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OPENING ADDRESS

I want to welcome you to the GRA. Rather than, "Grace and Peace be unto you," I want to say, "Welcome Warriors." As I look out across this group tonight I see people who have been stranded in the desert with a flat tire. I see people who have decided to do circuits across Canada in -30° weather. I see people who have decided that they are going to deal with the mud in Kawangware and conquer it. I see people who have decided that they are going to make Sudtonggan alive again. I see people who have been out on circuits raising the funds to undergird Global Social Demonstration and Town Meeting and have stuck to the job day after day, week after week. I see people who have gone on LENS treks. I see people who have set up appointments over and over again in small towns and have decided that they would win. I welcome the warriors here gathered to Summer '76.

This year we have witnessed a miracle. And you and I have been part of that miracle. People say I look different this year because I have a mustache. Well, I want to confess to you that you are looking at a different man than stood here a year ago, and I doubt that the mustache has very much to do with it except, perhaps, as a symbol that such a change has happened. As I look into your eyes, I suspect that this is true of you as well, for we have been immersed in a miracle.

We said that what the world needed across the globe this year was eight Social Demonstrations and there are eight Social Demonstrations in being now. One of the most overwhelming aspects of the summer is that the people from those eight Social Demonstrations are here and yet at the same time the Social Demonstrations are going on. That is what has to happen across the globe in order for us to really do what is needed. That work must go on. We witnessed a miracle in over 3500 towns and villages and communities of this nation. To say they were visited is inadequate. Hope visited these towns across North America and 500 Global Community Forums were held in this continent. I consider that a miracle. In the files of this building are over 7500 proposals of local man's expression of what he yearns for and plans to have happen in this continent. That is a phenomenon. The other part of the miracle that I want to point to is that Xavierism is alive and well and living all over the earth.

But that is not the miracle. None of what I said is the miracle. The miracle is that life has been reborn in communities. The miracle is that Maliwada walks. That Kawangware sees. That Peoria has had the good news delivered unto it. For me, that is the miracle. Energy has been expended and rekindled in people again: those who thought they were diseased and over the hill are spending ten and fifteen and twenty hours a day engaged in creating history. Local man in communities has come back to life. That is the miracle that has happened. Hope has been grounded in the truth once again through Community Forum and Global Social Demonstration. The earth is alive. That is the miracle.

Something has happened to us and to the globe in the midst of that. We have talked about something called transparency for about three years. I never could figure out what that was. If you got in a jam you said, "transparency," and if you didn't say that you said, "catalytic." But now, I can talk about transparency in only one way, the way it has happened to me.

When we first started Community Forum, I wasn't much sold on them. I would do a Community Forum and then would have to translate it through RS-I to figure out that it really was a spirit happening. I want to announce to you that suddenly one day, I discovered that I did not translate that through the symbolism that I grew up with anymore. I saw directly that Community Forum was an event that brought good news for mankind. I believe that that has happened to you, as well. Part of transparency was discovering that social entities could have rebirth, not simply individuals, that communities as a whole could come to life and that we are in a new time.

I remember reading a commentator on Christianity in China, and he said that the reason Christianity failed in China was that we could not believe that a societal event was as valid as an individual event. I believe that we have discovered that there is a societal event when a whole community discovers the hope of life and the possibility of rebirth. We have discovered that the new religious moves through the symbolism of any given religious form and is transparently evident. I had to go through the Christian symbolism to get to the place where I am today. But I have come to terms with the fact that I do not necessarily have to believe that every human being has to follow the particular type of journey that was part of my milieu, my culture, and my neurosis to see the transparency of the revitalization of mankind directly. Now if you misunderstand me and think that I am negating my heritage, you simply do not understand what I am saying. Others see through other forms and in other ways. I suspect that what we have experienced, though we are very hesitant to talk about it his way, because it scares us, is that we are clear the Community Forum is whatever Evangelism is. For we have seen with our own eyes, and heard with our own ears, and experienced with our own lives, the resurgence of community and world.

In the midst of the miracle, that is, in the midst of Community Forum and Social Demonstration, there is a burden. I fear every Thursday that somebody is going to call me and ask me to do another Town Meeting. I don't want to do any more Town Meetings, and it is not because it isn't fun to orchestrate, but it is because once you have awakened the hope you discover that you have put upon yourself the burden of what comes next. I was telling someone how much I loved New York, and they said the problem was that they loved everywhere they go. But what you know is that this is only the first step. You know that after the awakening comes demonstrating the possibility of a creative future concretely manifest in the rebirth of the social and economic fabric at the local level.

