

THE SIGNS OF PRIMAL COMMUNITY

I am going to start by reading you some poetry:

*As we live, we are transmitters of life.
And when we fail to transmit life, life fails to flow through us.*

*That is part of the mystery of sex, it is a flow onwards.
Sexless people transmit nothing.*

*And if, as we work, we can transmit life into our work,
life, still more life, rushes into us to compensate, to be ready
and we ripple with life through the days.*

*Even if it is a woman making an apple dumpling, or a man a stool,
if life goes into the pudding, good is the pudding,
good is the stool,
content is the woman, with fresh life rippling in to her,
content is the man.*

*Give, and it shall be given unto you
is still the truth about life.
But giving life is not so easy.
It doesn't mean handing it out to some mean fool, or letting
the living dead eat you up.
It means kindling the life-quality where it was not,
even if it's only in the whiteness of a washed pocket
handkerchief.*

This talk is about primal community, a subject that is very, very familiar, yet new and unknown at the same time. I would like to talk about this whole arena of primal community, first of all looking at the non-community experience that is seen and known. The pentagon was used in 1975, illuminating the activity of primal community, the campaigns and finally the new reality.

First of all, Primal Community is relationships. Its foundational relationships concern selfhood. It is related to the neighbor, the mystery and the space that is community. To me as a mother, it is especially interesting and encouraging to know that we really are not born human. It is something that is invented in the process of living. It is something that happens over against the reality of the social situation in which we appear. It is something that takes place in the midst of one's encounters with the unsynonymous mystery of life that is ever present. It is something that happens, that is invented and that is created.

Living in times of selfhood, it is similar to giving birth. Primal Community concerns giving birth to the self and to authentic selfhood in the process. It is no wonder that we experience in our work, in the world, in these circuits and in these Social Demonstrations a vacuum of true selves. We encounter death in the eyes of human beings. As you reflect on this, you find it is no surprise. No community is functioning in the primal sense which beckons forth this selfhood. Primal Community is defined through selfhood, rather than through the acceptance of self. It has nothing whatsoever to do with a secure and warm place where I am never required to be a human being, where I am permitted to live in my own escapism, my own neuroses and my own reductionism about the way I would prefer life to be.

Encompassing the whole arena of selfhood, it deals with vocation. It concerns the release of human expenditure far beyond any particular action of the moment. This release of expenditure is related to the positing of my creativity into history. It allows you to have your deeps opened as a self. Primal Community causes the penetration of well springs of consciousness. When it happens to us, we find it strange. I don't know how you experienced it, but I can remember almost to the day when I sensed myself talking, saying and doing things that seemed totally strange to me. It is as though words came out of my mouth without recognizing their source and ability to grasp the depth meaning of things. I could not count one, two, three, four, but this is how it was created, just happening in that social relationship.

I become more and more angry with people these days who are overly concerned with being individuals. I can testify to this from my own experience. The experience of being a self only happens in the context of society. It only happens through confronting and being in the midst of Primal Community. It also occurs when examining non-community relative to the neighbor. The hatred that exists in this world for the neighbor is amazing. It is a very subtle hatred. It appears in so many ways. In Ivy City, I was shocked to encounter people who had lived next door to someone for years and they didn't even know their name. They didn't even know the events that had occurred in the lives of those human beings. Primal Community pierces through that hatred of one's neighbor. It is Primal Community which re-establishes the common ground on which we all stand. It is Primal Community that allows us to see ourselves as one with the whole of humankind in the universe. Again, it is not experiencing yourself as an individual, but intensifying the feeling of being an individual. Primal Community allows that intensification to occur. It eliminates the reductionism which is part of the phenomenon of relating to the neighbor, which causes people to deal only with what they can see and choose to deal with. Primal Community penetrates that reductionism and allows for a new picture of the world that I live in.

