

Chicago
Continental Council

September 1983

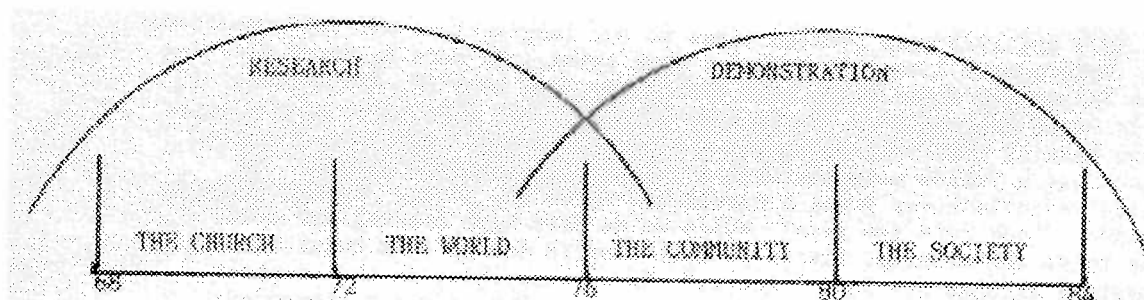
THE YEAR OF ORDER COUNCIL

What we want to do this morning is to reflect on the Year of Order Council and the implications for this Continental Council. I think it was in 1978 in this room, at a Global Council, that George Walters got up and proposed we have a Year of Order Council. It was proposed that that year of Order Council be in 1980, and that in the meantime we would set aside various funds in order for all of us to go somewhere for this Council. One of the contenders for the place we would go was Beirut (which is interesting to reflect on) because someone calculated that it was equal-distant from everywhere and therefore the best place to have such a Council. We kept postponing this Order Council. It has taken us to 1984 for that proposal to be realized (this should give you heart about consensus).

Now the shape of the Year of Order Council is probably dramatically different from what George Walters or any of us envisioned, and it will probably be different than any of us envision at this moment. One of the unique things about it is that it isn't a year. Within the context "you can always re-define time," the Year of Order Council is 16 months. We have used the phrase around here: "sixteen months towards the next sixteen years;" and 16 years from now will be the year 2000 - tremendous symbolism.

Now I found that to reflect on why this was the time for Order Council, and why we shouldn't stall on George's proposal a little longer, I had to try to trace the last 16 years. You know the old infinity symbol: you can only think as far ahead as you can think back in history.

I found it very intriguing that this is the first time that I could take a 16-year period and find that I have been in the Order all that period of time. It was in 1968 that the Morrill family came to the Order, and I will never forget the day that we arrived; Don Cramer and I drove a truck from Seattle. We had a few earthly goods to bring to Chicago, so we got this 16-foot truck in order to assure our future. We had a great trip across the country and arrived about 8 or 9 in the morning at the Trumbull Street door of 3444 West Congress. Cramer and I were both somewhat zealous. We knew that the Order would be particularly blessed and happy to have us and it would now improve dramatically. So we were delighted to be here and hopped out of the truck. We noted that no one was on the street. We got to the Trumbull Street door which, as you recall was always locked with people assigned to security. We knocked on the door; it was opened and we strode in thinking there would be bands playing and so forth. Carlos Zervigon was on security. I shall never forget our first welcome -- he said, "What a hell of a time to arrive!" "Get in here quick and shut the door!" Apparently there were some problems in the community at that point. That was a memorable introduction to the Order: Ecumenical which has probably warped and formed my whole history in the Order.



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We had an Order Council in the summer of 1968 and I mark it as the critical Order Council before this Order Council. It was at the time that we were beginning to move out as Houses. At that time, just about everybody in the Order fit into Room "A". We dealt with questions of Order mission, disciplined life, corporate models -- all the things you think an Order Council is about, and we wrote documents about it all. Some people around here tell me there are still copies of those documents available if you ever want to look back and see what it was like then.

During that four year period to 1972 a lot of things were going on. It was the time when the New Religious Mode charts were created; that whole section of time could be called The Time of the Church. You will recall that this was the time of massive cadre/movement formation across North America, and the beginning of Areas of the globe.

