted in Being, is rooted in the Mystery itself, then the possibility of spirit consciousness is born. We have talked about that before as poverty, but this is the kind of intensification that has to take place in the life of the Order in which, when that kind of shearing comes at us, through whatever kind of exterior happening, we see that as the very love of God, shearing us from unnecessary baggage. The novice must decide to leave everything or he cannot proceed on the journey. This is what Kazantzakis is suggesting in his preparation. The novice must decide to leave behind everything: all his intellectual ideas, all of his emotional drives, and all of his hopes of the future, which always disappoint; and then he can take the journey. Jesus often used the phrase: "Leave everything and follow me." This is the "leave everything" part of that.

I want to go to the "follow me" part now. The second discipline in the intensification of the journey is radicalized obedience. "Leave everything and follow me." I want to ground this as best I can. It has to do with what fundamental selfhood is. Who you are is no essential self. Who you are is a relationship to your family, to this Order, to your extended family, to the city of Chicago, the nation, to the globe,

to the universe. You have your being only in relationship to every other reality upon the face of this globe and in the framework of the universe. Which is to say, that is what your self is, that relationship to all that is. You may not be conscious of that but that is the objective reality. In the midst of that, you are the one who can decide your relationship, the character of your relationship to the givenness. Radicalized obedience is nothing more or nothing less than objectifying that actual relationship to the given realities of life. I am the obligated one. I am obligated because that is my life. It is part of my very being. I can pretend that it isn't but that is to flee from the lucidity that is there in the center of life. The acknowledgement that all is related and has a claim on my life is what I mean by radicalized obedience. This is the very first step, if a man does not make that first step, to acknowledge the claim of all reality upon his life, he leaves the journey.

We begin to move into the practices of that. Radicalized obedience is a decision to be obedient to all. To say the "Yes" first, and the "No" only after the "Yes." In terms of the practicality of that in our community, we are those who have decided to be obedient to God and in so doing have decided to be obedient to the corporate priorship of this order. A person who refuses that obedience leaves the journey. I can see no other way, except through the door of obedience, that a man can stay on the journey. His refusal to be obedient to the claims of history on his life negates the possibility of his continuation. If you push Order life further, it is to be obedient not only to the corporate priorship of our Order but obedient to a particular priorship of that order, as a sign of obedience to God. That kind of intensification is necessary. Obedience is not doing, it is free decision. When a claim is made on your life, you respond in obedience, you freely decide obedience to that claim. Obedience, therefore, is a spirit discipline that requires of you your freedom. Whenever something makes a claim on my life, my immediate response is, "Go away." That's why obedience is free decision. It is knowing that every time that, "Go away" is going to be there till I die. It hasn't gone away yet. But in the midst of the gap, he decides to be obedient. Duty is what I would call rebellious submission. It is uncreative and therefore unfree. Obedience is creative because it is a free decision born out of deep knowledge of one's own rebellion.

The third Novitiate discipline or arena (you could say that all of these are both disciplines and arenas), has to do with training in the collegiality with history. That is to say, there are those with whom I travel who have been on the journey before me, without whom I could not be on the journey. There are those who depend for their very life upon me, that I proceed upon the journey. Who would we be without Abraham? Who would we be without Joseph? Who would we be without the prophets, particularly Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah? Who would we be without Peter, without Paul? I forgot Jonah, He's very much a part of my journey. Who would we be without Augustine? I'm speechless everytime I come upon Anthony, the man who taught me poverty like no other man. Who would I be without Luther? I would not even be standing here today apart from that man. And it is the same with Wesley, Soren Kierkegaard, or our contemporaries theologians. There are men who have been on the journey before to whom we owe our very lives—that's just the way it is.

