
The ICA as a Learning Organization

by Patricia Porter Scott

for
Dr. David Beatty

The Institute of Cultural Affairs
as a Learning Organization

This paper is a labor of love as well as a class project. It is probably *because* it is a labor of love that I have chosen to do it. I need to slow my thoughts and understand why there recurred in my head during two courses on the learning organization that I had been in a learning organization for sixteen years. When I was with the ICA we never knew we were a learning organization; we never consciously tried to be one, but we were.

The Self-Discovery That Is Worth the Price of Admission

I also need to articulate my vague dis-ease with the fact that I find I do not finally "fit" into the DHR focus in the way I feel others may. It is not that the program is not satisfying, but I have only recently discovered that I come from a different consciousness than the one I believe the program is designed to serve. Yet doctoral studies is the place where one sorts out ones thoughts and stance, so in this regard the program is 110% successful for me.

It is the discomfort and the cognitive dissonance that is forcing me to say what is different in my orientation than the one I find in others around the table. This is in no way to judge others, but to acknowledge that we define ourselves in comparisons and contrasts to others. Nor can I truly presume to know what is in the mind of another, but classes and conversations have a focus which defines the work of the group.

I have come to see that I am a product of movemental consciousness and the program is directed to mainstream establishment consciousness. So I will cast myself as a learner who is making observations about myself, the DHR learner, and my experience with the ICA as a learning organization. They are inextricably linked. The process of writing this paper is organic. It will unfold from the inside out. I have notes from an interview with an ICA

colleague, but as I Write I find I have intellectual itches to scratch. So this is a stream of consciousness paper. It will be refined for the reader, as there is a grade associated with this effort; and for the writer, as it is part of an ongoing work.

I Meet the ICA

The ICA was the formative experience of my adult life and the benchmark against which I measure all other experiences. 'Nothing in my experience has equaled it in passion, scope, daring, commitment, creativity, spirituality, intellectual rigor, compassion, vision, cohesiveness and collegiality.

This paper will not be a critique of the ICA although I have done some work on it as a critique is a necessary part of being a learner. The critique accounts for the psychological, sociological, spiritual, structural and systemic variables that influenced the organization's development, and in this case, my development over time. In my case it is a subjective evaluation as opposed to a formal study done by Tojo Thachankary in his affirmative inquiry into the ICA. Thachankary's work, however, had a profound effect on my ability to explore my own experience. The critical thinking I have begun has only been possible in the last five years as I was more embedded then in my experience than I am now. Thachankary's work inspired the distance I needed for my own work. He allowed me the see the ICA through his eyes which then allowed me to see it anew through my own eyes. I believe that the capacity and willingness to reflect on experience is a crucial feature of the learning organization. I learned and internalized reflection skills while with the ICA. Regular reflection was structured into the time design.

Living in Camelot

When I was about fifty years old, following my inner urgings, I undertook to take apart my decision to join and later leave Camelot as I lovingly refer to the ICA. Yes, there was Camelot. And yes, I was part of it, and yes, I left it. Most importantly when I left it was no longer Camelot for me. I reasoned that both the mission of the organization and I had changed dramatically since my joining in 1964 and subsequent departure in 1980. But what *never* changed during my years with the ICA and the years since, is that I am and intend to remain a product of movemental rather than establishment consciousness.

I am sure the *memory* of Camelot stayed with the Knights and Ladies of King Arthur's court long after Camelot had ceased to be; the Kennedy years still capture our imagination despite the tarnishing of the image of our hero as far too sexually adventurous for our stated moral conventions. Yet, we forgive these indiscretions and excesses because our spirits were stretched to heights and depths we never dreamed were possible.

As a result of my life in Camelot, I never quite fit in with establishment organizations as they always seem a bit shallow and superficial to me. They are goal driven, hence don't even allow for more than goal execution or, at best, goal over achievement. Goal and objective driven organizations proceed as though the goal is all there is. And, if there are deep aspects of life, those deep aspects belong to another sphere of society such as religion or transpersonal psychology. Very few vision driven organizations have moved me, because the vision is limited to work with work being defined as a contractual arrangement of hours of service in trade for dollars. While many people care deeply for what they do, many others labor at work

they care little for, so they can be free for a few hours to do what they really love. This arrangement creates further self-estrangement.

