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ABSTRACT

The status of Adult Education programs is discussed in this speech by the Superintendent of Schools in Amsterdam, New York. A state-wide curriculum is proposed which includes evening high school, vocational-occupational programs, civic programs, job retraining, and recreational programs. The need for involving the community in continuing education is stressed, and categorical state aid is urged. (RS)

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"A SUPERINTENDENT LOOKS
at
CONTINUING EDUCATION"

ADDRESS BY

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Amsterdam, N.Y.

Annual Meeting
of
New York Association
of
PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT EDUCATORS

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to have been asked to speak to the New York State Adult Educators this morning. The fact that my few comments today will be a substitute for a position paper on adult education presented by a representative of the State Board of Regents is an honor for me. The fact that I am a relatively new chief school officer in our state and have been selected to represent superintendents of schools and to pinch hit on this occasion is also a distinct honor. Some of you will undoubtedly disagree with my presentation — and this is necessary if we are to value free open discussion.

When asked by Ed Hostetter to present this address, I, as all chief school administrators, was deeply involved in the stress and strain of negotiations with multiple groups, the preparation of an annual budget and the inter-twining of both to create harmony. Economic soundness and human reasonableness as it relates to a meaningful educational program.

Superintendents and school boards throughout our state are deeply engrossed with all the ramifications of the Taylor Law, — with accelerating costs of education and limited available funds. To be asked to focus upon one phase of the total educational program of any community without negotiations becomes a real pleasure these days. This is particularly significant to me when that phase is Adult Education — a real step-child in many school systems, deemed a necessary evil by some, and an "extra-curricular activity" by others.

I most certainly am aware of the variety of problems which you face — and have faced in the past decade, in projecting Adult Education. You have been searching for:

1. Recognition as a full-fledged member of the educational family.
2. Total acceptance by the public as an integral part of the educational program, and the annual budget.
3. Recognition by the State Legislature of the the full significance of Adult Education in the community and upon the future of the community.
4. The need for categorical State Aid to bolster and to establish firmly the concept of Continuing Education; and
5. The continual need for dynamic leadership in your field to gain this recognition and your "Place in the Sun."

Most Chief School Administrators fully recognize these needs and have a sincere interest in expanding further the Continuing Education Concept. However, other pressures — well-organized pressures — have dominated his time; directed his efforts — and have absorbed the available finances. He is constantly plagued with the need to maintain with quality the on-going programs which have the greatest community support and parental pressures so that Adult Education — as it is known — has become an "Extra - Curricular Activity". When the tax money is tight — it is the less known "extra- curricular activities" which go without, are curtailed or are forgotten.

So — Adult Education, as such, is being forgotten and, in too many instances, has died a natural death..... The fault lies with many — but the greatest blame rests with you — the experts, the leaders, and the advocates.

Much of what you have been emphasizing for sale is non-salable — obsolete in so many ways — a product of yesteryear which cannot compete in today's educational market place, or the market place of the future. You have been undersold by others, and you hardly realize it. You have isolated yourselves from the main-stream of educational trends and the directional flow of community needs — from local, State and Federal funds, and from the Research for Tomorrow. You cannot compete with the many facets of the Educational Family until you re-tool, innovate and become technologically competent.

May I offer a few suggestions for Re-tooling in this technological age?

First, take a look at yourselves — your titles, your responsibilities: Adult Educators striving for recognition and acceptance in the total educational family as directors of Adult Education.

What is Adult Education? What is an adult, for that matter? When does one become adult, and then require "education for an adult"? When in life does one begin to learn and when does one need not to learn? With the first breath of life and through the last.

Have you really accepted the fact that learning is a continuous process for living?

Let's rid ourselves of these "Handles" — "Adult Education" — "Director of Adult Education" — Yes, "The New York State Association of Adult Educators"! This would be the first giant step — A step into the future. Not only re-tool — but re-name!

What you need is a new image within the minds of the total community: the adults, the young people, industry and commerce, the politicians, the State legislatures, the educational family and even, Chief School Administrators.

"Continuing Education" is a good beginning, but it may not meet the needs of the year 2000 AD. Since life is a continuous learning process, the educational programs must be planned for life itself.

As advocates of Continuing Education you will soon become lost in this "Life-Time of Learning" concept without a recognized place or a valid purpose.

