

FIFTH CITY: DEMONSTRATION OF GLOBAL COMMUNITY FORUM

My talk could be called "Fifth City: Demonstration of Global Community Forum." First, I want to tell you that today there is a Town Meeting in Fifth City with three hundred prepaid registrations. If you know anything about the inner city, you know it is going to be a great event.

It is only in looking back through history that we are able at any moment, to state the meaning of the task. In looking back at the task of Fifth City, one can see that in every moment in that community's life there has been a current hope, a vision of the future, a set of contradictions and those who care--those who from the depths of their being, understand their lives already given for what needs to happen in their community. The universal dynamic of vision, hope, contradictions and those who care exists in every human community across the globe. The journey of Fifth City has been one of deciding how to release all of the creative potential embodied in that dynamic in order to build one community for the sake of building Primal Community everywhere.

I would like to look at Fifth City's history as three four-year plans. The first four year plan emerged out of a great deal of struggle and work from 1962-64. A group of community residents and a few of our staff--scared, uncertain, fresh from the suburbs wondering what they were doing there, but with the deep passion of those who care--came up with a very simple plan.

It called for the creation of a problemat, which is what we now call contradictions. The problemat would be organized in a way that would allow grasping and working on a particular set of problems. It called for organizing the people into "guilds," the structures where they could work on solving these problems. It called for motivation of the people, releasing their care and power, which happened through the "stakes," or the geographic division of the community into five parts.

The plan called for dealing with symbols, which had to do with a community's and a people's self-consciousness of themselves, their heritage, their culture and their future. It called for dealing with the depth contradictions which spawned hopelessness, despair and impossibility.

And it happened! Stakes, guilds, great community festivals happened, and finally the fantastic invention of The Community Congress came into being. The Community Congress was a one-day planning event. The morning session was spent looking at the problems and needs of the community and reporting on what had not been done. In the afternoon, there was planning for the future of the community, and the evening was a celebration of the planning and the gift of that community to history. That was the birth of Town Meeting but we did not know what we were aborning then.

In the second four years, 1968-72, the critical question was what are the methods for recreating and rebuilding community? What are the methods for getting at the underlying problems and contradictions and for dramatizing the victory?

Miracle Work Days and Agency structures that began to build new forms for community health and housing came into being. The preschool was birthed as it must be birthed in every social demonstration: with a kid on one end of a log and an adult on the other end, or one adult and all the preschool children in the community.

*How are you doing?*  
As adults led the children in singing songs, marching around the community, or visiting airports and museums, the preschool began to take on structure, depth, methodology and curriculum-building that were phenomenal. Our depth pedagogical skills that show up in LENS and are evolving into the Social Methods School were born out of this period.

From 1972-75 the burning question was replication. Now that we have grasped the ways of awakening community and the methodologies for rebuilding it, how can it be replicated in every community across the globe? Now we have seen the emergence of "The Global Band of Social Demonstration."

One of the first consults took place in 1973 when Fifth City revised and rebuilt the model they had been operating out of for ten years as a symbol for Primal Community, describing the essential dynamics for every local community. You can title the 1973 fifteen program social model "Moving toward the Building of Primal Community."

*How are you doing?*  
Out of that in other consults we have learned to honor the fact that at every moment in the history of every community there is always a current hope, a vision, a set of contradictions and those who care, and that you never really finish building primal community. We have to rehearse to ourselves that primal community points to an ongoing dynamic of current and perpetual rebuilding. That building focuses upon finding the major contradictions and moving on these and that is an endless task. It is necessary to choose a situation for the task where everyone else, particularly those in responsibility, have given up. People come to Maliwada and say "This is our job but we have never known how to do it. This is our task in history but we have never had the guts to do it."

*How are you doing?*  
In selecting this situation, you are dealing with the structures of society created to handle this situation, but they are not delivering. You operate out of the presupposition that there are no experts. There are just local men who care and who understand themselves to be the ones to find a way. They are finding a way, not imposing a set of answers or solutions.

I had an interesting conversation with one of the community development consultants in Chicago, the president of the most economically powerful community redevelopment corporation in the city. They are doing the Chicago 21 Plan which describes what Chicago needs to look like in the 21st Century. This includes the multi-billion dollar riverfront development project.

We took the results of our Consult to him and he asked who the consultants were. I told him there were two kinds of consults. One type of consult involves a group of experts with a vision of the future of society who are looking for a



community to impose it on. The other kind of consult involves the local citizen with hope for the future who is willing to sit down and build the way to get there. I explained that we use the second type of consult. The consultant can be the Vice President of Gulf Oil or Jerry Neu, who is just getting a new job, but he understands that he starts with the vision for the future within the local community and moves from there rather than bringing his personal vision and imposing it on the situation. This is a great discovery and this is exactly what we do in a consult.