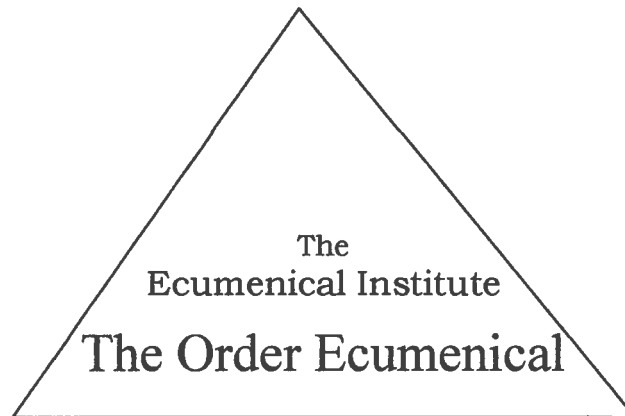
A work-focused vision forces people to compartmentalize their lives. They derive one set of satisfactions from work and other sets of satisfactions from other sources. "So what's wrong with that?" I hear you say. "Isn't that the way it's supposed to be?" By conventional standards, yes, that is the way it is. But having been for sixteen years in a holistic organization, even with its flaws, has spoiled me for all less inclusive organizations and made me perpetually hungry for the unity of human experience once captured so profoundly and elegantly all in one place.

What drew me to Camelot was the style of the faculty and the depth of the training programs. To understand the style of the ICA it is necessary to know that the ICA was the public face of a quite remarkable experimental family religious Order. It was born in Austin, Texas at the University of Texas in the 19-'Os as the Student Faith and Life Community. The community came into being around the notion of mission; its mission was to wake up the church people of the time to the fact that there was a revolution in progress. There was a ^{theological} revolution and a cultural revolution breaking old paradigms and calling people to live in a new age. By the time Bob Dylan started singing "The Times They Are a Changing" the Order had been getting that same message around for about ten years.

My husband and I became members of the Order Ecumenical in November, 1964. There were 30 people in the community. It would grow to 1500 before we left in 1980. Alvin Toffler described us quite succinctly in *Future Shock*.

"In Chicago, 250 adults and children already live together in 'family-styled monasticism' under the auspices of a new, fast growing religious organization, the Ecumenical Institute.

Members share the same quarters, cook and eat together, worship and tend children in common, and pool their incomes. At least 60,000 people have taken "EI" courses and similar communes have begun to spring up in Atlanta, Boston, Los Angeles and other cities. 'A brand new world is emerging,' says Professor Joseph W. Mathews, leader of the Ecumenical Institute, 'but people are still operating in terms of the old one. We seek to re-educate people and to give them the tools to build a new social context.' "



Distinguishing Between the Ecumenical Institute and the Order Ecumenical

The distinction between EI, the Ecumenical Institute, and OE, the Order Ecumenical, which Toffler fails to make, are important. The Ecumenical Institute was the respectable public facade of the Order Ecumenical. The Ecumenical Institute was a research and training center doing lay theological education. The Order Ecumenical embodied the power, genius and commitment that made the Ecumenical Institute go. It was the engine on the train, but it pushed the whole train from the rear of the cars; yet the people in EI and OE were the same. We often spoke of EI as paper mache and the Order as the "real thing." The Ecumenical Institute was the legal paper work and the organizational chart of "this world", the world of laws, which allowed the

Order to do its work. This dual identity allowed members to be social revolutionaries on the one hand and a respectable social institution on the other.