The spirit discipline in this is rigorous, I would suggest, because what I know about you and about me is that everything I encounter calls me to uncollegiality with history, it calls me to fragmentation. It calls me to reduced pictures of what I am to be about in life, and therefore it is like a murder has to go on. Were you not addressed when that man Gideon took up that spear and could not kill that one who stood in his way. He was saying, in one sense, I refuse to have a universe where God wins,

I refuse to have a universe where rebellion to God is not tolerated. That's the way our universe is. We refuse to slay those demons who call us to busy our lives in foolishness. They must be slain; only then can our lives be given back to us. But a murder has to be committed in the very center of your being and that is a death to yourself. How you form your meditative council is a matter of life or death in the journey. You are only as great as your council. The people whom you choose to be your advisors on your journey literally define who your life is and that is a radicalized decision. If you do not decide, then the demons rule within you. Only as you decide to choose your companions does one continue on the journey. I would be not on the journey today were it not for the great mediators, the great priors of history and of our order who have dared to mediate the word to me, and prior me over against my own decision and to be those saints who dare to set the style, those colleagues who fought along side of me.

I want to talk about discipline in the area of releasing the well-springs of creativity. It sounds a little romantic, but I don't mean that. Everyone wants to be creative. One of the things that has gotten clear to us this last quarter is that when you talk about what is at the very center of man, you talk about nothing except creativity. Often times, where the creativity is not known or decided, where one experiences, at the very center of his being, nothing--except the decision to create the future out of that nothing. He creates out of that nothing his decisions. In the midst of that creativity one has two options: it is either to create his decisions and his life out of something or to create them out of nothing. Man has to invent his own being. If man invents his being out of something, as soon as that something is attacked, he is destroyed. If I invent my being out of my relationship to my wife, as soon as that relationship is attacked, I am destroyed. Only the man who invents his life out of nothing is the man who has the possibility of the wellsprings of creativity passionately boiling within his own being.

There are a few practical steps in this discipline that I would want to point to. The first thing I would want to point to is that the one whose creativity is released is the one who first learns to know what he knows. Everyone of you need to write that down. What I find time and time and time again is a man learns to know ideas. NO! I don't care about your ideas, in the first instance. Your ideas are just pass-away flashes of nothing. Authenticity, or freedom, or creativity is rooted when a man knows what he knows in the deeps. The danger here is that many of my colleagues trust what they don't know, rather than what they know. In an escape from their own lucidity, they flee to ignorance of what they actually know. This is to protect themselves first from the demand of what they know, and second, from the new decision that has to be made out of what they know. So the first discipline in the area of creativity is learning to stand present to what you genuinely know is true about life, starting first with your own death. Secondly, you need to stand present to the reality of the possibility of deciding to receive your life as it is. A man who is not rooted in what he knows, is always inauthentic. He does not stand on anything. You push a little bit on an idea and he collapses. The man who stands on what he knows, is the one out of which you begin to see passion emerge, out of which you begin to see courage come. You cannot just knock him back and forth when you push a hard question at him. He stands on what his own unique experience has revealed to him.

Secondly, he trusts his intuition, his deep stirring in his inner being. When there is a shift in the depth of his own life, he sees it is also happening to every man. He listens keenly to the deeps of his own life as it is impinged upon by history. He is the one who is able to risk himself in the midst of a seminar.

He is the one who is able to risk himself in the midst of a seminar or a division meeting. He is able to speak out of his genuine life experience toward creating a possible response to the future. Our discipline has to be in the arena of making our whole life experience known to us and available to us, because all you have is the richness of your own life experience, and as long as it remains unplumbed, the journey of the spirit cannot proceed.

The second dimension of getting hold of the wellsprings of creativity is, what I would call, knowing one's weakness. There is no possibility of genuine strength or genuine authenticity unless one faces clearly his weakness. Our weakness is first ontological--that is, I may not make it to the next hour. That is just the way it is. Or, our weakness is interior--I am a coward. Not only that, but I tend to blame everybody else for my own problems. That is just my constitutional make-up. The man who hates his own weaknesses is bound by them but the man who knows his weaknesses as his strength is the man who is released to be creative. The man who knows his weakness as a clue to what he is genuinely grounded in, namely, Being itself, is the man who is strong, who has the whole resources of the universe as strength and not his own trumped up self-elevation. There is no journey for those who hate their weaknesses. Creativity is a decision to embrace one's weakness and see it as the very strength that roots him in his genuine life.

