

CLOSING ADDRESS
GLOBAL PRIORS COUNCIL

We have heard a passage from Hebrews read a couple of times this week. I wanted to read a passage from Bonhoeffer, but it occurred to me that it is exactly the same thing we had been reading out of Hebrews. All the same, I want to read it. This comes from a statement that Bonhoeffer made at the end of 1942, and he made it on behalf of those who had worked with him in their decision to try to create a more human future for Germany and on behalf of the world. One of the excerpts is titled "No Ground Under Our Feet."

"One may ask whether there have ever before in human history been people with so little ground under their feet - people to whom every available alternative seemed equally intolerable, repugnant, and futile, who looked beyond all these existing alternatives for the source of their strength so entirely in the past or in the future, and who yet, without being dreamers, were able to await the success of their cause so quietly and confidently. Or perhaps one should rather ask whether the responsible thinking people of any generation that stood at a turning-point in history did not feel much as we do, simply because something new was emerging that could not be seen in the existing alternatives."

Bonhoeffer never had a way of knowing what we were to do with some of his writings. We took the "Freedom" paper and ran our lives through it. We taught seminars on Saturday afternoons to thousands of people and filled full that paper and their lives. That writing stood for us, and still does, as a foundational statement on the ethics of ambiguity. There is no other place to stand, and there is nothing to be added to what Bonhoeffer said. I think he would smile on this council, because I believe we have pushed through the existing alternatives to something very new - not simply for us, not for him - but for all of those for whom he died.

Now we want to talk about the priorities a bit. I want to read them all, and then spin back through them. There are fourteen, again this year. We worked on these after sitting present to the whole of the council. We did a workshop with some people who dropped by the cubicle last night, and used their wisdom along with ours as long as they could stay. Then we listened to the Memorials this morning to check our wisdom, and we feel that these fourteen priorities point to the kind of resolve we have as an Order for the coming year.

1. Year of the Region
2. Movemental Order Formation
3. Initiated Human Development Zones
4. Exemplary House Life
5. Intentionalized Training Designs
6. Replication Schemes Transposition
7. Profound Hope Declaration

8. Strategy-Building Councils
9. Systematized Geographic Circuitry
10. Actuated Team Modes
11. Socio-Spirit Guide
12. Established Permeation Laboratories
13. Empowered Internship Vehicle
14. Demonstrated Financial Proficiency

We charted these to try to say for ourselves how they might relate to the Master Strategies. If you did them on a chart form, you would have **five** columns. In the first one you would have the Year of the Region and in the last one, Movemental Order Formation. Then in the second column, under the heading of "Manifest New Society", you'd list these priorities: Initiating Human Development Zones, Established Permeation Labs, Systematized Geographic Circuits and Replication Schemes Transposition. In the middle column, entitled "Declared New Humanness", you would list four more, including Profound Hope Declaration, Socio-Spirit Guide, Exemplary House Life and Strategy-Building Councils. And in the fourth column, titled "Formulated New People", would be Empowered Internship Vehicles, Actuated Team Modes, Demonstrated Financial Proficiency and Intentionalized Training Designs.

Now let's talk through these in the order in which I first read them. The first one, The Year of the Region, is one of the pillars, and certainly many of the other priorities will inform this one. The Year of the Region has to do with reclaiming all of the geography. Last year the Priorities included the 54 areas. This year we are pointing toward 324 Regions, which throws us directly into the Metros, six in each region. We will be beginning with the 88 regions in which we have Religious Houses and moving through the 324 as a way of getting to the two million villages. If you cover 324 regions you can't leave out very many of the two million communities. That has been our wisdom from our earliest days. Also, it means that we will not get trapped in divergent intermediate strategies which tend to lead us off down the trail of national-isms or superstructure entrapment. These secondary strategies are important and viable, but the region stands as a reminder of what we have set out to do - to deal with the whole of the earth.

Now, the second priority is Movemental Order Formation. We were struck by the image of the thirty thousand movemental order members. We have said we are going to do a lot of work in this area this year. We said that we are going to work on the interior classes during this year, and probably next summer we will begin to pull together what we mean by those classes, how they mark our journeys, and how as classes they would make wisdom from the whole Order available to us all. Someone harked back to 1968, when we had all the people of a given age write papers about what we were going to be doing, and in that exercise we began to get many different angles on our mission and on our life together. This would bring form to the wisdom of marking journeys, allowing everyone to stand present to individual journeys as well as our journey as a people. We are going to find ways to create an Order with eptitude of all kinds - to create ourselves anew, to be self-conscious as those who live out of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and to give form anew to the thirty thousand.