Many people in this room started their life out of a thing called the cadre. Out of this we began the Local Church Experiment which was to "cough up" people with a revolutionary vision to help create a global future. It is very interesting that we finally did only one-third of the tactical systems at that time in that form. I would like to suggest, however, that we did all the tactical systems during that 16-year period, but they took dramatically different forms than we had expected them to take.

In 1972 we had this tremendous time called The Turn to the World. The years 1972 and 1973 were rocking times to our imaginations and self-consciousness. Dolores and I weren't here for that event. We were in Seoul teaching in the ITI moving right along with the images from 1968-72, not knowing all of this stuff was going on in Chicago. We first got wind of it when Pierce, who was Dean of this ITI, came into a faculty meeting, opened up a packet, and took out a yellow songbook with a God-awful, perverted symbol. Our favorite wedgeblade was gone; a circle had taken its place. He was laughing and said, "Look here you guys! While we're over here beating our asses trying to do the mission, listen to what they're doing." He began to sing: "In mystery strange new land I see..." To us everything in the songbook sounded like late Ezra Pound in the sanitarium. But it was a tremendous marking time nevertheless...the Turn to the World.

The next four-year period I just call, The World. That is the time when we began to do the HDP's. That is the time when we really got LENS launched (after Convov and NIMS). and the Global Women's Forum.

Now I should step back and say that we did make some attempt to do the next tactical system on the local church experiment with the Primal Community Experiment back in the early period of 1972-73, trying to figure out this whole thing. We had these "five" things all over the world: Gunfoundry Five, Global City Five, University Five, Byculla Five, etc. Many of you were part of these. They didn't last long but they were very critical.

Another thing about that Turn to the World: do you remember how we had the Ecumenical Institute side of our life and the ICA side of our life. I remember the New York House had an office for the ICA and an office for the Ecumenical Institute across the hallway. The ICA side had all the gorgeous furniture and the Ecumenical Institute had all the leftovers. They had separate phone systems. If you got a call for the Ecumenical Institute, you had to walk clear across the hall and answer it on the other side. I suppose you even used a different tone of voice. This was a tremendously confusing transition time for us as we made this Turn to the World.

Then from 1976 to 1980, I call The Community. It's the time of the Town Meeting, the Global Community Forum, when we marched across planet earth with these Town Meetings. We could write a book on those Town Meetings. Remember how we began by thinking we needed 13 weeks to set them up, which meant you already had to have established the revolutionary church to have a town meeting. We discovered that was pretty fruitless, so we moved from 13 weeks to one and a half hours - and various forms in between. We still have not digested the impact on community of those town meetings. A couple of years ago my son-in-law was trying to document what happened in Mississippi. He called at one community which had had only 8 or 10 people in its Town Meeting. George talked to one old man to find out if much had happened. The man said, "No, not much has happened here since the town meeting." George asked, "Well, just tell me what has happened." He said, "Well, we

have the new fire department and the new community center, and the plans for the new hospital, but not much has happened since the town meeting."

I had the same experience in Lorne after it had been in process a year and a half. Here were all these phenomenal new buildings and people were saying, "but not much visible has happened." Maintaining the eyes to see is difficult. The time of the Community -- the HDPs, the 24, the 48, the US 12 -- this is the period in which we circled the globe.

The Gibson section of the new film is like an absolution on our expenditure. I know my meditative council tells me you don't look for fruits of your labor in your own lifetime but I do delight in them occasionally out of my concupiscence and various other sins; and since Luther said to sin boldly, I like to revel in that a bit.

Then in 1980 we had something called The Second Turn. This was a sort of grasping the kind of paradigmatic shifts that were happening in the midst of this part of the twentieth century. A turn of the dial in our understanding.

The period from 1980 to 1984, I call The Time of the Society. This is when we began in earnest to do structural permeation. This was the time of replication in Indonesia, in India, in Kenya, in the Philippines, in Korea. We took our [earnings and moved massively across these countries. I am still rocked by the kind of figures Kenya gives about its work with some 700 villages. All last year I was saying 200. This reality just rocked my imagination.