You must go further — but you cannot be identified by name alone. Your purpose and your responsibilities must be re-tooled — and re-tooled fast —, before you "go broke" or your identity is discarded by the educational family and absorbed by another.

First, I submit that you must learn to "think Big", to think of the future and not of past performance. Your image must be acceptable as part of the total educational process of man and his need to learn continually.... The image of Adult Education, as such, is not good because of your own limited performance — and lack of daring.

Many believe that Adult Education is for those who have failed to complete a satisfactory secondary program.

They believe that Adult Education is a series of hobby clubs which are provided for special cliques in the community and at the taxpayers' expense.

Some believe that it is a program to provide regular classroom teachers with extra-pay for an "extra-curricular activity".

Others believe it consists of basket-weaving, a bridge club, a sewing circle or an adult weight-reducing program.

Far too many people believe it is a waste of time, a waste of money and a waste of school building utilities.

You and I know that many of today's programs are not — that there is much more offered for total community good than the tax paying citizens realize. Yet, that is the image in too many cases — and what are we going to do about it?

For years you have been lobbying for categorical aid — and you have been doing it alone. — without the full support of your community, your Boards of Education or your chief school officer. Each year the legislators placed low priority upon your demands — perhaps, because you haven't had this full support, because your image is to them a "basket-weaving — sewing circle" pressure group, or because you haven't re-tooled for the future.

You cannot survive as a member of the educational family with yesterday's image, with yesterday's curriculum and with yesterday's tools.

Some of you believe that the basket-weaving concepts of Continuing Education should be weeded out and that an academic curriculum would raise your image for "3. fast move ahead". This is natural — for as much as we need to direct our youngsters into the vocational-occupational and technological fields — secondary education continually faces the pressure of a college education as the only course of study to follow.

I believe that there is a purpose for basket-weaving if the local community needs it and wants it. But also I believe that Adult Education, as such, cannot survive this kind of curriculum alone, and with the image behind it, which now exists.

Elementary, secondary and college curricula offerings consist of both the academic and extra-curricular programs, both of which constitute opportunities for the development of the total individual. Post high school education, as such, should also consist of both the academic and extra-curricular programs. Thus, there is a place for basket-weaving, for bridge, for physical fitness and sewing clubs. Your job is to realign the curriculum, to balance it and to present it as a total program for the development of the total individual beyond the secondary school curriculum.

However, this can't be done by you alone or in scattered communities throughout the state. It must start from the top — from this group here assembled and from the State Department of Education.

If you want to be full time directors — then make it a full-time job first. Begin now — by fostering Adult Education — Continuing Education — or what it will be called — as a full-time, fully recognized member of the educational family.

I have spoken of the educational family, let's pause a moment and define. By educational family, I refer to the total of the accepted phases of the formal educational life of the community, — blending together the multiple ages and stages of learning as a sequence in a continuous process. All groups would fit into a related pattern — not separate from each other — but rather, each member of the family dependent upon and cooperatively seeking one goal — the total continuous education of all peoples and for all their needs.

We begin today with the
Pre-School Programs:
The Kindergarten;
The Elementary School
The Junior High School or Middle School; and
The comprehensive Senior High School

Post-High School learning may be obtained through:

The Junior or Community College;
The College and University;
The Graduate School;
And other variations of these, such as Technical Schools, Institutes and other Institutions for specialized training. Together these form the total Educational Family.

But where is the "Adult Education School", or "College", or "Institute", as such? It is the family step-child, a distant, but not kissing, cousin of the educational family. It has become the catch-all for everything and anything that cannot be classified as a current educational experience or which other institutions cannot tolerate as their responsibility. The result has been a multiple-breed "of mishmash" with confused objectives and meaningless goals, if any at all!

There is a need for local post high school educational programs that are part of this continuous process of learning. Let's create a minimum formalized program which is acceptable to most communities, regardless of size and special needs, and let this officially come forth with full endorsement from the State. In other words, let's rebuild our program by re-establishing meaningful goals, stabilizing a minimum curriculum and prescribing a local program with the State as the leader.

A state-wide curriculum would immediately change your image and give you recognition. It would project equal financial aid and place the continual education of adults in this educational family — not as a cousin or step-child — but as a full blooded relation.