The third priority, Initiated Human Development Zones, is one which we know much about, but during the GRA and Council when we tried to say what we know, it was difficult. A Korean talked with me in the hallway the other day, and he pulled out of his pocket a picture of a grid of Kuh Du I Ri, and of the county surrounding the village and of that region. He said, "We have been doing a human development zone all year. We have had Town Meetings all across this county. We have had Women's Forums, Youth Forums, Global Language classes, and in the center of it all sits the Human Development Project of Kuh Du I Ri." Something major has happened there, and it will mean something new for that region; something new for Korea; something new for Area Tokyo. We have decided that we are simply going to launch into these zones, and next year we will be able to say much more about what a Human Development Zone is. But we know that we intend to deal seriously both with geography and with the structures that crisscross that geography. It is going to be an exciting year of catalytic demonstration for our regions.

We intend to have Exemplary House Life in every region. That means that whether you are in a village, three hour's distance from the nearest railway or bus station, or in the City of Chicago, every House is intended to be an exemplary House this year. Not only that, but every Nexus is going to be an exemplary House. Religious Houses are what hold us in being. They are what train us. They are what launch us into our mission. We ran across some phenomenal ones on the Panchayat Visitation last year. I wouldn't tell this if the prior were here, but the Religious House out in Nadlapur you would not believe. You go on an awful ride out of Hyderabad two and a half or three hours - potholes, dust, heat, and you finally arrive at this village, and they have an archway and flowers and big welcome signs. You drive through the village and over to the far side, and there is the auxiliary House, and a huge earthrise painted on the outside of the auxiliary House. It is amazing. They had a Guardians' Meeting at the House. The tables were beautifully laid, the chairs carefully set in place. We went on village walks and when we returned, the room which we had left all askew had been put back into place. There were snacks on the table - and all done completely unobtrusively. This sort of thing happened over and over again. We went to Bayad and out in the middle of the desert is this amazing House with amazing people. One of the young auxiliary women is so short that she has to sit up on her knees to be high enough to reach the table and be able to write. As we were leaving Bayad, she came to me and said, "I want you to do three things before you leave. I want you to say what your impressions of Bayad were. Then I want you to say where the holes were - I know I heard some of those things you said - but I want you to say where all the holes were. And then I want you to say what we need to do." I am trying to talk about the quality of life that Religious Houses have produced around the world, and yet a huge number of our people have not had the privilege of living in a Religious House. They have spent their whole time in our outfit on a circuit, on the road, in a school, and literally have never been in our Houses.

Closely related to this last priority is the next one, entitled Intentionalized Training Designs. If we are to bear the burden of moving to the two million villages across the world, then we have to make the skills available to every last Order member. This council has talked about the spiral curriculum; we

have to know how to create spirit constructs; everyone has to know how to write procedures; everyone has to know how to build curriculum. There is a young man in Kapini who is a veritable spirit giant. Every time you ask a question that requires depth spirit insight, he is right there with incredible answers. Now he has to know everything that **any one of us knows. He has to be** privy not simply to what the Order has produced, but also to what the world at large knows. Some day we are going to have to roll out University 13 again and really do it. We have certainly stated our resolve to get a handle on this in the coming year.

The sixth priority is Replication Schemes Transposition. We have set up village consults, schools, circuits and on and on which have produced amazing results in Maharashtra, and are producing gems across the nation of Kenya. And now we have the possibility of lacing those with new images out of this council and from the GRA, including the Human Development Zone, using all of the forces within that zone to bring it alive. We don't know what the shape of replication is going to be at the end of this year, but we know that it is going to be **affected** in terms of its strategy. However, the main point is that we are still moving toward ways for other people - for agencies, for governments, etc. - to incorporate replication into their own plans. That is what replication is about. It is another catalytic tool to give human community to the world.

The seventh priority we called Profound Hope Declaration. We went around the world during this year, and one of the evenings during the Panchayat Visitation at each House was set aside for people to share stories. They were amazing. They told a story in Lagos of doing Town Meetings in a horrifying slum, the kind of slum where people are so crowded in their small rooms that they have to sleep in three shifts in order for everyone to be able to sleep. This is a place where three Irish nuns work, and where, after a series of Town Meetings, some of those who had been in the Town Meetings set up cleanup days that made the old Fifth City ones look pale. They hauled out loads and loads and loads of garbage and began to recreate that section of Lagos. That is the kind of event out of which the new myth is going to be created. It is a story of action going on and new life bursting forth, and on the other side of this, something new for the whole future. The myth is also that drama we had of the "Band of Twenty-Four" with all of the flags. It is the Annual Report with "Hope Takes Root" emblazoned on every page along with grounding pictures and stories. We are going to be about that this year - finding ways to declare to the world that hope beyond hope is what makes life possible.