You would think after twelve years we would be through somewhere. One of the decisions Fifth City has made however, is that they are a perpetual laboratory. They are not simply trying to improve things so they can have a nice life. They have an ongoing task and they operate within a global context. Their first concern is that what Fifth City does can be done everywhere else. I submit that is the task of every Global Social Demonstration.

X A consult is exactly the same thing as a Town Meeting. In five days you start with the vision, move on the contradictions, create the proposals, formulate the tactics for implementing the proposals and then you talk about your first steps for getting the show on the road. You formulate programs that contain the vision, the tactics and the components, the practical, concrete "do's", and the implementation plan. Then you build a five-phase, two year tactical system for every tactic and every program component stating who, what, why, where, when and how everything will be done.

As soon as your programs are formulated and your budget is set, you print the book, send out a development team and send everybody else out to work on Monday morning. You begin with Phase One, which is just a lot of miracles. The miracles dramatize the consult as a serious event that has to do with getting to work, not with developing a plan. It is like the Sun Tzu book which says that the object of war is victory, not creating nice generals. You go to work and take what has been built to the world.

Phase One was a phenomenal event in Fifth City. We finished the consult April 17. We finished our tactical plan April 23 and on Monday morning April 25, we launched the project. We planned twenty miracles that would dramatize every program and every tactic to be done in six weeks. We took every man, woman and child we could find and put them on the street. We had not been out on the streets of Fifth City in a long time. The riots and many other forces at work in the urban crisis had discouraged that.

We hit the streets calling door to door. We started printing bulletins every week. We announced the birth of the project. We immediately moved on beautification of the most horrible spots in the community. We erected signs to mark the spots where the community had said they wanted a factory, an auto service center, a community playground or a garden. We placed signs at all entrances to the community: "Welcome to Fifty City," which symbolized that this community was moving.

We had stake meetings, community assemblies every Thursday night which reported events of the past week and planned activities of the week to come. We moved dramatically on the contradictions. The first one was crime. Crime is the combined force of the fight for survival and the parasitic opportunism of those who know they can take advantage of the collapsed situation. One hundred fifty people gathered two weeks after the consult for the first community meeting and got their documents. Most of them had attended part of the Consult, but a number of people came who had heard of the consult or who had been visited.

One such man was Henry Constant, who read a bulletin stuck in his door and came to the meeting. He owns a home facing Central Park. It is a beautiful old home with the original leaded glass and stained glass windows in it. It has a neat, beautiful yard and is painted and clean. We did not know this at the time. Mr. Constant, in a pinstriped suit, very clean cut with a neat little moustache, looked like a business executive as he sat very quietly during the entire meeting.

At the end of the meeting, people were getting up and witnessing to the happenings of the first two weeks. One woman talked about her garden. Another talked about the preschool meetings she had attended after volunteering to be a teacher. Someone else told about cleaning an old factory to provide useable industry space. Another person talked about the safe street patrol begun by the men's club. Finally, Mr. Constant jumped up and marched to the front of the room. He was not on the agenda, but he did not know there was an agenda. He just heard his fellow citizens reporting and had decided to make his own report.

He said: "I have lived in this community for 25 years. My name is Henry Constant, 211 South Central Park. Today I have decided that I will be here for 25 more years. I want you to know that I am here to stay." The following week we had a meeting of businessmen to work on the future development of the community. Some of the men had never been there before and one of them stood up and read that line: "I am here to stay." "I am here to stay" has become a slogan for the whole community.

That speech by that man was the birth of the new four-year project in Fifth City, and those programs that deal seriously with the depth contradictions. All you have to do is drive through the community to see that they are right. They deal with the environment, the beauty, the presence, the symbolic style of the community. They deal with industries, jobs, new construction and building renovation.

The following week we put out a call for anybody in the community who might be interested in building a home here. Ten families showed up at the first meeting, checkbooks in hand, ready to build their new homes. They looked at the vacant space in the community and each one claimed their spot. We had an architect present and they all pounced on him with pictures of what they wanted their homes to look like. We put the architect to work right away. He has ten different sets of drawings which honor the existing architecture of the community and allow the recreation of home ownership.

We discovered that twelve years of work has paid off in many ways which we were not aware of. The only block was that we had not looked at where we were and what the new contradictions were and had not created programs to deal with them. Once we did that, the momentum was released again and people were ready to be engaged. There are so many stories that it is impossible to tell them all. You could take Kamela's stories about Maliwada, change the name and the place and they would fit Fifth City.