There are other avenues of learning which has been spotted upon the horizon and which have by their very nature been recognized as infants in the educational family.

Manpower development training programs and job re-training programs are two infants that have really grown into manhood. In those communities where they have been established with great success, the local, State and National interests have supported them and recognize them as full-fledged members of the family. Job re-training programs should have been a natural outgrowth of Adult Educational Programs — and should have been incorporated as such, however, they came from without — because there was a need. Why were they not created by you? And why was the recognized need for job retraining not referred to you for solution, for implementation?

Was it because your image projected basket-weaving and golf that such meaningful programs grew from without your domain?

Sometimes I feel that some Adult educators have measured the quality of their programs by the number of registrants, the number of courses or the number of classrooms used each year, rather than by the degree by which pre-determined goals have been met. Is your success then determined by statistics, or fruitfully fulfilling a recognized void in the educational process.

Let us consider a curriculum that has purpose, such as job re-training, and relate it to state-wide minimum proposals and expand it to include the specific local needs. When this has been accomplished, let us then add the extra-curricular activities. But let's not exclude them.

In thinking of a minimum state curriculum, I think in terms of these kinds of areas:

1. A basic educational program to give all oldsters an opportunity to become full participants in our society, and to provide a required avenue for youngsters who fail to complete a minimum secondary program.

2. An evening High School — and not just for High School equivalency, but for those who might better adjust to a part-time learning program and schedule.
3. A full Vocational - Occupational Technical Program where facilities exist for part time youngsters and oldsters alike.
4. A cultural program for the individual as well as for the community, — the "Humanities-At-Large" within the continuous process of learning.
5. A civic program — police and fire training programs — civil defense training, air patrols, water safety patrols, and the art of leadership in local affairs, local politics.
6. An avocational program — planning for the expanded leisure time to come, and a potential job change.
7. A job retraining program in cooperation with local industrial and business leaders, — An "Open Door Policy" for full utilization of available facilities in order to maintain local economic stability.
8. A community information program to develop unity of purpose and an informed and active citizenry.
9. A Senior Citizens Program for leisure time activities and the creative arts.
10. An evening and week-end recreational program.
11. An enrichment program for a full, and, meaningful life.

Many of these areas are provided in scattered programs, but the depth has not been developed nor properly focused as a recognized curriculum.

All adults in the community should be served and be involved in the programs of the school. We have given lip-service to this, but have never really moved upon it.

If we are to expect continual support from the community for all kinds of educational advancement, then we must attempt to involve actively all facets of the community. Not just the parents of the youngsters of the public schools, but all parents, all non-parents and all grandparents, uncles and aunts. Truly, if they become part of a Continuing Educational Program, they will feel that they belong, that they are being served, that their school tax dollars are worthwhile. That they should and must support the total educational family.

Many civic groups, service and fraternal clubs, industrial and business organizations, social clubs, and recognized groups within the political and religious facets of our communities require meeting places and socializations. Some day, it will be recognized that these groups should be able to use the million-dollar school plants which are idle in the evening, on weekends and throughout vacation periods. When this is finalized, even greater support will be forthcoming for new schools, new educational programs and additional tax support.

I submit that Adult Educators have a part to play in achieving full participation of all groups within their community, with the full use of educational facilities and the expansion of evening, weekend, day-time and vacation programs. Must you and your constituents be a victim of the annual public school calendar? Post High School needs do not function about a 40-week school year; neither do they relate to the 20-week semester rule. Adult needs are continuous, and at all times, even on Sundays.

We talk of equality of educational opportunities in our public schools today and, yet, if education is a continuous process then where is the equality of continuous education for the post high school young adult, and the not-so-young adult? Whether it be job re-training — or cultural exposure, we haven't done our job — nor does the future look any brighter — if we rest upon yesterday's questionable laurels.

You must also break-away from another tradition of the formal educational institutions — perhaps become a leader for the total educational family! Just as the forty week school year and the semester rule are not applicable for the Continuing Education Program, so must I question a formal grading or evaluation of oldsters. In our secondary school program we are beginning a plan to evaluate with minimum pressures — A P/F, "Pass or Fail" Program for selective electives. This is a movement within the elementary non-graded organizational patterns, High School and Universities. Doesn't it seem reasonable that formal grading should not be a formal part of a continuous educational process — where we wish to maintain a continuous desire to learn to the very last breath?