The eighth priority we called Strategy-Building Councils. We are not talking simply about councils as such, but the conciliar dynamic, whatever goes on that is related to the democratic pole of our polity triangle. We have councils and PSU's and grassroots mechanisms for engaging people in the processes which lay out the strategies **whereby** they are going to lay down their lives. This council, I would want to suggest, is only the beginning of the kind of prowess which will give people authentic vehicles for getting their wisdom into the corporate planning. It is going to be scary. Some people are going to run away from that. It is very hard to trust that everyone can in fact create the future. But, we intend to work more and more in this arena. That likely means that we are going to have to pay critical attention to other dimensions of our polity -

the bureaucratic and the symbolic - in order to hold the tension, in order to create not simply our life together, but a more human world.

The ninth priority reads Systematized Geographic Circuits. They are going to claim our lives this year. I don't know what they will look like. We have done circuits of all kinds in the past. My images fly all the way back to the early seventies when there were two of us in the United Kingdom. In Area London we circuited the six regions. Week 1 we were in London; week 2 we were in Bristol; week 3 we were in Dublin, and then we took a week to write letters back to the people we had seen in the regions where we had just been, and to the people in the regions to which we were going. Then in week 5 we went to Glasgow, week 6 we went to Manchester, and week 7 we went to Birmingham. In week 8 we sat down and wrote letters to those three regions and to the three in which we would be starting over again. That was systematic circuiting, and it did everything the two of us knew how to do. I am sure that picture is so simplistic that we will laugh at it at the end of this year. But there is wisdom in it, and that is what is going to do the job as we move around the metros. We are going to have a great time working with time rhythms in order to really make the most out of those circuits in 88 regions.

The tenth priority we called Actuated Team Modes. Someone said that the GRA was a bit like a giant condor getting off the beach - as it got underway you were not sure it would ever get off the ground. But by the second or third day, you could walk around and ask people "Hey, how is it going?" And they would answer, "Tremendous!" And then you would say, "Well, what's so tremendous about it?" And they would answer "The TEAM." Now, the first time that happened, you tended not to pay very much attention. But after the answers became consistent over a few days, it began to sound as though the procedures writers had fed the responses into the procedures. It was clear that everybody knew that something new had happened in the GRA. It was a matter of care for every last member of the team, but not only care; it was also using everyone in the team in order to get the job done. You couldn't rely only on the experts in the teams. Everyone was a part of what went on, forcing a new kind of corporateness. We are not going to know what that means in our body for a time yet, but I do know that during the year to come we are not going to be willing to settle for anything less than what happened in the GRA.

The Socio-Spirit Guide is the eleventh priority. Something new really is happening, and a new kind of style is going to be required. I think we have seen it already. We saw it in the plenary leaders in the GRA - not orchestrators, not pedagogues, - something new. And we saw it embodied in many people. It is not simply style, but it is social or procedural also. We are just neophytes in this new style, but it is exciting to participate in. It was a tremendous thing to have those leaders weave us through the morass of these past ten days. I believe that we are on a new threshold.

The twelfth priority we called Established Permeation Laboratories. We have set ourselves toward something new and awesome, toward catalyzing the established structures of this world. We are going to have to figure out what that means for us. We are going to have to decide all over again in a radical way how to be the transestablishment, how to live in but not of this world.

We know without a doubt that there are alligators - hordes of them sitting around at the edge of these permeation labs, just waiting to grab the first arm or leg that comes into sight (if we are lucky, we'll lose only an arm or a leg). But we have decided that we are going to find ways to release people's care toward bridging the gap between the fifteen and the eighty-five percent. And that means moving into the structures of this world.

The thirteenth priority is Empowered Internship Vehicle (we could imagine all the fine drawings such a title would elicit from this group). In the sixties we had a double-barrelled vehicle. We had RS-1 and we had Fifth City. They moved side by side, and out of that an Order was birthed. Someone said in a conversation la-t year, "It wasn't RS-1 that got me. RS-1 woke me up, but RS-1 wasn't what got me. It was Fifth City that got me, and that is why I joined this Order." In the seventies we had schools and we had Human Development Projects and replication. The eighties are a new time, and we have a new task, though it is the same job of awakening and engaging that raises the vocational question. I think we are going to move to the universities again. We are going to find all kinds of new channels for allowing people to ask themselves what their lives are about, and to answer that in terms of laying them down in service for the sake of a more human future.