This is all against the background of the happenings occurring during this unbelievable 16 years of human history: Black consciousness, Vietnam, OPEC, female consciousness, the sexual revolution, the economic collapse, the new consciousness of ecology and the fragility of planet earth, the new concern for the nuclear situation, the time of the silicon chip and the computer, the communications satellite over India just launched. At this very moment in our history, it is shocking to look at the condition and situation of Sphere South. Every continent in Sphere South is in the midst of dramatic upheavals. We said in the grid of the three spheres, the South was going to be the tensional point which would reshape the images of Sphere East and Sphere West. And that is exactly what has happened.

This is the time for the Year of Order Council because everything we intended to do in the last 16 years is done. You could go on doing it forever -- I understand that. But we now know how replication takes place. We now know how to create a movement. We have DONE these things.

The report Joe Crocker gave on the World Council of Churches meeting in Vancouver was tremendous. It became obvious to him that our work over the last 16 years has dramatically effected the shape of the concerns of the Church in history. He pointed out that seven years ago in the World Council of Churches the word "development" was not even used. Now it is consciously part of its images of care and concern for the Third World.

Now you and I know that there is no one to one relationship. You and I know that Yes, we did it; no, God did it; no, history did it; no, the events of life did it; no, we did it; no, God did it... and on and on. This makes documentation very hard as some of you who have been through this know. The fact that we have completed these things is why I say that this is the time of Order Council. Because the question before us is: what is the secular/religious human revolutionary body called to do and be NOW? What is its task in history? I want to hold the image of the next 16 years with The HDZ. I like that, but I don't know yet what it means. Now, that doesn't mean we don't have inklings, but I'm not sure yet what it fully means. I hold it with a big question mark about the future, knowing we could go right on doing what we are doing forever. What is it we are called to be about? And what are the clues we're going to get in this year out of our work which will inform that direction? That's why I think this is exactly the right time for the Year of Order Council.

It is important to remind ourselves that we are not having the Year of Order Council because the Order has a problem. The problem it has is that of being responsive to what the mission requires. Every other problem is really incidental. We didn't whomp this up because we're falling apart. We didn't whomp this up because we are worried about something. We did it because this is the moment to reshape the images of our future. We are doing this Year of the Order Council precisely in the midst of the most intense time of engagement in our history. Isn't that interesting?

Every once in a while you run into people who want to "get away" to find themselves. But what you find when you "get away" to find yourself is not the self that you are when you are engaged in the life that you live! You find another self! I used to think the Year of Order Council would be when everything slowed down and we had time to sit and think. But then, what would you think about if you went that route? No, the time of Order Council is in the midst of our highest intensive mission, creativity, and opportunity--exactly where it should be. It should not surprise anybody that individuals have vocational crises precisely at this kind of a time. I used to think that people had crises with the Order at the time of dull periods. They don't. They keep sticking around. But when you have intense mission you also have intensified self-consciousness about your own vocational decision. That should not surprise us. But I've been surprised. Now once I've said that to myself I'm not surprised any more. Some of you who have a long memory may remember that in 1972, the Turn to the World was a dramatically critical time in the life of the Order with many people leaving because of that kind of shift.

I now want to get into this year by first reading an old familiar art form. When I picked it up again, I found it as "on target" as ever. I'm reading this because I think we are still in a time of dramatic crisis and dramatic tensions between the forces for humanness and the forces that would crush it. The outcome of this is not clear; what is going to win is not clear. When Nan Grow came back from the World Council she brought a paper which quotes a woman from Brazil: "What is it like to live in a village when you are giving birth to your 14th child? The first three months of your pregnancy you are in tears because you know when the child is born it will die because you have nothing to feed it." That's the world we live in. And there are millions of forces that would just as soon keep that situation in being as it is. We cannot get deluded that things are getting better and better.