We also need to take a hard look at some of the teaching techniques within our Adult Education Programs — especially those which are not extra-curricular. The teacher-directed and teacher dominated lesson must give away to the involvement of the learners — and particularly "adult learners". Perhaps, this is why the extra-curricular courses have been so successful. They are involved!

How many of you evaluate the teaching within your programs? How many of your instructors are products of yesteryear — when you first began your program? How many of them still lecture, assign extensive homework and how many began this deadening approach in the days when "educational moon-lighting" was so necessary? How many of you evaluate instruction for the purpose of improving it? How much supervision or evaluation do you really do?

How many of you have up-dated your own knowledge of Continuing Education? How long has it been since you —— or your staff —— have completed a course on this new concept? —— Inservice or otherwise?

Yes, a full time program deserves a full time director —— but —— one doing the full job!

If we are truly going to provide continuous educational opportunities, then we must re-organize from the very first breath ——to the very last. Adult Education cannot remain aloof to the needs of the next 30 years; neither can it move ahead alone. Recognizing this continuous process, Adult Education must become a member of the educational family —— and the educational family must accept the Continuous Education of adults as an essential part of the total program.

We can no longer speak of a K-12 Public Education Program. Within the next five years many communities will be involved with Pre-school Programs, or a nursery-12 organizational pattern. As a matter of fact, the non-graded elementary school concept will soon reach the secondary schools and thus, grade levels, or years of learning will further be diffused. All organizational patterns of learning are changing and Adult Education must change with the times.

We can no longer afford architectural designs for K-12 and for ten month utilization. We cannot tolerate structures for single purposes, for we must combine our needs, our expenditures and our objectives into multi-purpose complexes for total community use and for maximum time use. By the year 2000 AD our life span will undoubtedly be approaching 90 and our retirement age will drop even lower than today. We must plan a Living-Learning Program that will encompass our respective life spans. A "K-90 Program" If you will: Kids to 90. Schools will become truly a Living-Learning Center for all —— for all ages —— for all times —— of the day, the week, and the year.

Many chief school officers are amazed at the costly structures now being built for higher education. In public schools we are required to construct around Pre-determined enrollments equated to teaching spaces. We are forced to utilize space from 95% to 100% of the regular school day. Not so in the university, where multiple classrooms are constructed for their colleges or divisions and are idle in afternoons and evenings. Perhaps, it is because no one wants to teach after 1:00 PM and maximum utilization and learning is considered to be ideal within a limited time span.

The total educational family cannot accept part-time use of facilities, nor can the taxpayer. Public schools and Continuing Education must build their programs around total community needs for greater utilization and less cost. We cannot afford selected hours for instruction, nor can we accept the fact that learning only takes place in prescribed hours of day. Adult Programs must be geared to facilities as well as availability of the learners.

Therefore, it should be a full-time program with classes scheduled throughout the day, the evening, the weekends and the entire year. Can we not learn in July and August? Whether it be housewives, senior citizens, night or day workers or retired educators ——— adult programs to be continuous education must be scheduled continuously. In raising our image let's rid ourselves of evening education alone ——— the night school dilemma. And let's demonstrate leadership in economy as well as services.

How many of you have vocational-occupational facilities within your reach? How many of your school systems use them during vacation periods or during the summer? During the evenings, or on Saturdays? How many Post-High adults would consider a comprehensive course during their vacation period or on weekends or in the evening, to develop skills, or another avocation? Millions of dollars of equipment lie idle throughout the year. I sincerely want to open our occupational labs to academic college bound youngsters during the summer. Why not? They should understand that all of life is not to be spent in an academic and college atmosphere ——— such as one might call it. And many college students need these experiences, as well as the adults of our community.

Another challenge before you is the limited expansion of Community Colleges for Vocational-Occupational and Technical learning. Too many Community Colleges have been organized with good intentions to meet these needs of our society but have merely emphasized the liberal arts curriculum. Perhaps, there is greater prestige in becoming an academic institution ——— and perhaps, their goal is to become a four year Liberal Arts College. But there still remains the essential need for technical and occupational institutes.