The fourteenth priority is Demonstrated Financial Proficiency. It is clear that we have made a new resolve about fiscal prowess. And that means many things for us. It means Institute finances. It means being accountable on the world's terms and at the same moment maintaining integrity in terms of what we ourselves set out to do. It means a new concern for care of the Order. It means stipends and funds really set aside. It means a new kind of consciousness about, and structures to handle, the financial issues that are a part of a body like this Order. It also is clear that we have decided that we are going to supply the money ourselves so that this job can be done. Everywhere the Panchayat went across the world last year people had this concern. It was not a moralistic concern - something born of ought's or should's or principles. It is increasingly clear that if you are talking about an Order of thirty thousand people, you are talking about supporting yourselves in that venture. We will have to invent new ways as well as relying on old, tried and true, self-support models. If we accomplish that, it is not simply for us, neither for the ICA nor for the Order: Ecumenical. We live in a world in which nobody else has figured out how to do what we are already doing in our internal life and in our missional life; namely, raising monies and making them available where and when they are needed. That kind of demonstration is something the world is looking for.

These priorities point us toward the kind of unity which has been apparent in this council. We have spent a lot of our time together talking about pluriformity. Pluriformity is not new in our life - from our beginning we have been pluriform. Pluriformity is different ages and different sexes and different classes and different nationalities and different cultures and different religions. That is a part of what our life is about; that is what the world is about. You walk across the street over to that high rise apartment building, and pluriformity is what exists. We got sucked into this issue a bit during this council, but it is clear that what we are really about is singularity. We are about creating one way, one mission, one united set of

strategies - common life together symbolizing a single wellspring of human-ness into which we can drop through our various kinds of religious poetry. That is what we are about.

Now there are dangers of many kinds. Alligators are not simply sitting around the permeation labs. We are more public than ever. We have said we are going to pay attention to that. There are not only dangers in being public, but also in our own internal life. It will be frightening to see what we catalyze, and some people will run from it, because they do not trust that just plain old local human beings can guide their own destiny and ours as well.

We are going to encounter the seven revolutions, not only in the world, but also in our own lives, because we are never separated from the world. And so we will have to watch our bigotry more carefully than ever. Who would ever have believed that an innocent song book could have evoked such wild responses? This kind of ongoing conversation points to the kind of revolution that we are a part of, and which is a part of us. It means that we are going to have to repent over and over and over again in our own lives and in our own structures, in order to be a sign of the new and the possible for the rest of humankind. This means that we have to pay attention to the phases, to the youth. Clearly we have decided to do so, but we don't rest in it. We have to pay attention to the bigotry which is in every fiber of us relative to sex roles and old images. The revolutions are not going to go away. They are not going to turn back. And where selfhood is created out of these revolutions, there is not going to be an ebbing of that selfhood. So we have to stand present to our own lives this year, and from now on, so long as we decide to be the people of historical repentance.

We are going to have to guard continually our assignment flexibility. We are going to have to care for our symbolic life, if we intend to show up here next year. We are going to have to care for the whole life of our whole body - economic, education, family and so on. We have had some tremendous rites over the past few days which symbolize what that care requires - the weddings, the baptisms, the memorial service. We intend to pay attention to our common life and to our individual lives. You will find yourself caught in all of the same kinds of traps you were caught in last year. You will show up with all kinds of doubts.

That talk tonight about hope beyond hope was something that we could all laugh at and cry over, because having our hopes smashed has been part of everyone's story. And yet at the same time there are signs - signs to watch and to remember. The other night during the celebration of the band of twenty-four Human Development Projects, there were people from different nations with vastly different and amazingly similar experiences from the past few years carrying twenty-four flags and singing. The Panchayat was sitting up here, with the flags nearly surrounding us, and I suddenly felt as though I was on the bow of a flagship. There was a crew gathered from twenty-four time zones and many cultures. And there were twenty-four CEM documents that constituted the log of the ship. We have barely begun to see the waves of extension that are moving out from that ship - the clusters,

the replications, the Mactan mass, the Zambia 500 Village Meetings, the urban probes. Today, when somebody questions the possibility of the emergence of a more human world, you can hand them a brochure of the celebration of the twenty-four. And when you find yourself wracked with doubt, then just remember those flags, and recall the sea of blue sitting in this room and indeed across the world, and perhaps even sing a line or two: "Here's to the band of the 24, the glorious band of the 24, victorious band of the 24, the 24 global signs," - and remember that that flagship has just barely left the harbor.