At every moment of crisis an array of people risk their lives in the front ranks as standard bearers of God to fight and take upon themselves the whole responsibility of battle. Once long ago it was the priests, the noblemen, the burghers who created civilization and set divinity free. Today God is [local people] made savage by toil, rage, and hunger. They stink and smoke of wine and meat. They swear and hunger and beget children. They cannot sleep. They shout and threaten in the cellars and garrets of the earth.

The air is changed and we breath in deeply a spring laden filled with seed. Cries rise up on every side. Who shouts? It is we who shout! The living, the dead, and the unborn. But at once we are crushed by fear and we fall silent, and we forget out of laziness, out of habit, and out of cowardice. But suddenly the cry tears at our entrails once more like an eagle, for the cry is not outside ourselves, it does not come from a long distance that we can escape it.

God shouts! Burn your houses!

I used to love to read this because I thought it was about reduced suburban living. I was such a self-righteous bastard to do that, because I do have a house! You can move my room in this building, but I will keep my "house" intact as much as I can. I will not let anybody burn it, for it is my protection from the assault of life.

I am coming.... whoever has found a solution, cannot find me.

Boy, that's a tragedy isn't it? Thinking you have life all wrapped up or that you have the Order's future wrapped up. Your problem isn't that you have a solution; your problem is that you are cut off from the very Mystery of life. That's the tragedy.

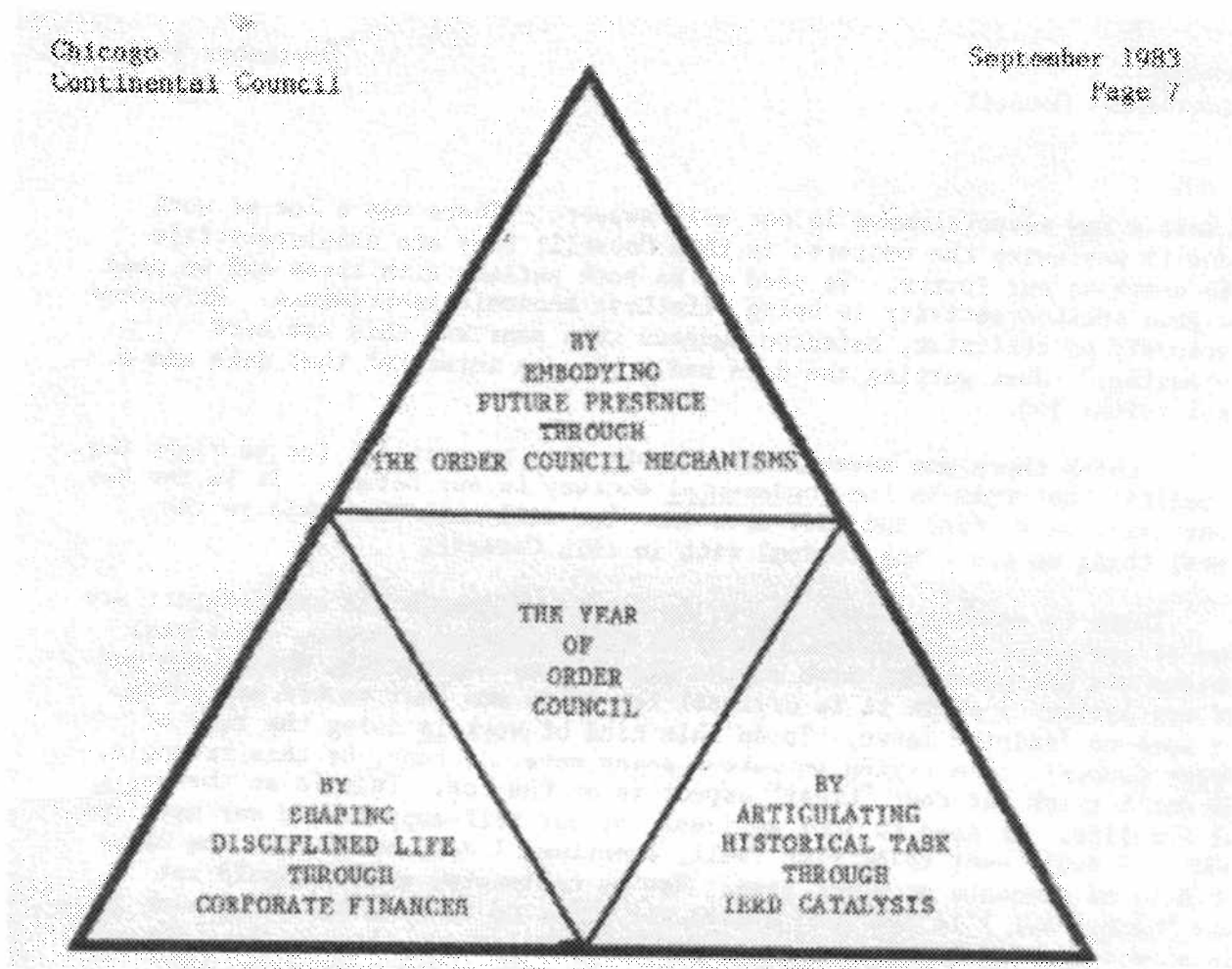
Whoever has found a solution cannot find me. I love the hungry, the restless, the vagabonds. I am coming! Leave your wives, your children, your ideas and follow me. I am the Great Vagabond.