Continuing Education and secondary schools may be the only answer to this. Are you ready to help in this area? Are you prepared to demonstrate leadership in Post-High School Occupational-Technical areas of learning? State and Federal Projects should be made available. Why not determine your community-area needs and spark your chief school administrator to make the move. Is it so unrealistic that a 13th and 14th year of education in these areas could not be considered within the facilities now available, or with limited expansion? It is my opinion that this is in your area of responsibility by not as adult educators, necessarily, but rather as leaders in the Continuous Educational Process. Grab hold of this one ——— it is an essential need today and for the year 2000 AD!

Take a look ——— a deep penetrating look ——— at your role in urban education: The problems in the urban areas of our society relate to education in so many ways ——— not only elementary and secondary education ——— but expanded educational programs for our adults. You claim this is an area for which you are responsible ——— but how responsible have you been?

Basket-weaving alone will not solve these problems, nor will the constant chit-chat and the cries for money of the past decade.

Here is a change for your leadership to come forth ——— for you to serve as you have never served before.

I speak not only of the racial differences within the community but of the ethnic, cultural, language and social inequalities which exist and for which you have done very little to solve.

Through Adult and Continuing Education the blending of a community can begin through opportunities for all races and ethnic peoples to learn, to understand, to appreciate and to tolerate with conviction the contributions of each, the values of each, and the relations of each to the total functioning and existence of our society. There is a big job to be done here ——— and your leadership and your field of endeavor are essential if we are to survive for the year 2000 AD.

How many of your communities have "organized cultural groups without a home"? A community symphony, a choral group, a dramatic group, an art display or a make-shift art gallery?..... How many of you do not? This is Continuous Education for the community. Grab hold of this one, too ——— and provide them a "home base" within the education family. Offer them the support of the schools as well as the available facilities. Go further, create for them in order to solve for their needs and in turn serve the needs of all. Establish new groups, if you will, dance, instrumental, vocal and theatrical. Marshall and expand the talent of your community, identify it with your school system under Continuing Education ——— and create additional support for the total educational family. And not only will you be raising the image of your program in your community ——— but you will be expanding opportunities for continuous education in music and the arts beyond the present and terminal secondary school program.

Yes ——— the continuous process ——— a real living-learning sequence for the total education family, and all peoples ——— Kids to 90!

There are many other educational needs in your community, but you must seek them beyond your desk and beyond last year's Adult Education brochure. Citizens committees should help to organize and create enthusiasm. They should be involved with identifying needs and with the planning for education of adults. But they cannot be expected to blend continuing education into the total family. The leadership must come from the experts.

One of your real goals has always been to obtain categorical State Aid for Adult Education. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with some of you from the Albany area to attempt to convince certain legislators that such aid was essential. I felt that it was a fruitless effort ——— not because the

speakers were not convincing nor was sincerity lacking. But because the few legislators that attended had little knowledge of the real meaning of "Continuing Education" and because "Adult Education's" image was one of the "extra-curricular" aspects of Learning-Education. They also remember the many flaws of previous programs and the misuse by some of the intent of previous aid.

Let's realize that categorical aid for Adult Education as it is now is doomed to failure. Competition for State and Local funds does not permit consideration at this time or in the immediate future. However, if you can become a recognized member of the Educational Family through a revitalized, state supported curriculum, through a new image which is a part of continuous education — Kids - 90, then you may spark approval of state as well as local assistance.

Remember, General Education Aid is really the result of many forms of accepted categorical aid. Elementary and secondary education have recognized differences as built into the formula. Pre-school programs are special funds which will become part of General aid. Poverty programs, urban education, are categorical in nature. Community colleges and higher education have their own assists from local and state agencies, and the 12-month school year, of the future will reach the same level in many school districts in the next decade.

Federal programs have recognized certain categories through the elementary and secondary education act, vocational funding, poverty programs, Head Start and higher education acts.

Then why not Adult Education? Let's face it realistically.....
.....Perhaps, you haven't proven yourselves to gain this special recognition. Perhaps, meetings of this kind not only isolate you from reality but further encourage you to continue in the same rut of yesteryear.

How many Chief School Administrators are present? How many Board Members? How many different members of the Educational Family are represented here today? Continuing Education encompasses all of these areas — and includes you — even though you have humbly picked up the pieces where others have failed by providing basic education, high school equivalency programs and the "extra curricular activities" of adults.