Part of the burden is that we have become aware in the past year that we are in a real war. I am not negating our past, you know you always start over, you re-interpret history wherever you are standing, but the war has become all new to us. We have turned to the world; we have been in the world and, lo and behold! Two years ago, we thought all the world was our colleague. We thought every social agency, everybody who yammered something about renewal was our colleague, and we have discovered, this year, that this is not true. We are thrust out there to be the creators of a future. We found ourselves to be children, learning to walk, learning to talk and learning to be effective in the world which at first we saw as foreign to us. That is part of the burden of turning to the world.

Well, the miracles have occurred and we have established a new beach-head from which we can launch the new approaches for the continued historic engagement and recreation of this earth. We are aware of the resurgence of local man. We are aware of the local in a brand new way.

I talk to priors these days and for the first time they know their geography. They know it in a deeper sense than ever before, a Hebrew knowing, not a Greek knowing. We have become aware in a fresh way of what we've always known: that if the earth is to have rebirth it will have rebirth when the localis is rebirthed. It really doesn't matter much who is elected President of the United States, you know. It does matter where Town Meetings are held across the face of North America and that is far more important than if it is Carter or Ford. For that is the way the future of the United States is going to go. We have learned that. I was rocked when it became clear that feeding the whole earth is possible when you look at that through the eyes of every local village. Much that we have learned from technology and statistics and global perspective has become a demon around our necks, has made us blind to the possibilities of localis by localis renewal that will, in fact, renew the earth. We must be the ones who slay that demon, in order that all local people can be unleashed from its old imagery of failure-fatedness, and from its decision to subjugate man to futility.

I have been reflecting a great deal on the dinosaur. The dinosaur was doing well in his world. He was really the King of the earth. And then changes began to come into his environment, into the social fabric, into the socio-economic milieu. He didn't see any way in which he could deal with it, and the water dried up leaving only mud to support his being. The trees were too far away to eat the leaves and he finally decided to die. Now, I stand before you as one who has decided that mankind is not a dinosaur and I will stake my life on deciding that the creative urges of mankind shall be realized and we shall not have the demise of the dinosaur. We can take the new surroundings of our environment and we can create that new which is necessary to allow the human experiment to continue. That is a part of the new war we are waging.

We are in a new war. We have eight Social Demonstrations and that has been exciting. But the frustration is that you and I feel underneath the haunting, yearning, nagging sense of "What the hell are eight Social Demonstrations in a

a world our size?" We know that our task is replicating that experiment, not so that we get bigger and better Social Demonstrations, but so that the world may see the kind of comprehensive awakening and engagement that can happen everywhere. I am very much aware of what is going on in social agencies that work in the Third World. The most haunting question they deal with these days is the question of how you replicate an experiment. They are as aware as we are that one little sanitary well over here and one agricultural plot over there and one medical center over here is meaningless save it is comprehensively replicable for every village across the globe. One reason that we need to be about the task of replication in Maliwada is in order to show Those Who Care, like some of those agencies, that that kind of thing is possible for the globe.

This requires of us momentum. It requires of us a social impact that cannot wait five years, or ten years, or fifteen years. It isn't a question of our having the time. The time is right in the world. The rise of local man, the concern for the villages in the Philippines and Korea and India and communities both urban and rural across North America and elsewhere is the God-given opportunity to create the kind of momentum that will create the social impact that will actually move creation ahead in the continuous fulfillment of humanness. We use the phrase, "Move It, Move It, Move It." You have heard it. Some people use it pharisaically and it is irritating as hell. It isn't the question of my moving it, moving it, moving it in order that my religious house can do better. It is the impact of our tactics of moving it in history so that history can move. That is the issue that we face. It is not a virtue. It is the globe's need. We must show those signs and release the vast body of Those Who Care. I know a great many of you have been in Social Demonstrations and have witnessed mousy men and women in the communities who in two days of engagement with Social Demonstration became giants, who became alive again, who discovered all over again that they had prowess, that they had intellect, that they had skills, that they cared. That is what we are about. Releasing Those Who Care, not for the development of a larger summer program, or something like that, but that the task force of God in history can be released for the task before us.

Well, we are waging a new war. Some new things have become critical for us that I suspect were not critical before. First, it is a very critical moment. The urgency of the time requires moving. It is a critical moment. If you think the anti-forces to the creative urgency of man are just lying dormant, you are crazy. Those forces, when they see their death-knell with Social Demonstration and Town Meeting and that which is creating the new, concretely, will rise up in rebellion and we are called to battle with those forces. I guess it was in that old character from Tarsus, who said, "Our war isn't against flesh and blood, but it is against principalities and powers of darkness." It is against the failure mentality. It is against decisions to give up the human experiment. It is against all of those who have decided to crystallize the human experiment at this point and sit in the dried up mud and eat the leaves off the trees, however few they are, and die away. Mind you, they do not die peacefully. They die with vengeance and power, and seek to undo the work of the resurgence of man. Don't be

mislead by what the word resurgence means. It does not mean quiescence; it does mean that we are called to a new kind of battlefield and a new kind of warriorship.