Quantum Leaps and Stability Simultaneously

What was remarkable to me in my first years with the Order was that no two years were ever alike. School had been the same, year in and year out. Family life had followed familiar patterns and rituals year after year, but not so with the Order. But we were growing and by definition nothing was sacred for very long; yet there were some bedrock things that held us in being for many years. One was daily office, a twenty-minute chanted worship service. It had a high church feel with the grounding experience of a five minute "witness" given by a community member. Prayers were both formal and participatory. There was a great deal of existential sensing that one learned by leading and participating in this ritual. I watched the Daily Office evolve over time to become quite a bit of high liturgical drama, including robes and processions and the addition of unique musical components of African drums, gongs, click sticks and then, actually disappear altogether as the community needed to become more overtly secular and less religious.

The lesson about the learning organization is that you can grow and change, but there have to be steady markers that give the group an identity. Just as in adult development, there are periods of stability followed by periods of transition there must be stable hand holds in the learning organization by which people "know who they are." The handholds themselves may change, but they *must* be there. These handholds may be invented, if they do not already exist.

Two Mentalities - Mainstream and Movemental Consciousness

It is also important to know that the Order Ecumenical was a manifestation of movemental consciousness not establishment consciousness. By consciousness I mean mentality. Mentality is a predisposition for operational style or simply, 'how we do things around here'.

Invention Over Imitation

The Order Ecumenical, Ecumenical Institute and Institute of Cultural Affairs operated from an entirely different mental model than organizations that typically comprise mainstream organizational development literature. To distinguish, I will call these the "establishment organizations." They are the IBMs, the GEs, and the Bell Telephone Companies, the 9 to 5 organizations. Shift work notwithstanding, establishment organizations have time perimeters which frame the individual commitment to the organization. It is a contractual agreement of time and dollars for service and benefit exchange between the individual and the organization. The boundaries are clear and sharp. I have come to distinguish movemental consciousness from mainstream organizational consciousness in the following ways. Because I am dealing in essences, there will be a caricature sense to the differences I have assigned to each. The movemental characteristics are intended to apply to the ICA only and not all movemental groups.

Mainstream Organization or Establishment Consciousness	Two Consciousness	Movemental or Transestablishment Consciousness
Traditional, textbook management	Prevailing Attitude	Experimental, inventive
Salary for service, pay for overtime	Financial Arrangement	Maintenance pay, benefits y
Structured, hierarch	Organizational	Organic, dynamic,

	Design	flexible, mutable
Make a contribution, offer products and services	Motivation	Create revolutionary change, cause-oriented
Rewards based on performance, pay for knowledge or performance	Accountability	Executing the mission, performance assumed, work matched to ability
9 to 5 Specified time limits	Time Commitment	All time is assigned time till the mission is done.
Shift work, 8 hour shifts, vacation period, overtime	Time Design	Week 1 and Week 2, 13 week quarters, five weeks reflection, discontinuity
Committees, hierarchy, managers and executives democracy	Decision Making	Consensus, collegiums, power is at the center of the table
Departments, individual responsibility, some team	Work Groups	Teams almost exclusively
Contractual	Commitment	Covenantal
Work ethic	Roots	Ontological deeps
Job description, you qualify or not, education & credentialling	Work Definition	Assignment, do whatever it takes to get the job done
From within, bring in an outsider	Promotions	Fifteen minutes of fame
Forms, regulations, red tape	Operating Procedures	Low bureaucracy, minimal forms
Ordinary, conventional, in house short hand	Language	Specialized jargon, purposefully "different" to force question raising
Company picnic, 25 year pens, employee of the month, the gold watch	Work life Rituals	Daily singing, daily office, conversations at breakfast, lunch and dinner, fasting, watches, guinea pigs in our own programs

It is fair to say that many current organizations that began in movemental consciousness have become establishment organizations. The YMCA, YWCA, the civil rights movement, the Red Cross and hospitals are a few examples. The object of a movement is to make its principles, perspectives and cause

part of the mainstream. In doing so it works itself out of a job. The movement is not only out of work, but when the aims that the movement were seeking to establish have been embraced sufficiently by mainstream society, whatever organizational mechanism was needed to bring the new social vision into being is no longer required. Thus the organization, which really consisted of a network of human relationships bound together by common cause, faces a choice.

Bear in mind that the common cause is more important than money, security, safety and social position. D. H. Lawrence says it quite well in his poem, *The Deepest Sensuality*.