People are alive. My greatest joy these days is loading the cars with some of the old hands, taking them over to Fifth City and driving around the twelve blocks of that community. There are twenty blocks in the community. Twelve of these blocks have formed beautification blocks and have created a set of symbols for block beautification. You know it has begun when you drive down a block and see all the trees painted to the same height. You see no trash. Every vacant lot is clean. Grass and flowers are planted in the front yards. The houses are freshly painted and you see a beautiful street to live on.

First we did Trumbull Street. We decided our own front door looked pretty bad so forty of us plus ten kids worked from sun-up to sun-down. About fifteen community residents from across the street and another fifteen or so from the next block helped. We had a great day. We had a buffet lunch in the middle of the street. All the sandwiches were gone before you could get to them. I guess the most exciting thing was seeing all those kids with paint brushes in their hands.

When that street was done, people going by all day long would ask "How can we do this on our street?" We would tell them, "We'll see you where you live." It has been like falling off a log to go from one block to another.

We have a manual on how to do beautification projects. You have one meeting with the people and then, for symbol, we send two of the ICA staff to work with them on Saturday. The 3400 Van Buren block was next with about fifty people. In the 3500 Block of Van Buren we hit our peak with nearly a hundred people and two ICA staff. People take the manual. When they see a vacant lot, they turn to the section on that. They see they can put a playground there, a garden or a little park or they can just clean it off and wait to decide what to do with it. But let's get it clean for whatever we want to do.

They have operated with virtually no money. We did spend \$75 for the first block but not a penny since then. The residents figure out what materials they need and everybody chips in.

The community patrol has begun. We have thirty or forty people working fulltime in the evenings or on weekends. We have ten businessmen in the community riding patrols at night. They have stopped arson. They have stopped thefts, prevented attempted murders, saved people from auto accidents in the middle of the night when no one was around. They have stopped rape. They have become an iron group of men who have said they will no longer be victimized by crime. They have CB Radios operating on Channel 5; Fifth City Safe Streets. Turn on Channel 5 and you might pick it up. They are hooked in with the police station. Three base



sets are located in three men's homes in the community and everyone knows where they are. Anyone who knows about the inner city knows that this is pure guts. They do have code names which are supposed to disguise who they are.

These CP radios go all night long to those three houses--a hotline to the police station. And all this cost no money! Nobody had to find a corporation grant or request funds from LEAA. They just went out and started doing it and when they did, they found all the money they needed. When they decided to hold a fundraising event for the Safe Streets program, a thousand people turned out and they cleared two thousand dollars.

I do not like the word "volunteerism" because it connotes engaging myself in something that I am not responsible for but will give a little bit of myself to. The people in that community have reinvented what it means to take responsibility for the community you are in. That is phenomenal. I do not have another word to substitute for "volunteer." But it means doing whatever needs to be done, in the Fifth City context.

Another major contradiction is in construction. I was assigned to housing in 1967 when we began that program. I remember running rent strikes. We used to have secret meetings with tenants, then go to court the next day, smile at the judge and say, "We do not understand what is going on judge, but these people are not going to pay their rent." We brought slumlords down the hard way and got options to buy alot of buildings, paving the way for rehabilitation in the community. One of the buildings, on the corner of Congress and Homan, had a big sign saying "Are you Buggy?" It was an advertisement for an extermination company. In the first six weeks of Phase One, that sign was changed to one that says "Welcome to Fifth City." The building is completely rehabilitated and the first families moved in last week. In order to realize what it took to do that, just subtract 1967 from 1976.

Some of you are anxious about follow-up of Town Meetings. Follow-up means being a servant force that operates in a global context as an 18-hour-a-day working unit with no days off. If you are ready for that you can use the word follow-up. If you are not ready for that, do not use the word follow-up. It is not alot of nice little meetings after Town Meetings in which you dispense some information to people on how they can follow up their Town Meeting Day. It is the birth of a servant force ready to die for that job to come off. You remember Lela Mosley, Tom Washington, Allan Addams, Ruth Carter, Mildred Robinson, Sally Bells, Ray and Lily Fox, Floyd and Mary Stanley, Peggy Davis, George McNeal, Carrie Neff, Velma Brock, Mary Brown, Charlie Stewart. These are some of the people that have died in the last thirteen years for Fifth City to come off. Some of them have been resurrected and some have not. That is just the way it is. This is how it will be for every local community that is out to do this job.

What is the future of Social Demonstration? There is no chance to do a social demonstration outside of a global context. I think of the resurrected ones

on that list who went to Maliwada or the Isle of Dogs. I think of Helen Eskridge who called the other day saying "I want to go to a Consult. How much would it cost?" Helen has had 14 cancer operations in the past thirteen years and alternates walking on one crutch or two. She grins from ear to ear and says "The one reason I am alive is that I am doing Fifth City. It is not Fifth City taking care of me, but doing Fifth City. This is the only reason I am alive."