Now I have some double reflection on this leaving your wives and children too. It seems to me this has to do with all those things that keep your life ordered, when order is not called for.

The 1983 Global Council was a strange council. It was the smallest council we've had for a long time. It was somewhat "laid back". I don't mean that we were casual, I mean that the timeline gave distance to think. It was tremendous. Somebody said that the real energy for finally making decisions came in the last 24 hours, but without that other time it couldn't have happened. The Council knew what it had come to do before it got here. The format

was simple. It dealt with three arenas: the IERD, Finances, and the Year of Order Council, plus assignments. We experienced ourselves as inescapably representational. It dawned on us about half-way through the Council that issues and decisions and models are not referable to somebody. We had to decide what was going to happen by the end of the Council. There was a real wrestling with the hard decisions we had to make. The seriousness and direct style in the midst of that was tremendous.

The fruit of all this is the Year of Order Council. What we have finally come to is just one priority this year. This is the smallest number of priorities we have ever had in our history (we have had as many as fourteen).



It is the first year for one priority, and the first year we have so dramatically lived out of that priority so quickly. This major focus has three dimensions.

The first dimension of the one priority is SHAPING DISCIPLINED LIFE THROUGH CORPORATE FINANCES. If you use the Social Process Triangles as a screen, this is the foundational pole. I find it very significant that it is here. The Council this summer decided that we are going to take seriously our Funds and our Funds Balance. We said we would balance the year, not replace it in this year. This is a long term issue of replacing the funds which will sustain our life. We are going to guard them. We will not dip into the principle this year to make loans back and forth. We are going to take the building up of these Funds seriously. We did a tremendous analysis on self-support across the globe and reaffirmed last year's priority that twelve stipends is critical. Now I don't think that anyone is happy with the stipend level in any continent. It is not that we want to be wealthy, but we do want adequate potential for families to have self-reliance and integrity in order that they can be effective missional units.

I think we have shifted the story of Permeation from "indirect mission" to seeing that it is a direct part of our mission to society in history. We have moved with our ventures to seeing that fundamentally we are moving

toward a new corporateness in our self-support. There was a lot of work done in reviewing the ventures in this Council; they are absolutely life and death to our future. We need to be both patient with these and we need to push their creativity in being effective economic instruments. We worked seriously on realistic, balanced budgets this year and this was hard "slogging." Just getting the data and trying to interpret that data was a very tricky job.

I think there are several reasons why this is critical for us right now. I believe that this is the fundamental doorway to our future. It is the key contradiction we face and must move on. You will note that this is the first thing we are going to deal with in this Council.

