

GLOBAL PANCHAYAT TREK REPORT

It was only a year ago, June 10, 1974, that the first Local Community Convocation was held. Now we are talking about Global Community Forum around the world. That is awesome. But as I look back, it seems that Global Community Forum has been going on for quite a while.

Our last stop on the Global Panchayat Trek was Iceland. That is the bleakest country I have ever seen. I was astounded by the gray clouds that continually roll across the vast bleakness of the land. You can imagine how cold it is in the winter snows. And you ask the question, "How could a people forge out a civilization in that climate?" Well, we asked the girl who was selling tickets for the bus-ride into town, "What is the one thing that you suggest we see in Iceland?" She paused for a minute, thinking of the right word, and then she said, "It is parliament." You know, that made sense. Of course it would be the parliament. That is where the community came together and made decisions. That is how they forged out that civilization. We found out that for 100 years the parliament met without a building. Think about that climate. Imagine, for 100 years they came together without a building! That is the sort of great history that Global Community Forum has been in the journey of mankind.

You remember the story about how, at the beginning of civilization, man and woman roamed around with their little ones. One day they discovered that little sister couldn't walk any more. They picked her up and carried her for a while, but she still couldn't walk. So they stopped and put her down and piled some rocks around her body. And they stayed by that pile of rocks and others began to gather. Soon the question gets raised, "How do we care for one another?" And a community is born, a city is born. People come together, they begin to make decisions and only then does the journey of mankind begin.

Think about the history of the Church. The Greeks used the word, "ecclesia," which meant "coming together to make decisions." In the Hebrew tradition, the root word "synagogue" meant a gathering for making decisions. In the history of the Christian Church, the "congregation" meant "congregating to make decisions." All of these are forms of the dynamic of decision-making, the dynamic of Global Community Forum. In a real sense, we, as the Order, have been a Global Community Forum for the Church in a global society. During our first 20 years, we went, as the church, to the church, calling it to serve the world. At that time, during the 50's and the '60's, the existential journey was held in the question, "Who am I?" We raised that question and called forth a decision, but it was an individual decision. It was an "I decide" sort of decision. Here, in the midst of the next 20 years, we, as the church, go to the world to serve it for the church. And the question being raised today is "How can we?" That question is calling for a decision,

but that decision is a consensus of the whole globe. The basic problem here is the absence of the local community dynamic for consensus-building. What we have found is that we have to create the form of community ourselves. As the pioneering dynamic, we move out to the world with Global Community Forum.

What are we trying to do with Global Community Forum? It is very simple. We are out to establish the consensus to form community. We are beckoning that consensus forth, for without primal community there is no way to release selfhood.

If you remember the "I-thou" dynamics, the self is only the self in relation to the family or to the community. But the 19th century concept of family made the family the idol, so that today the family has turned in on itself and there is no community there. There is only the family living off itself. The problem in the globe is that of creating primal communities, the bridges between the family and the globe, between the local and the universal.

Global Community Forum is the new evangelism. It is the way to the masses. In the first instance, Global Community Forum is the awakening of local man to respond to what is happening in the world. It is allowing every human being to stand before the comprehensive and to forge vocational decisions. Global Community Forum is awakening of local man.

But Global Community Forum is also a tool of awakening for local community. It allows a community to grasp itself as part of a whole. It releases authentic engagement and therefore becomes a real part of the ordering dynamic in society. I was thinking recently about Italy. I read a news article which indicates that there were powerful small groups in that country who were actually determining the direction of the future. But, in the midst of the struggling among these groups, the local communities were not themselves participating in the destiny of that country. I suppose something like that is happening in every country today. Global Community Forum intends to awaken those local communities to take their appropriate places in the ordering dynamic of the future.

In the third place, Global Community Forum is building polity structures. This has to do with tactical thinking. Anywhere in the world there are groups who have great plans for the future. Global Community Forum is not great plans; it is tactics. It is implementation. It is allowing something to happen which will actualize those plans. And Global Community Forum is the release of corporate action. It is building a consensus. It is allowing the corporate to move.