You cannot exist alone or as a separate entity. Rather, you must move to join and become part of the total program of educating for all ages —. It is true you will be called upon to sacrifice some of your identity —. But consolidate you must, if you are to survive. If you are to play your proper role, then you must join in the total concept of Continuous Education — and not by word alone.

Categorical Aid will come when you prove your worth; General Aid from within the total family will also be realized when your goals and purposes have been redefined in line with the needs of the next thirty years; when:

you have at least minimum and acceptable curriculum for these goals; and when you reveal an all-inclusive program beyond the "extra-curricular activities.

Reorganize ——— create a new image and then sell it. Involve the Chief School Administrators and the total community so that maximum support may be obtained. The Chief School Administrators will look to the specialist in the future in Continuing Education for leadership and this need will increase each year. If you want to be a full-time director, then you had better create a full-time program which will be recognized as an essential ingredient of the continuous, educational, living-learning concept.

In Amsterdam there is a program of concern, of communication and of commitment, aimed at a cooperative involvement between schools and community ——— a plan to revitalize a city through Continuing Education ——— via an effective dialogue of cooperation between schools and the city to build the "Amsterdam Living/Learning Center" ——— A real catalyst of learning ——— A place to serve all within a total community.

The Amsterdam Living/Learning Center will be a graphic example of a statement made by President Lyndon B. Johnson: "Tomorrow's school will be the center of the community life, for the grown-ups as well as the children; a shopping center of human services".

The Al/L will, therefore, create one of the town's greatest assets ——— a vital educational center (comprehensive secondary school facilities for grades 9-12 and 2200 pupils), a continuous educational curriculum, a cultural center and a regional center. To be built about a "town square", it will include three basic core areas: The "Educational Forum," "The People Place", and "The Action Center".

The Educational Forum shall be an all-age (K-90) forum for learning, for training and retraining, for health and counseling, for community meetings with a computer center and a communications center to serve the young, and not-so-young, and a Media Center ——— full library research services which may well include a cooperative venture by the school and public library systems.

The People Place will encompass a Junior/Senior Citizens "Place" ——— with a complete performing arts theater for school and civic use situated as the hub on the Mohawk River's edge. A senior citizen center and a teen age center will blend together for the K-90 concept. All the facets of the arts will be included: A School-Community Museum, an Art Gallery, and a place for continuous "creative happenings".

The Action Center will provide a full spectrum center for athletics, physical fitness, recreation, "hoe downs", and a marina ——— for "Fun on the River".

Just as the Amsterdam Living/Learning Center ——— a place for Al/L people, projects complete living for the future and for a community which

will be alive and alert to the continuous process of learning, Adult Education, as such, will be blended within the total complex, within the total recognized learning needs of all people — the young and not so young — even on Sundays!

Ours is a total program based upon the realities of action, rather than the glowing illusions of words. It is a plan requiring new concepts and bold action if effective solutions are to be found to a series of complex problems, which in themselves, are simple.

Ours is not a search to be different. Ours is the search to fulfill the unfulfilled.

Emerging from this Living/Learning Center will be a Continuous Educational Program for all learners which will require an integrated curriculum for all ages, for each day and evening of the week and for a never-ending school year. The present Adult Education Program will become an integral part of this total program — probably the focal point around which much of the community and these total facilities will function. We will have established a basic but flexible curriculum which will be geared for post high school learning in preparation for the year 2000 AD.

Continuing Education must be a real and living program and it must come from you and your organization.

Many of you are deeply emerged in many of these programs, but I ask "what are your objectives? and why? Do you serve the total needs of your community — K-90? How organized are you for the year 2000 AD."

These few words have been presented merely as the thoughts of one Superintendent and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any other.

But Superintendents can be "had" — if you really work at it — if you really look to all that is around you — plan for the future and present a program that is imaginative, innovative and alive! Marry into that educational family and obtain your equal rights, equal recognitions and equal responsibilities.

If I have sparked one unified thought with you — then you do me honor. If from this presentation, a controversy is aroused — then there is hope for an open forum on your future role, your future direction and your future existence.....Now is the time for you to stand up and be counted — to soul search for the future.

Yours, too, is not a search to be different. Yours is the search to fulfill the unfulfilled.

Thank you for listening and best wishes for the year 2000 AD.

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