There is another reason why it is first. Stipends and self-support are one of our major convenantal, spiritual and religious symbols. Spiritual things are not something over on the edge of our lives; they are at the gut of our lives. I think it is critical for us to see that we are not going to work on "spirit" later. To do this kind of work is doing the Year of Order Council. I'm trying to make a point here. I hope, by this triangle, we don't think the real "Order" aspect is at the top. This is at the heart of our life. We need to look seriously at our self-support and our development. I don't want to be rich (well, sometimes I do), but I want the Order to have an adequate economic base. Now my colleagues said I should not say "rich," but I'll say it. I want the Order to be rich because I want it to have the missional flexibility for 1984 and beyond, to move where we see the necessity to move and not be like so many other groups who go where they can "get a buck." That is not what I understand my vocation to be. Therefore, it is absolutely life and death that we regain this kind of missional flexibility. It's not going to happen overnight. We are part of a social situation that we will have to work on together, carefully. It is important because it is a grounded symbol of our stability for the next sixteen years. If you don't care about the Funds and all you care about is a \$1.50 for your next toothbrush, then I raise a question about your understanding of the vocation of the religious in our time.

Self-support is a symbol of our power of independence to act. Even more importantly, it can be a social demonstration to those who care around the globe. This is the point of the greatest despair for groups in our society who experience no way to handle the economic situation to the vision of mission that they see. We must forge the way for them as we move into Phase II of the IERD. We are going to be working with these groups, and when we work with them we must understand the kind of agony they experience in trying to figure out how to deal with the economic. Finally, I think this is a critical section because it is about the creation of new modes of ~rti on in our life.

Now what if this wasn't part of the Year of Order Council? Well, I said to myself, if it wasn't we would just be having abstract conversation about covenant and mission. And our understanding of covenant would finally become meaningless. The net result of it might be that we wouldn't be a global body. We would finally be powerless, regional organizations ill-equipped for a global task. And it is possible to go that route. But it would not be the movement of a human revolution.

Now let's move to that second dynamic: ARTICULATING THE HISTORICAL TASK THROUGH THE IERD. It is absolutely staggering what this task force accomplished this summer. I am just beginning to grasp the enormity of the task of launching the Delhi event. We have never done this before! We have had global councils, but we have never done an event with this many nations. There are now 64 nations working on this. Since we published the list of the co-sponsors, WHO (World Health Organization) has become a co-sponsor. A supporting organization is FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization). We now have Ben Kingsley's introduction to the new film. Things happen so fast you can't quite keep up with them. The group this summer built all the detailed designs for Delhi. These tell you where you are going to be everyday in Delhi, and whether you need your meal ticket for a meal. During the first section, on Monday you can go out on the town in Delhi alone...if you are crazy...all those details are there. I hadn't even thought about the fact that when you have this many delegates you've got to have a little clinic. People get sick. They know how they are going to get people to these 35 villages -- every detail. It is absolutely staggering what they've done.

Then, there is the whole system of documentation. Did you know that at the Delhi Event we are going to be translating into Hindi, English, French, Swahili, Mandarin and Spanish? We have never done this in our whole life! We've done a little translation around the edges in Councils or at Consults, but not this. We have never worked with co-sponsoring organizations; we've got to figure out what this requires. Since the Council, a tremendous report has gone to our UN co-sponsors describing what's gone on so far. We've not been in the position

of having to account to somebody else before. This is all new for us; we're going to learn a lot about what it means to move beyond 1984 with this type of activity.

Obviously one of the tasks we face as a Council, and in this year of the IERD, is the whole question of communications. How do we get this declarative story out? Perhaps you have seen the news clippings which have come out of the Denver region. The IERD is newsworthy. It is critical that this event is known across the world. This is not a "candlelight town meeting" in a town of 500 persons. It is an event where people from the 64 or 50 nations must be there. And the story must get out about this event. It is a public funeral for the t~down approach, where everybody must go past the casket and see the t~down approach lying there dead!

We've never been in a position of an aggressive media campaign. We always respond if forced out of our bedroom to say something to the press.

