

Global Priors' Council  
Chicago

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### THE GREETING

Two hours ago the Panchayat asked me to give a greeting to you on behalf of the Board of Directors. I thought, "How can the assignment processes of life have allowed this to happen? Why didn't they give me seven days notice?" Then I began to think, "They did that deliberately because they realize that I just recently passed over into Phase IV." Knowing I had acquired that status in life, one of great wisdom, the Panchayat probably thought if I had a day's notice I would write a 25 or 30 minute speech imparting all my wisdom to you. Therefore, they deliberately did not give me that opportunity. So I greet you on behalf of the North American Board of Directors. I would like to also speak for the International Board of Directors to say greetings to all of you on behalf of that part of your relationship to society.

Isn't it great to have us all here? It overwhelms me to see all of you here. I am sure you feel that way also as we come together with a great deal of collegiality as well as the seriousness of the Global Priors Council.

If I might have just a moment. I do go once in a while with my wife to the theater. The other night we went to a play called "Morning at Seven". The setting was 1922 midwestern U.S.A.. It had some nostalgia for me because it looked like my old home town. There is an old character in that play who was a nobody, based on this world's view of him; and he was a nobody based on his own view of himself. Once in a while he would reflect on his situation and go into what he called a spell, when he would insist he go back to the "fork". He HAD to go back and find the fork: where it was that he had made the wrong move, his mistake.

I don't want to use that illustration as a negative image. I have been discovering some of our forks as we have been looking at the history of the Order over the last years. A week from tonight we have a big party celebrating 25 years of the Institute's service to humanity. We will focus on those forks in the road where we have made decisions relative to our next moves. I sense we don't have to go back to any of those forks. We have made great decisions-about Global Research Assemblies, about opening the Academy, having the first Guardians' Council, the beginning of LENS, Town Meeting '76. Each was a milestone in our history. These have been forks in the road. We have taken, I sense. the right direction.

Somehow 1979 seems to be a pivotal fork. It has been a tough year for us; glorious but tough. We have learned, or will have learned what it means to be a nuclear family in the great corporate family that we are. We will learn or will have learned how to be nonchalant in the face of unjustified criticism. We will have learned that to do anything brings and breeds criticism. The nonchalance on the other side of that, we have learned or will have learned in this Council of 1979. Maybe we have learned or will learn what it means to be corporate with two-man Houses, or doing the Daily Office with two liturgists - what it means to experience globality and corporateness in the midst of isolation and a sense of forgottenness. This summer we will image again what it means to be the Order:Ecumenical. When we look back from the year 2000, what will the fork look like? What do we need to do to be the pioneers?

So I say, let's have fun. Have a great council!

*Jim Phillips*