The profoundest of all our sensualities is
the sense of truth and the deepest
sensual experience is the sense of
justice.

Movemental organizations are given to seeking justice. Therefore it is the justice fashioned into the vision of the new world that drives the members. So what happens to the organization when its vision is realized?

What Happens When the Vision Is Achieved?

The question is, what will happen to the network of relationships? First, will the organization, which is usually quite minimal, stay in being and become a player at the table of power for the issues it represents? Some civil

rights groups have chosen this option. So the former movemental player becomes part of the establishment and represents its cause. Arifat, the revolutionary, is Arifat, the diplomat.

Second, will the members stay together and continue to fight for their cause, failing to realize that it has already been won? Some women's groups have failed to realize how far women have come and appear as though they are stuck somewhere in the 1960s. Gloria Steinem, on the other hand, is an

excellent example of a social revolutionary who has changed with the times. She recognizes the advances made in woman's fight for equality, but continues to push the edge of change and justice.

The third alternative is to recognize that your mission has been fulfilled and choose another revolutionary aim. The March of Dimes exercised this option when a cure was found for polio. Jonas Salk's vaccine meant the virtual end of polio. The March of Dimes decided to turn its attention o researching birth defects. It took on another big dream.

A fourth option is to close down and say, "Go ye into all the world and do what you need to do. You lend your life for a magnificent mission, take it back and see what else needs doing. We did what we said we would do." It is this option that I believe the Order exercised. Surely this is the best of being a learning organization, to know when it is time to quit and have the accompanying courage to do so.

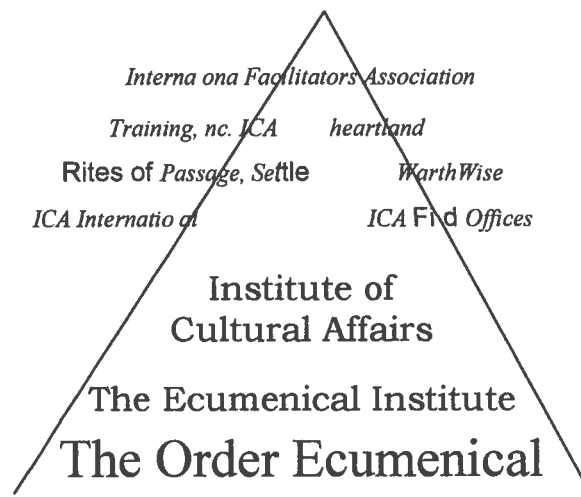
In 1988 the Order Ecumenical called itself out of being at a final Council in Mexico. Any member or former member who wanted to attend the Order Council was invited. If a member wanted to attend, but could not afford to pay his or her own way, the group paid. The Order paid off its debts and distributed the remaining assets to those who were members at the time. A formula was worked out, based on the age of the members and the years they had been part of the community. Older members were given more money as they literally had less life "time" to make money. Younger members received a bit less as it was reasoned they had more time to make themselves financially viable in the world. By in large the ICA staff was well educated and finding work in the world outside was not a great problem. Many ICA members had contacts from fund raising days and from lobbying efforts in the governments and businesses of the world. In many circles the work of the ICA was well respected, so the prospect of having an ICA trained staff person on board was not only

appealing, it was a plum. There was, however, a bigger problem than finding a job. The greater problem was figuring out individually what direction to take now that the great revolution had been accomplished sufficiently for individuals to move on to some other adventure.