Now we want the press to make the declaration. This is something we need to work on during this Council. And the documentation of these events is a critical aspect of it. In this Council we have to figure out the design and strategy for doing these PDL's (Project Description Labs); plus documenting all of the other projects we are still discovering. After the Des Moines RDS every day Forms I and II kept pouring in to Lorimor, because people want to declare the story of what they are doing. We need to create the form whereby they can tell the story.

In exploration with Control Data it is possible that 10 to 20 thousand locally initiated projects around the world can have lateral interchange with each other and learn from each other from around the world. Can you imagine what it would do to a village to see itself in that kind of network? Now we aren't going to get all of that done here, but I get carried away about that part, because I think it is absolutely tremendous.

We are going to have to think through the funding to assure that the delegations get to Delhi. It was a delight last night to hear about these delegations in Canada who say they're going to get the money. We may not have to do much about that, but what we want to assure is that the local people from these nations get to this event. It is not because they will not move ahead without Delhi, but because of the sign that Delhi can be an event with a massive number of local people at a global conference rather than just global executives. If the local people are not there, then it is a top down conference and we have not had the funeral!

Making sure that the funding, the displays and all such things are worked through in our time together is to assure that we are prepared for our National Steering Committees which meet in September and October. They must be ready to pick up the kind of load they need to carry.

The other thing we've got to work on is Phase III. I don't mean "After Delhi". I mean the "Phase III" that has already happened in North America, probably more dramatically than on any other continent. We do not need to worry about final clarity on Phase III. It is from what is happening now that we will get clarity on Phase III and 1984, and beyond. Don't sit around and figure it out. Just go do it and then figure it out. That is our method.

I want to emphasize again that doing IERD is doing the Year of Order Council. If we took that part of the triangle off, then all of our thinking and deliberations about the Order would be detached from the world and turned inward. In my wildest imagination, I would say that without it, the Year of Order Council would turn cultic. Therefore I consider it a very important pole for the Year of Order Council.

One aspect of its significance is that we are at the moment of catalyzing an historical movement. We are not creating an historical movement, we are catalyzing one. We have said from the year I first walked through the Trumbull door, that God creates movements, we don't. We give shape and form to the movement of human resurgence and human revolution that is happening. Thank God for IERD--it has saved us from thinking we can create a movement. But we have a huge responsibility of catalyzation and formation of that movement. I am still trying to figure out what that means and how we go about that. This is one of the profound functions of the Year of Order Council.

Then, we are figuring out all over again what I call the Strategies of Credibility--you may call it framing. Some people are worried about our flirting around with all of these rich people, all of these big corporations, all of these big agencies, etc. I understand the concern. But we are still Nobodies. A Nigerian guardian says he is glad for the ICA because it will go to villages that his own people won't. That is who we are, and we will always be

nobodies. If we were somebodies we wouldn't need Ben Kingsley's introduction to the film. Now I got excited about co-sponsors. I thought, oh boy, they're going to do all this work. Actually they are going to do very little of the work. Do you understand that? They may do some little things. They are the social form of the individual frame that we did before. They are what will deliver us to India and deliver us to Phase III, but don't have any illusions that they are going to do something else. We must not negate them because of that. They were not called to the vocation to which you and I were called. But they are our "rider" to make bold and public the event in India. Without them it would simply be a "candlelight" IERD. It was through the co-sponsors that Haiti learned about the IERD. They are an access, a tool. If you are worried about your own identity in the midst of this kind of situation, I would suggest that this is your problem which you must wrestle with in terms of your vocation. The Strategy of Credibility is not new, it has simply changed forms. Some people will worry so much about this that they will leave.

The edge in the IERD is coalitioning. Everybody talks about coalitioning. As we turn past 1984, coalitioning is going to be absolutely critical, but I want to suggest that it is our research edge. We do not know how to "coalition." No one does. That's why we need to learn by doing it. These Human Development Associations around the Blocks in India may be one of our closest clues to what a coalition is. It would be great to have a PSU on what we've learned about coalitions. We know it's not simply cooperation. We know it's not an old form of democracy. We know it's not saying to UNICEF or UNDP, "any old methods for the IERD that you all think are fine, are o.k. What is it that will deliver people beyond their own vision and structure into a new relationship with each other? We have touched the edge of it, we are excited about it; but it is going to be hard work because it must involve the political dimension as well. This is the trick of all tricks!