I remember when I went to Widen, West Virginia. I had cast places like Widen, West Virginia out of my mind completely. I am very clear that I would not have gone to Widen had I not been assigned. As I was driving down this long, winding road, over the hills and down in the crevices of that curve, I was recalled once again to my experiences of visiting my grandfather. He used to live in a place where we had to go down winding roads in what we then called the country. You had to descend all of these winding roads to arrive at the places where only a chunk of people lived, one of whom was my grandfather. I probably never would have associated that memory or recovered it in any creative way if I had not experienced those trips to Widen. It is Primal Community that allows and forces you and me to explode all reductionisms regarding what exists in this world and its meaning. I am convinced the key is organization. I think that explains why we have been so very excited in our task force. We have had fantastic talks and fights, bitter exchanges of words over stakes and guilds. It has just been phenomenal! I believe it is happening because we recognize how critical the formation structure is to Primal Community. I don't worry about having done 100 experiments in this area, started and stopped and re-started and stopped. The stopping doesn't bother me. What disturbs me is neglecting to create form where Primal Community is missing.

There is a dimension of the unsynonymous in Primal Community. The emphasis or the ability to recognize, experience and be in the midst of something that is completely other than this world, while present in this world. Another way of describing it is walking into the Other World in the midst of this world. There are elements in the emphasis on individualism, security and long life in our times and in our world that have eliminated that experience of knowing the very foundational reality. This foundational reality propels us forward to continue life creatively; without it, life is lived in shallowness without the Other World. Existing without some image of relating the Land of Mystery, the River of Consciousness, the Mountain of Care and the Sea of Tranquility, life is shallow, life is boring and life is wasted.

Now the pentagon. The five faces of the pentagon from Summer '75 are Depth Awareness, Functional Eptitude, Historical Engagement, Spirit Prowess and Primal Community. I found it intriguing when I recovered the pentagon shape and discovered Primal Community right at the base of that pentagon. I am not quite sure whether you start from the bottom and move out, or move out and you find yourself there. I am not quite sure how it operates. I think we will probably understand that better over the years.

Depth Awareness as it relates to Primal Community may be defined as waking up, seeing deeply into life, perceiving what has not been perceived before. It is related to the spark that bursts into flame. In the movie about Helen Keller, *The Miracle Worker*, you may remember how the little girl violently fought with her life not to see, and I mean *see* in the deep sense of the word. She fought passionately against that until one day the spark ignited and it could not be extinguished. If you remember, she was like a wild person, feeling, stumbling and grabbing, holding onto things, feeling water. You could see a whole life come into being right in that moment. That is what I mean by Depth Awareness--waking up, waking up. We do it with images and symbols, songs and stories that explode life, and enable life to be exploded so that human beings can see life.

Functional Eptitude concerns being educated in the real sense. Being educated involves methodological equipping, grasping how you and I live in this world. I remember a real, bitty lady that was my music teacher in school and who was just the size of a little shrimp. The most important thing I remember about her is not so much the great time I had in the course, on the trips and so forth, but I remember that I had I had never, never in my life encountered a woman like her. She was the most dynamic, energetic, creative human being I had ever experienced in my life. Through her, I learned how to be a woman. I was educated and in that experience, I learned. That is what I am referring to with the phrase, Functional Eptitude.

I am referring to learning and being educated in the very practical arenas of stylizing, living, and working through involvement in the midst of life. I mean things like knowing how to get a job. This year, I could not help but think about Larry Ward. He used an illustration that kept flashing through my mind as he worked in the Vocational Skills Academy in Ivy City. He said, "You know, I used to go looking for a job while I was telling myself, 'You are not going to get a job. You are not going to get a job. You are worthless. You know you are not going to get a job.'" And he would go right into the place where jobs were offered and say, "job". And the people would answer, "There is no job." Then he would walk away from that and say to himself, "You see, I told you. You weren't going to get a job. I told you. I told you you weren't going to do it." Functional Eptitude involves knowing how to get a job. It includes the ability to function. It is very, very practical. It includes knowing how to win. It includes the skill to do your own thinking, to do your own asking, to do your own being, to do your own planning, to intuit, and to build the framework that elicits winning. This is Functional Eptitude, a key to being your own person. If you are not functionally ept, then you will never know the significance of being a human being.