With the dissolution of the Order, individuals and families began to address this issue of "What next?" Some ICA staff chose to maintain the offices where they were assigned at the time of the dissolution of the Order. So a world-wide network of ICA offices still exists. Other people took parts of ICA programs that they were drawn to and have continued their operation as their life work. For instance, Order children took a rite of passage trip during the summer after they finished grade six. While the Order no longer conducts these trips, an ICA group in Seattle still keeps them alive. Now many grade six students, beyond the Order youth, participate in the Rite of Passage into teen years. Training, Inc., a 13 week training school for office workers, now exists in some US cities. Training, Inc. was both a vehicle of financial self-support for Order members and a means of service to inner city folks. Its mission was to take welfare recipients, equip them with marketable skills and stay with them until they got a job. Training, Inc. turned welfare recipients into tax payers. The ICA education methodology, Imaginal Education, developed from the work of Kenneth Boulding, was equally as instrumental in getting people hired as were their marketable skills. They came for the marketable skills. They got marketable skills as well as a dramatically improved self-image. They learned to handle child care issues rather than call into the office and say, "I can't get a baby sitter." The idea was to eliminate any notion that the individual was the victim of anything or anyone. There were many government sponsored "job training programs" in the US, but few with the successful track record of Training, Inc. Training, Inc. took seriously that self-image was a more powerful shaper of the ability to get and hold a job than were marketable skills. If you

had the confidence, the skills would come. Few other programs took this component into account. The staff goal was to see that every person graduated and got a job. Eighty percent was not good enough. The goal was 100% graduation and 100% employment. The result was that there was about 95% graduation and employment.

So the ICA has evolved into further satellite organizations as held in the following diagram. This is a partial listing. If I could make my computer do gray letters, I would have the Order Ecumenical in lighter tone to show that though it has dissolved, the memory of it is very present. It is a lingering image in the "memory body



Preserving the Fruit of the Labors

One question any self-conscious movemental group has to ask is, "How do you responsibly take care of all that you produced?" In Chicago an all-star cast is completing The Archive Project. A few people felt called to organize all the papers that were produced out of the thirty years the Order was together. One specific outcome is that the papers of Joseph W. Mathews, the founder, will be housed at Perkins Theological Seminar in Texas. In addition to Joe's work, there are dozens of social and spirit methods that are written down, but

known only to those members and associates who were present at the time of their invention and use.

The method best known to the world is the Card Method which was published in *Technologies of Participation*. But that was only one methodology. Others include Imaginal Education, the art of image change; spirit conversations; social process analysis methods including whistle point and pressure point analysis essential for catalyzing social change. Hundreds of people worked on documents describing the new social vehicle and new religious mode. While the "religious Nvork" of the community was based in Christianity, it had a transparent quality to it, so that when you removed the religious language, there was spiritual truth that wears no religious "brand" name. It is simultaneously profoundly human and spiritually deep.

Joe's work on "the other world in this world" is an ontological discovery of the inner human spiritual depths that equals the outer space probes that we are doing currently. It is true that the farther we go into outer space, the deeper into ourselves we are driven. I believe that Joe mapped the inner human terrain as few have. His work is in the same league as St. John of the Cross and Theresa of Avila.

One is not able to map this territory unless one gets "there." Joe got there and tried his best to report the landscape to the rest of us. But you have to be "long in the way of the spirit" to get there. It is a master's journey. The master can only tell the apprentice of its existence. The apprentice has to get there on his or her own. I have been lucky because I "stumbled into the other world." I would have only known where I was because Joe had said, " 'The other world in this world' is the most real world there is." To talk about it

makes you sound a bit "off" in the head because few people have any knowledge of how truly deep the human spiritual experience can be.

Many times, as I watch the world go through its paces, I am persuaded that the ICA was only about one thing, creating the new story of our time. Forging the new mythology is not a "job to do". It is a "path" you take to continuous discovery. Nikos Kazantzakis says in *Saviors of God*, "It is our luck to have fallen on fighting times." It is not the fighting times of hot wars to which he refers, but the fighting times of new contextual creations that will make sense of people's lives and restore meaning to living. Thomas Berry says it for me nicely in *The Dream of the Earth*.

"It's all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story. Our traditional story of the universe sustained us for a long period of time. It shaped our emotional attitudes, provided us with life purposes, and energized action. It consecrated suffering and integrated knowledge. We invoke in the morning and knew who we were. We could answer the questions of our children. We could identify crime, punish transgressors. Everything was taken care of because the story was there. It did not necessarily make people good, nor did it take away the pains and stupidities of life or make for unfailing warmth in human association. It did provide a context in which life could function in a meaningful manner."