The third dimension in getting hold of the wellsprings of creativity has to do with the fact that creativity in the first instance is a decision. Creativity is not an understanding. Creativity is a man willing to risk inventing a decision or a stance in the midst of a situation. Whatever a man is is his decision. When you make new decisions you literally change your being. The first thing I look for when I am teaching RS-I or when I am working with my colleagues is what decisions have they made, what life decisions has that person made. That is the only thing you can know, that is the only thing you can trust--the decisions that a man has made out of the creativity of his own being, or the decisions that he has not made. Our community as we sit here today is nothing more than a community of those who have made radical decisions about the course of history until death. That is the only thing that binds this body of people together. Nothing else.

Spirit in the midst of that is deciding about your decision. I find it helpful to say because it also helps the understanding of the gap. It is as if in the midst of my being assigned to try to get the bathrooms fixed all day, if I decided that was a rotten assignment there would be no creativity. Creativity is born when a man, in the midst of having that assignment and knowing that it is a rotten assignment, decides that it nevertheless is good to the core. In the midst of that the wellspring of creativity breaks loose. You can decide in the midst of that a thousand different possibilities, but until that decision is made there is no possibility of spirit creativity. In the novitiate training we somehow have to demand that that wellspring of creativity just burst forth. It can be called out by the vision that we put ourselves before over against the radical demands of history. But the very crux of the matter is that only each man or each woman can decide to be the creative one, to risk their being. No man can finally make any decision for any other man here. He alone can refuse or seize his creativity, which is the only thing that he has.

We have been in what I would call the novitiate stage of the journey in the spirit and there are those who want to move too quickly to the next level of the journey. I am not clear here. But what I am clear about is that if we are not grounded in creating the spirit gap, if we are not grounded in radicalized obedience

(all of these are obedience and nothing else), in a collegiality with history and with being rooted in the wellsprings of our creativity over against the decision to embrace our lives, there is no possibility of going on the journey into spirit. Maybe another way to say that is this: a man can start the journey anywhere. He can come in through poverty-Russell came in through poverty. I have talked to those who came in through obedience, just seeing the claim of history upon their lives and knowing the demand to respond. There are those who have entered in through the intellectual dimension of confronting the power of those who have been articulate in history and the style of history. It was here that I was first called to get on the journey, just seeing embodied in flesh and blood, men of freedom, men who in the midst of absurd overagainstness were nevertheless able to live creatively their lives.

While the first arena is the novitiate stage, I would like to call the second arena, or Phase II, the stage of spirit intensification, or styling your freedom. This gets more painful. You begin to touch the arena of the decision to assume inclusive responsibility-for history, for the Church and for the Order. That is an absurd decision to make. I don't know how one is brought to that decision, but what I do know is that decision can be made abstractly and quickly passes into fog and one is back in the first stage of the journey. Or one can will to make that decision and fall into indecision.

The Spirit discipline that goes on here is what I would like to call inventing the style, or inventing the role, or inventing the great self. This is the most difficult task for any one of us sitting here; to move into the arena of the chaste man, because deciding to make an absurd decision like that, is an extraordinarily difficult step to take, yet I am very clear that there is cosmic permission for us to take that. I want to talk about some clues this morning. I was very fascinated by the New Testament injunction, where it said, "Put on Jesus Christ." Did that ever bother you? "Put on Jesus Christ." Literally, that's what style invention is. You put on a garment. You are literally a new creation. But it is a lie. It is an untruth. To put on Jesus Christ is a lie. But do not let that bother you for the disguise that you are wearing right now, the role you are living primarily in right now is a lie. It is not your real self. It is a lie that you have invented to keep yourself in being out of certain presuppositions about what you need to be in history. A human being moves here and what he sees is that he is out to invent a lie, to invent a new self. How does that happen? Maybe you say that the self you are out to be is the one participating in radicalized obedience, taking inclusive responsibility for history. How do you invent that kind of a role?

We have some clues here. The role of the committed teacher and the guru is part of that. I am absolutely sure that priorship has to do with chastity here. How is it that you step into that role that you are not and create that lie. The first thing you do in the initial struggle is to embody that decision and to look and see where in history do I see someone just going ahead in the role of prior. Where do I see a person being totally responsible for a particular course or a particular endeavor? What does the style look like? There is one back there, there is one over there, you decide to copy. You decide to take the dimensions of that style from several people you see and put that on. And it is phony as anything. You feel as if that's not me. Of course it's not you. It is a lie. The other you is not you either. But you feel more comfortable with that you. That's all. Getting out into that no man's land of inventing the lie is the risk, but one can dare to do that.