Global Community Forum is also, motivated being. Global Community Forum is a happening, not unlike what we have talked about with RS-1. People's lives are changed; they are changed human beings. Global Community Forum is a spirit spark which releases freedom and depth

spirituality. It is a happening in which I discover that I am a believer. I discover that I am a caring one. And in the midst of those discoveries, I realize that I am possessed by belief, possessed by care. And when I discover that, I become aware that I just go on hoping in the midst of no hope.

What is the global indicative before us? Mao said that to significantly impact one percent of the people is to do the revolution. Global Community Forum is a revolutionary strategy. There are 3,500,000,000 souls on this earth. One percent of them is 35 million people. That is what is necessary. All that means is that 1,525,000 Global Community Forums must be held. I am here to announce that Global Community Forum can indeed be global. That is a practical possibility. It is not that someday it might happen, or that it could happen, or that perhaps, it will happen. Global Community Forum is for now. Everywhere we went, we heard just two things: The doors are open and the time is right.

We have built the transrational structure that will allow one percent of the globe to be impacted by Global Community Forum. There are three phases. We already are in the actuation phase with the 6 areas of North America. Sydney, Brussels and London are in the experimentation phase. Sydney, with a 75th anniversary, is ripe for Global Community Forum. In Brussels we are doing our first experimentation in Global Community Forum this coming weekend. We went to the American community and there was not much of a response. So we asked our Belgian colleagues to come and they are coming. This is great. Although we are going to do Town Meeting '76, there is already happening that Brussels is getting interested, getting involved in a happening which will prepare Brussels for a Belgian form of Global Community Forum. In London experimentation has also begun. Liverpool, as Joe mentioned had a Global Community Forum last weekend. The reports of that event were astounding. It was sponsored by local people, the church and community organizations; more than 150 people came. One man said, before the day was over, "We are going to have more of these, aren't we?" He was already looking toward the future. Some of the men who planned to set up the facility and help with the practices went across the street to the Pub after things got started. But they did not stay long. They came back. Even the Pub could not hold them during the Global Community Forum.

The third phase of Global Community Forum is the preparation phase. Area Seoul, with a Social Demonstration in Jeju Do, is in this phase. Manila is also in the preparation phase. I was overwhelmed at the openness of the Philippeans, the possibility that is there. President Marcos understands that unless the local man participates his vision of the New Society will never happen. Frankfurt, Nairobi, Hong Kong and Taipei will all move from preparation to actuation during the next two years. All of them are ready.

We need to put a star beside Delhi. By 1977 Delhi will be ready for actuation. But that star is important because Delhi will be the fire which will release the rest of the globe.

We need to list all the remaining countries of the globe---those in Latin America, Southeast Asia, West Africa, Europe, Northeast Asia, Central Africa, South Pacifica, Southern Africa, NAME, USSR and China. It is possible to be in preparation in all of them now. In fact, by 1980 we may well be in USSR and China. This gives us a practical picture of Global Community Forum through 1978. After that, the breakloose in society will tell us where we need to go next.

What is Global Community Forum going to mean to the world? In the first instance you don't worry about the consequences one bit at this point. That is not what we are after. We are not out peddling some ideology. We are out to let loose a dynamic in the midst of history. Global Community Forum is that which will beckon forth, that which will move toward the New Social Vehicle. At the same time, Global Community Forum and Global Social Demonstration go hand in hand. Global Community Forum awakens the deeps of life and Global Social Demonstration generates vision and points to practical engagement for every man. When you let loose that sort of dynamic in the midst of history and you know that it is moving toward the New Social Vehicle, you know that you do not know what finally will happen. If you did, you would not have to do it. But you do do it. And you trust what will happen. And you let it move toward the new.

--Marianna Bailey

July 30, 1975