I think the need to draw the distinction between movemental and establishment mentality has been an important task for a long time, but I have not had sufficient stimulus to focus the need into a do-able act. As a member of the ICA my work was done both inside and outside the organization. I worked outside the ICA community and contributed my salary to the upkeep of the whole group. My nights and week-ends were free to work inside the Institute. I felt I had the best of both worlds as a result. But I saw myself primarily as the embodiment of movemental consciousness who was by day a school teacher and by night a social revolutionary. One activity fed the other. It was a *both/and* proposition rather than an *either/or* one.

How very ICA to take seventeen pages to set the context for what I wanted to say. So now we get to the point-by-point reasons that the ICA was a learning organization for me. ,

Shared Vision

Our vision was three fold, contextual reeducation, structural reformulation and spiritual awakement. I remember it thirty-one years after the fact. I do not recall the vision of my many work places. With ICA we rehearsed our vision in thought, word and deed. We sang our vision, said it to each other in talks and wrote it in our publications. We reported our successes and committed our deep spiritual insights to song. If "The Anniversary Waltz" came over the radio waves we did not hear "Oh! how we danced on the night we were wed". Instead we heard "Given the chance to do life in the deeps." We heard the words *we* had put to the song. We held before ourselves what D. H. Lawrence called "the utter depths of mystery."

Mental Models

Our most highly developed mental model was our mental model of how to understand other people's mental models. It is called Imaginal Education. *Image* is pre-verbal and carries a lot more information about our assumptions and beliefs than our *words*. We reasoned that if you could understand the image another person held of themselves, their circumstances and the world you would know quite a lot about them without having to know "all about them." It is the holographic principle applied to the individual. Understand the image and you largely understand the individual. The whole is in the part. All our courses were based on understanding people's images and offering more inclusive, freeing images than the ones they usually held. Our aim was to have every human being we encountered embrace their freedom. Our own mental model was that our given state is freedom and we have learned limitations. The work of a life is to restore oneself to his or her freedom.

Our values were to require ourselves to be comprehensive, futuristic and intentional. We insisted on articulating our values and operating presuppositions as we changed focus over time. As we began to shift from a theological mode to a more secular community mode our mental model was held in "All the earth belongs to all the people." Our name changed from the Ecumenical Institute to the Institute of Cultural Affairs. Systems Thinking

The boldest moves of the ICA were usually systems savvy. In 1976, the 200th birthday of the United States, we decided to try to recreate the spirit of the Town Meeting that had been the focus of community decision making that built America. We collaborated with McDonald's fast food to produce a beautiful colour workbook. Our objective was to hold a town meeting in every county in the US. That are 5000 counties in the US; 5000 Town Meetings were held. The insurance industry's Million Dollar Round Table asked if they could buy the results. We said, "No."

That *no* reflected a mental model on our part that said, "We do not collaborate with other organizations." While we had collaborated with McDonald's that was a rare exception. We wanted to refine our own methods. Non-collaboration earned us the reputation of being loners, seeing ourselves as "too good" and a bit stand-offish. We decided to pay the price for non-collaboration so that we could do it our way and not be obligated to others. We were outsiders and happy to be so.

We would collaborate when it suited our purposes as it did in the Maharashtra Human Development Project. The ICA had been conducting village development projects for about five years when it was decided to try to do a project in Maharashtra State in India that would reach a critical mass in which villages would become self-renewing. The numbers were calculated. Start with one Human Development School in one demonstration village. Invite villagers from across Maharashtra to come and learn village development

strategies and tactics. Send them back to their village to begin a village renewal project. One village would initiate five, then five would spin off another five until the critical mass of 250,000 was reached. Most of the work finally came down to *networking* between the village and its local government. All the goods and services that were needed for healthy village development were available, but no one was making the connections between the village and the available resources from the local governments. The ICA staff simply taught people how to network. I don't know that the stated goal was ever achieved as it was envisioned, but the sense of systems savvy was evident.