I don't want to speak personally too much but I have copied the styles of Joseph Wesley Mathews, Donna McClesky, Gene Marshall, and I can name a number of others- none of them are me. I am not Gene Marshall. Literally, I have created my own style

out of their styles. That is my style but it is born out of the decision to step into something that isn't yet and be that which you are not, which you have always known you are not and that it is a lie.

The next step is that you experiment with that role. You try it on. I remember the first time that I had to call into question somebody in the Order who was my superior. I was one who always wanted people to like me. For thirty years, I was one who wanted people to like me. And I literally lied-I called him into question. He couldn't believe it. Who in the world was this character doing that He had not seen that before. That's right. It had not been there before. Literally, here was a new creation in history. And there it was, walking and talking and breathing and trembling like mad inside. But people began to say, "He has changed. What has happened here?" I remember when I was in seminary, this character roomed with me for a half year. He was a quiet mouse, got B's and C's on his report card and he went through seminary. Then at the senior year, up from under that table crawled a giant and he began to speak in words that I could scarcely understand but had the ring of authenticity. He took charge. He had invented a new human being and was a different human being. He had decided to assume a new lie that was authentic, as over against an inauthentic one. That is what you have, an authentic lie or an inauthentic lie. You don't have anything else when you deal with the creation of a role, because nothing finally is at the center of your being, no thing except radical creativity. I do not believe anyone can help anyone here. One just has to seize hold of his own being and decide to invent it anew. Unless that style is invented the decision falls into the abyss.

I want to talk about the intensification of one's relationship with the mystery. We all have experienced that happening in the midst of which we confront the mystery and can identify that in the midst of our lives. But I am pointing to the intensification of this experience. This is an arena in which sheer terror hangs over the edge. There are two words that I want to use that have been very helpful to me in talking about the mystery, which point to my own experience. One is the abyss that devours. That's just the way life is. The other is the fire that consumes. And that's just the way life is. The experience of the mystery in my own being comes as just a great big hole opening up into nothingness. It has no bottom. It comes as an all-consuming demand that pushes me into the very fire and heat of history, the inexplicable in the midst of life. In that encounter with mystery, passion is born. It is passion for the real. I can't get excited about anything except that which is real, that which is really real. When you touch the really real, you start to burn. You either run like crazy or you get excited. You just start to burn with passion, like putting you finger on an electric stove. You either take it off and run or you leave it there and burn. It is something like when you touch the mystery, passion is born-passion for being, passion for the way it is, passion for that which is at the root of everyman's life. When the bottomless center of my own being encounters the bottomless center of being itself, passion is born.

I remember when I was thirteen years old. I had a dream. It's almost too terrifying to remember. It was like a time-tunnel they used to have on TV. I was in a swirl, shooting out into nothing, forever and forever and forever. I literally tried to eclipse that from my history for twenty years, but it wouldn't go away. God was gracious. That's what you know about the center of your being-it is bottomless. When it touches the bottomlessness of Being itself, awe seizes a man. We have talked a lot about the dance at the center of one's being, and I am sure everybody in this room knows about that-a kind of a quiet pulsing in the center of one's being. Sometimes it is very fast and sometimes very subdued but it never goes away. I also like to talk about that as the fire-like an inferno sitting down in the center of my life or like an atom bomb about ready to explode or exploding. It has to do with humanness. It has to do with

passion. This happens only when a man dares to stand before the mystery and not run, possibility.

If the first stage is just the encounter and daring to stand in the midst of that encounter, the second step of that journey is the trusting of that depth experience of life-trusting the abyss, trusting the dance, trusting the fire that is kindled in the midst of your being. I want to push to a third area that is extremely human and perhaps is the crux of what I would call intensified spirit consciousness over against the mystery. It has to do with a man or woman or child holding in his own being the beginning and the end of all history. An imbecile could have that happening happen to his life and would literally be participating in his own consciousness in the beginning and end of the world.