The new war that we are in requires far more careful discernment of what we have meant for years and years by contradictions. In the last two quarters there isn't any part of the battleplanning that houses take more seriously than discerning the contradictions because there are so many options of what one could do. There are so many tactics you could employ. We are clear that unless the tactics that we are employing are touching on the key contradiction of society at this time, we are wasting our lives. So we are learning all over again the prowess of what it means to discern the contradiction in history. The fascinating thing about the Movement right now is that it has got the contradiction out there. Nobody says anymore that the contradiction is not enough troops. Thank God. They never say anymore the contradiction is the spirit life of the religious house. Thank God. They deal with the contradictions that are present in community and society over against the trends of history. And praise God that this has dawned upon us -- that we have decided that the issues for discerning the contradiction are disclosed in hearing the authentic human cry, not the wailing of those who feel sorry for themselves, but the cry to the release that is possible for mankind as a whole as manifest in every particular situation.

We have become clear that this war is about tactical action. I suppose that we are clear about that, more than anything else as we come in from circuits and Social Demonstrations. What is important today is the critical deed--that which is done--that which is seen--the necessary action that must be carried out in order that human creativity and human spirit can be released. We need to learn more, I suppose, about tactical action relative to appropriateness and timing. Not simply locally, but globally, in order that we, though on many battlefronts, are one thrust across the fact of this globe.

This is going to take a new kind of generalship. A generalship that sees the necessary strategies and tactics for winning a war. It is not a "boom-boom" war. It is the war of the spirit. The war for humanness. We are going to talk a lot about that this summer, in the midst of our concrete tactical doing, our concrete tactical planning. The art of being a general. The science of being a general. We can move Community Forum Canada and Town Meeting '76 and all of the other Town Meetings and Community Forums across the globe because the time is right. We cannot laud ourselves with these, but must release them to a kind of radical propulsion. It will take strategic planning and generalship to do it. We must figure out how we engage troops, how to discover the front that needs to be fought on, how to be able to move the forces hither and thither depending on where the battle needs to be waged.

And mind you, not generalship in the individualistic sense, but generalship in the corporate body. That is not new, but if you are like me, you feel like a child learning everything over again. For the first time in my whole life, I experience that I am ready to learn. If I don't learn, I know that I am through. This is our war. This is the new war that we are in.

It strikes me that we are marked troops. I don't know that we are special troops, but we are marked troops. We have discovered that we are in a place of glory. We have discovered that for the sake of the mystery, we love the earth. We love the creation. We have discovered that the place of glory is in the strangest places that you would ever imagine them being. In the mud of Kawangware. In a southern rural village. These are places we have discovered that we are not the only people who care for the earth. It has been a rocking discovery for me. The discovery that the old Kuvanison really cares for his community; and when he cares for his community I know he cares for more than his community or else he couldn't care for his community.

We have discovered ourselves as marked troops in a time of fulfillment. I don't know how to express this except as gratitude that I am alive in this time and in this situation; gratitude that I can go to bed exhausted. You think back to the years when you went to bed unexhausted. When you spent years trying to find peace and your whole night was wasted. Now you go to bed exhausted and frustrated. You know, you don't really sleep anymore. You keep staging tomorrow's battles. But you know you would not have it any other way.

And you have discovered, as I have, that this is the task of a lifetime. That everything we have ever done has brought us to this point: the New Religious Mode, the Local Church Experiment, the Social Process Triangles, the Whistle Points, the Pressure Points, and Direct Tactics, which are still in a file and have never been used. All of that brought us to this hour. You have discovered, probably, and this is the terror and the wonder of the fulfillment, that without the Movement, the Order, there is no Town Meeting and there is no Social Demonstration.

Remember when we first turned to the world, and we thought that catalytic action meant somehow that we could hand it over to somebody else to do? Well, you are absolved from that ridiculous thought. We have discovered all over again that we are marked people. Marked for eternity as those charged with the task of catalyzing new life everywhere. We have been elected to authentic humanness. And could it be, could it be, that we have been called to be the Jesuses of our times?

Two weeks ago, I saw a play on television called "The Patriots." It was about Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration of Independence had been written, the Revolutionary War had been fought, and all of the great revolutionary action was done, so to speak. And Jefferson discovered that the Republic was in jeopardy. He felt the burden of it, so, like many of us, he wrote his resignation. He said that he thought that he should go back to Monticello because his personal affairs were in such bad shape. He was ready to surrender the whole future to Hamilton and Burr. I don't know what happened. But he changed his mind. Hamilton kept trying to get him to compromise: to accept the office, keeping Hamilton's men in the Congress and in the appointed positions. Jefferson continually refused. In the midst of the tension between resignation and love of the republic the Congress elected Jefferson President. As Jefferson stands there aware that he now has the full responsibility of being that role in history, he says, "God, what a dreadful glory."