Embedded in that community is an understanding of itself as a perpetual laboratory, that it builds every model to be replicated. We have had a long and arduous struggle with HUD and the FHA on housing but out of that struggle has come the selection of Fifth City as a demonstration of citizen engagement solving its own problems by HUD. Fifth City is a Horizons on Display community and it was selected to represent this nation at the Habitat Conference in Vancouver. One by-product of this selection was the slide show on social demonstration that you have seen.

Every model is replicable. HUD has asked us to do a concept paper on how a community does its own housing with minimal financial input and engagement of a the community skills so that HUD could do it across the nation. If Fifth City builds a model on crime, it builds one that every community can do. If it builds a model that beautifies blocks, it builds one that every community can do. Its preschool is a preschool that every community can do.

Would you believe there has only been one ICA staff person in the preschool for the past two years? Every preschool staff member and teacher is a community resident and they know more about education than all the people with degrees in the City of Chicago. We would not have even one ICA staff there if it weren'ty for funding requirements which call for someone with proper credentials to make educational decisions to be involved. That is a replicable model. You can scrape up one set of credentials anywhere.

National replication is the practical local form of global replication. Fifth City has decided that the project they are doing will go across the nation. The first step is to get into every type of community: an Indian reservation, a Latin American community, a southern rural black farming community, another inner city community and a midwestern farming community.

This replication would mean that within a year there would be six Fifth Cities across this nation. The step after that would be 48 Fifth cities, one around every one of the ICA offices. Each of these will find a way to have ten more and that will be 480. That is a four year plan. Now, if you are concerned about follow-up, how many Town Meetings have we held? 437 on the way to 500. How many Town Meetings does it take to find the 480 communities that would be a radical sign of demonstration?

I said the title of this speech was "Fifth City: Demonstration of Global Community Forum." If I had to point to the one thing that keeps Fifth City going, it would be the quarterly Congress. Every three months, the community gathers to look at what it has done and where it is going. That is a Town Meeting. The



dynamic of the Fifth City Congress is the only element which has held Fifth City together. The sign for the future is the words embodied in the last line of the Fifth City Love Song, "Till all communities live free."

I do not know how many Town Meetings you are anticipating, but I see one day a Town Meeting in every local community in this nation which gives 200 local citizens the opportunity to engage their care for one day and discover all over again that they can build that community for the sake of the world. Those who are interested in nation building would be wise not to run for election but to run for the nearest Social Demonstration because that is how the nation is going to be built. Those who would provide the opportunity to run for social demonstrations will do Global Community Forums under every community has one day of "living free." But then I guess I have to say that I do not care about every community having a one day town meeting. I do care about every community using Town Meetings as its perpetual dynamic of evaluation and planning, of rehearsal and new creation.

Social Demonstration is, finally, a community that has chosen perpetual Town Meeting for its life and its future. So there is no way of counting how many town meetings in this nation. The group that is going to do it is the group in this room. The replication of Fifth City is what you do in a war. A movie I once saw came back to me last night as I was thinking about this. Setting up social demonstration is like taking a hill somewhere and holding it while all the other forces are battling up their hills. In this movie twelve armies were trying to take twelve different hills. Finally, one of them broke through and captured one hill. The announcement went out to the other forces that this hill had been taken and all the forces were reinvigorated. As they fought they kept calling back every hour with just one question: "Is Hill 321 still holding?" The answer is yes, Fifth City is still holding and will be.

There is a little old fat man wandering around here sometimes. He causes a commotion, saying that you never do a talk anywhere without recruiting and raising money. I am going to do both and we are also going to sing a song. We have hills to take this year . . . Kelapa Dua, Krenzberg Ost, El Bayad, Caracas, Ivy City, Fuk Wah Tsuen. That is not all of them. There will be more later. But what we need is mechanics, village construction builders, civil engineers, metal workers, marine engineers, mariculturalists, livestock and cattle herdsman, animal herdsman, intensive crop farmers, hydroponics experts, financial and legal and promotional skills, nurses for public health and infant care, business management and business developers, small industry, preschool, public and vocational training, English language teaching, construction skills training, architecture and doctors.

If any of you think you have these skills, fill in one of the forms and you will be assigned to take a hill somewhere and hold it. Now money. Fifth City needs a lot of money and we have learned in development that it is all global. So Fifth City would ask you today to raise \$600 to buy a television set to place in the center of the community called Maliwada. Do you think you could do that?