Finally, the IERD has made dramatically clear to me that we are priests in history. I went reluctantly to the Des Moines RDS. I really didn't want to go. I wanted to go on doing Development. What I discovered there was that these people are looking for a temple in which they can deliver to the high altar their expenditure and have it blessed and absolved and delivered back to them for the future. This is a profoundly religious activity. This is something about the Other World and the New Religious Mode, much more than about a New Social Vehicle.

Now this third dynamic: EMBRACING FUTURE PRESENCE THROUGH ORDER COUNCIL MECHANISMS. These mechanisms are exciting. They are the ways that we are going to do all that is required of the Year of Order Council through the 16 months: the Informing Analysis, the Futuric Models, and the Strategy Leap. And these mechanisms are ways we can all come at this year through our Houses, through continents, through the whole globe by putting our minds together on what we are learning through our active, on-the-ground research.

There are several parts to this. I think these intents of the Year of Order Council and the mechanisms are tremendously stated: Towards Shaping Global Strategy, Towards Researching Geo-Social Spirit Milieu, Towards Designing Undergirding Order Forms, Towards Demonstrating Participatory Polity through the Year of Order Council, Towards Articulating and Symbolizing the Profound Identity of the Order Ecumenical. Then, there are ways in which we will do that: the Panchayat Trek to every House is part of this. In this Council we need to look at Phase I of this -- or The Informing Analysis. What do we intend to do about the Research Colloquies -- are they going to be by continent or by areas? What is the shape of these Order Forms colloquies. As we examine and look at our past and the forms of the Order and at the strategy for the future, what is the sustaining form of the Order for the future which will allow it to do its mission? I think this part is more about the New Social Vehicle than it is about the New Religious Mode. I think it is about shaping social forms for the future. Wouldn't it be surprising if hidden within this design were the discontinuous events and happenings needed to launch Phase III in a Human Development Zone.

Now what would happen if you didn't have this as part of the dynamics of the Year of Order Council? These dynamics keep us constantly on the raw edge of human revolution. These are the mechanics, the dynamics of doing that. Without this we would have shallow, piecemeal patchup. At worst we would simply become a social agency going on doing what we have always done.

I think these mechanisms are going to allow several things for us this coming year. They will allow us to grasp all over again our election; by that I mean our calling. It is going to allow us to re-ground our vocation. By that, I mean our task in history. What is it we need to be about? It is going to help us restate our commissioning.

By that I mean our strategies to respond to the social contradictions. It is going to allow us to re-design the future forms that are the life-giving forms for society in the life of the Order Ecumenical.

Finally, I think this is going to be a very prayer-filled year. It is going to hold a lot of struggle in figuring out what we do. We said prayer is the action before the action. It is going to be the time of reflecting on the social contradiction to which, in God's economy, we must respond. Secondly, it is going to be a contemplative time when we plumb the depths of the spirit modes of the Other World. It is going to be a time of meditation, when we examine what our mentors in the human revolution have to say to us about the past as we move into the future. All of this is the Year of Order Council - not any one part.

What will it be like at the end of the year to take the Local Pilgrimage? I thought for a long time that if I were in Japan, I would go to Hiroshima. I've changed my mind. I thought if I were in Dallas, I'd go to where Kennedy was shot. I've changed my mind. First of all, I don't know where I would go, but in the second place by that point I would have clarity on how we intend to forge the future. And just maybe in Houston Area I'd go to Gibson. Just maybe I would make a pilgrimage to a town we've forgotten in the town meeting campaign. Just maybe in Japan I would go to an urban village where the untouchables live. Maybe that pilgrimage is a dramatic sign not simply to do absolution or repentance all over again about the past, but where we intend to forge a dramatic sign for the future of civilization.

I cannot think of a better time to be the Order Ecumenical.