Team Learning

Teams were our strong suit. Everything was done in teams from cooking dinner, to child care, to teaching. We had no mental models around stages of team development such as forming, storming, forming and performing. We just assumed that any group of human beings who got together with an impossible dream could and would do it. Tasks and maintenance functions in a group were news to me later when I studied team development. What I had learned about groups I learned in teaching our basic course, Religious Studies I. I learned how to deal with people who tried to subvert the sessions. I learned to read groups.

"Personality conflict" was not in our vocabulary, nor do I recall anyone "rubbing me the wrong way." Because we made decision by consensus, we talked things out. We actually called our conversations dialogue. When we were in decision making mode, you had to participate to shape the consensus so that each of you could be inside it. The issues seemed always to be in the center of the table so we didn't 'take other members comments "personally." Yes, there were times when we did "one up" behaviors, but they had the effect

of calling you to attention more than destroying or wounding you. Most profound and the most missed of all our team activities is the singing. Singing lifts the spirit and deals with us at a level far beyond the rational. The blends and harmonies, points and counterpoints of our singing seemed to capture the meta-message of our work together. It did not matter if you were a good singer or not. The principle of entrainment carried the less skilled singers. Everyone sang. The body tingled with the vibration of the music. The soul was stirred with meaning. You could psychologically process your own personal and work struggles through the words of the songs. It was therapeutic. The mood of the group could be shaped by our songs. We wrote our own songs to reflect our new directions and new discoveries. How dull and lifeless Roberts Rules of Order, the decision making standard of the time, seemed next to this kind of power and connectedness.

Jim Troxel's compelling question after the dissolution of the Order, was, "If it's not the structures that hold us together, what does?" I recall being was one of the first families in 1967 to relocate to a house a block away from headquarters. We wondered if our corporateness would extend and hold a whole block away. It not only stretched a block, but it has survived many transformations. The ICA "corporateness" is the bond that remains after the impossible deed has been done. The year in and year out team work created neurological patterning that we can "fall into" whenever we are together. I met ICA friends in Victoria, B.C. last summer. We wanted to use each other as a think tank for our respective businesses. We had a week-end time design including meditation and exercise scheduled within about thirty minutes.

The ICA time design was another mental model and aid to team learning. Our yearly time design consisted of four quarters, eight weeks of teaching and five weeks for reflection. It sounds generous by today's

standards, but it sustained us. You could tell your own life story based on where you were and what you were doing in quarter two of 1974.

We also designed our week so that it was more in keeping with the way we actually experienced time. We had Week One and Week Two. Week One was Monday through Thursday; Week Two was Friday through Sunday. Week One actually started on Monday experientially despite the fact that calendars began the week with Sunday. The Sunday start to the week is a religious relic of a by-gone era. Only recently are calendar makers publishing diaries that begin the weeks and months on Monday. The learning organization creates the mental models that it wishes to use rather than assuming the conventions of the time.

Personal Mastery

Personal mastery was centered in the early days around teaching the core curriculum. A faculty of four teachers was assigned to each course. There was a fourth, third, second and first teacher. The first teacher was a master teacher which meant he or she could conduct the whole course. The first teacher was responsible for the success of the course. The second teacher was able to do almost the entire course and was second in command. The third and fourth teachers were in training and were responsible for the practical aspects of the course. There was a participant observer role for a teacher in training whose job it was to notice everything and ask questions. The whole model was an apprenticeship one. It worked brilliantly. Slowly you began to see how intricately the courses were put together. You began to notice how much you had missed the first ten times you had been through a course. You began to force yourself to make connections about people's behaviors, then test your hypothesis at the faculty meetings. It sharpened your observation skills to a fine point. You also practiced learning names so that by the end of the first session you knew everyone's name and had a tentative profile of them. I still use these skills, but I have to decide how much I will invest in any given situation. I have to decide if I will go full throttle or just cruise.

Surely the learning organization must promote personal mastery in the individual. It must not only promote it, but it must support it. The teacher

training system of the ICA was the best I have ever been part of. You were nurtured, mentored and groomed. If you "messed up" the team would figure out how to "clean up after you." There was no judgment except what you assigned yourself. It was a learning experience. You were supported in learning. It was expected however, that you would learn from your "mistake" and have the grace to make a *new* one rather than repeat the same one again.