This happened to me just recently in reading the section in Eiseley's Immense Journey on the flowers. Once there were no flowers on the face of this earth, and then a mutation happened and suddenly the earth was just covered with flowers, out of which a new form of life came which finally gave birth to you and me. I saw in the very event of reading that that literally I owed my life to those flowers, and I was one with 2 billion years of history. It was like all of a sudden you are aware that if every last jot and tittle had not happened the way that it did, you would not be here. I mean, exactly, you would not be in this very moment. Your collegiality with history is intensified in a vision of what one's reality is. Before Abraham was, I am. This human being knows in his absurd consciousness, in his finite flesh and blood that passes into oblivion, that he holds the whole universe. When a man has that vision of God, I don't know what you want to call it. That is the vision that invents humanness. It is that which Gideon refused to have in his consciousness finally. That was too terrifying, because that means that you stand at the very center stage of history itself, continuing the journey and inventing it anew for every man and for all time, for every age and every people.

All this takes you finally to the journeys. This is a journey that we have been on. There are disciplines in the center of these journeys, and I will talk later about those disciplines in terms of the temptations. All I said today has broken loose through the kind of push we have had when we have been talking about the scriptures, and reading in the Book of Acts, and having the spirit conversations on your own life--highly sensitizing yourself to your own experiences of life and standing before the dread and the fascination that go on in the midst of those patches that are the keyholes to the center of being. The journey here is in knowing and doing. If I am convinced of anything, it is that what enables men and women and children and old people to take the journey has to do with these journeys. When a man knows the deeps of his being, the deeps of his sin and his own possibility and greatness, the vision of history itself, and dares to trust the gift that he has been given and to forge that into a style and to embody that, history is created. Whenever a man stands up and be's a style that points to the mystery, thousands follow. You take a look at Martin Luther King. There was a man who stood at the center of existence itself and thousands followed. This is what has to happen in the local churches and in the midst of the lives of those of us who sit around this table. We have to be the style that embodies the knowing that we are, indeed the mystery itself. There is only one thing that even begins to interest me in the deeps--that is, in the feeble way in which you invent your own style, how is it you enable another human being to start on the journey? How is it you enable another human being to decide to be radically global in the depths of his life? How is it you decide to enable another human being to take the journey to the center that his life might be released to its incredible possibilities?

Just a word in conclusion on the Temptations. I want to call the first ones the early temptations--they go on in the novitiate. The early temptations on the journey of the spirit take you away from the journey. The first is the refusal to trust

your own life experience, the refusal of your own genuine authenticity by hiding from what you genuinely know, or trying to reduce it to some kind of rational syllogism or answer in order to avoid the address that comes to you on your life, or the new decisions that are required. The second part of that is subtle self-depreciation. There is not one person sitting in this room who does not have in his very life the secret of history itself, who does not know as much as even Jesus the Christ, if they would dare to stand present to the depths of their life. "Why, who can expect that of me, I only have a high school education." "Who can expect..." This is a very subtle way of leaving the journey early. The second is a refusal to risk the radical decisions that you know are demanded. To back away from the radical decisions that are demanded by history itself is to leave the journey. Another one is just refusing to die to, or getting trapped in, some kind of attachment, some kind of desire, some kind of status drive. That is the easiest way to get off the journey quickly. But one could quickly return in the midst of deciding to create the gap of the spirit. The fourth one is what I would call escape in doing, doing, doing, doing--running away from the center of your being.

There are more dangerous temptations. I want to point to one of them--pride--and talk about it in three ways. Pride is finally the only thing that can take you off the journey. Pride is first always wanting your life to be your way, not the way it is. That's pride. When you move to this arena, you turn your back on the consciousness you have. Was that not frightening in the play of Gideon? He could no longer hear the address of Being. The second danger is to be your intensified consciousness for your own end, to be somebody defiantly--that is, the temptation to be king rather than the nothing whose task alone is to be the one who unveils the mystery and enables men to live before the way it is. The third one, and this is a subtle one, is pride in spirit prowess, pride in split consciousness, in which you cut yourself off and seek some kind of security in a state of consciousness. That too passes away and leaves you in the ashes. These are the most fatal temptations.

The journey must go on. And the terrifying possibility (This became so clear to me in the play Gideon.) is that of being free to leave the journey. That's the closest thing to going to Hell that I can imagine.