Conclusion

As I have reread this through the eyes of specific colleagues I am getting mixed reviews. Some of them are mentally saying, "Where we in the same Order?" Others are saying, "You are remembering us kindly and romantically." Others who are less warmly disposed to the ICA experience are saying, "This is the biggest fiction since *Gone With the Wind!*" I understand all these comments my friends are making in my mind's eye.

It is not possible to have the highs I have described without concomitant lows. If you go the heaven, you also go to hell. That is the nature of the beast. So it is with the learning organization; it is not so much the highs and lows that count as the overall affirmation of the whole adventure. Michael Jordan, of basketball fame, says, "It's not so much the disappointments in life that count, but what you do with them." The same thing may be said of joy, despair and the whole range of human emotion.

On balance I would say the true secret to being a learning organization is *not* to be a learning organization at all, but to get up every morning with an impossible dream and set about doing it. You will be honored, humbled and joy filled as others join you in the quest, the *dream will pull* you into the future and being a learning organization will be the by-product of your work --- not the aim of it. Like the pioneers who settled North America, a good attitude may be

more important to survival than skills. The skills can be acquired if the dream is strong enough. Indeed, if your dream is far enough out, you will have to *invent* the skills to do the job, because no one on will have ever been on the trail you will blaze. I say, "Bet your life on the impossible dream. The dream and the life are all you really have anyway."

Selected Bibliography

Berry, Thomas. *The Dream of the Earth*. New York: Sierra Club Books. 1988.

Bohm, David. *On Dialogue*. Proceedings from a weekend seminar, November 6, 1989. Ojai, CA, 1990.

Boulding, Kenneth E. *The Image*. University of Michigan Press, 1961

Greenleaf, Robert. *Servant Leadership*. Toronto: Paulist Press, 1977.

Lawrence, D. H. *The Complete Poems*. New York: Viking Press. 1964.

"LENS" The Institute of Cultural Affairs, 1973.

Leonard, George. *1vlastery*. New York: A Plume Book, Penguin Books, 1992.

The participants in the Summer '71 Research Assembly, "Matrices of Contradiction," Document B. The Ecumenical Institute, Chicago, Illinois, 1971.

The participants in the Summer '71 Research Assembly, "Toward a Practical Vision of The New Social Vehicle." The Ecumenical Institute, Chicago, 1971.

The participants in the Summer '71 Research Assembly, "A Practical Vision of The New Social Vehicle." The Ecumenical Institute, Chicago. 1972.

Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. New York: A Currency Book, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc., 1994.

Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline. The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday Currency, 1990.

Spencer, Laura. *Winning Through Participation*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 1989.

Suresh Srivastva, David Cooperrider, Tojo Thachankary, Xiaoping Tian and the ICA Appreciative Inquiry Team, "Wonder and Affirmation in Discovery and Transformation: A Case Study of the Institute of Cultural Affairs, 'The Hero With a Thousand Faces'." Case Western Reserve University Department of Organizational Behaviour, Weatherhead School of Management, Cleveland, Ohio, November, 1989.

Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock*. Toronto: bantam Books. 1970

Tojo Thachankary, "An Appreciative Inquiry into The Institute of Cultural Affairs."
An unpublished dissertation, Case Western Reserve University Department
of OrgOrganizational Behaviour, Weatherh

adSchool of Management, Cleveland, Ohio, 1992.

Troxel, James P. "The Results of the Appreciative Inquiry Study of The Institute of
Cultural Affairs." The Institute of Cultural Affairs, Chicago IL, May 8, 1992.

Troxel, James P. "Appreciative Inquiry: An Action Research Method for
Organizational Transformation." Prepared for The School of INew Learning,
DePaul University , Chicago, IL. Revised and edited with assistance of the
colleagues of Institute of Cultural Affairs, April 20, 1992.

Patn'cia Porter Scott, 1995