Primal Community concerns Historical Engagement as it relates to Xaverism--the self understanding of being responsible for the whole world wherever you are. This self story informs you that you have everything on your hands, every last little thing. In Stake 1 in Ivy City, the whole is yours. That is what the totality of Historical Engagement is all about. It is understanding yourself as standing squarely in the midst of the present moment, related to all of the past and all of the future, yet not grasping yourself as isolated in the now. Historical Engagement concerns the heritage and destiny that comprise the human process itself.

Historical Engagement relates very much to structures. Structures illuminate the requirements necessary to transform this world into the human world in which we envision living. We have been hard on ourselves in this arena this year, pushing ourselves not to settle for something which will work only in Ivy City. Many times, we did the same thing we initially perceived, but it was helpful to ask ourselves whether or not the dynamics of our models would work in India, in Pace, in Sudtonggan, and around the world. We were concerned with grasping and pushing

hard on ourselves in this arena this year, pushing ourselves not to settle for something which will work only in Ivy City. Many times, we did the same thing we initially perceived, but it was helpful to ask ourselves whether or not the dynamics of our models would work in India, in Pace, in Sud-tonggan, and around the world. We were concerned with grasping and pushing the leadership of that community to not see itself as creating something useful for its own sake, but to illuminate in its dwelling place that which was vital and critical for the whole world.

The other face of the pentagon is Spirit Prowess. It is concerned with the whole arena of profound consciousness. Profound consciousness is the way we grasp the depths of life and acquire the ability to deal with life as it comes to us. Life always comes the way we don't want it, or at the time we don't want it. It is how you handle life as it rushes at you moment by moment, demand by demand. Only Spirit Prowess gives you the courage to make sense out of being inadequate, unprepared and unready for life as it really occurs. Spirit Prowess is the intensity of what we describe as the Other World, walking through that with finesse and learning how to handle that whole arena.

The fifth face is Primal Community. I am going to talk about that in a round about way. The three campaigns of the movement, Global Community Forum, Global Social Demonstration and the Global Servant Force. Those are powerful.

I think of the Global Community Forum when I look at those colored pictures of people from all around the world that decor our wall. How can you help but have something well up inside of you: The Global Community Forum is for every human being. It systematically offers every human being the possibility of wildly risking boldly, giving every human being the opportunity to see and believe again, to see and believe again. If you look at those eyes, and you look at those shoulders and you look at those bodies and you can see years and years and years of weight and burden suddenly becoming lighter. Eyes that have cried a thousand tears are filled with light and hopefulness. That is what Global Community Forum is all about. It is about waking up. It is like releasing four billion Helen Kellers all over the world, people that are waking up and grasping and grabbing and pulling and trying to clasp ahold and just delighting in the ecstasy of life itself. Those Town Meetings--they just come alive. They just go crazy. People will plan to stay for twenty minutes, and find themselves five hours later realizing that their soup is burning. They just come alive.

My mother called me and told me there was a Town Meeting in her town. I could have just wept. Area Houston has been working on Town Meeting in that part of Texas for a while. My mother told me what happened. She said, "You know, we wrote a song and sang it. We worked on our problems." I couldn't bring myself to say, "Mother, we do that in all of them." She was ecstatic, and it was amazing to watch her. That is what Global Community Forum is all about. It is about coming alive and setting the world on fire. It demonstrates witnessing love in a real way. The way we have talked about it for years.

Global Social Demonstration is for everybody. It is for every human being whether they live on a project site or not. Global Social Demonstration is for all to see and believe that they can care again. They can see care made manifest right before their eyes. It is like a signal, like a beacon, a light in the darkness that is showing the way and signalling, "Come, this is the direction. This is the way to go." That is Global Social Demonstration. This campaign of demonstration is not the same as Primal Community. The campaign is a simple one. Primal Community is not a campaign. But Social Demonstration plays the phenomenal role in our work of illuminating the way. When you see replication and expansion, however, I believe you begin to get a hint after Primal Community.

The Global Servant Force is what I really want to talk about. For years we told ourselves that there isn't going to be a New Social Vehicle unless there is a new mode of spirit consciousness created. And when that happens, that new mode will provide the foundation for a New Social Vehicle. Primal

Community is like the slow march of hope that creeps up in the midst of those two wildly ecstatic campaigns called Global Community Forum and Global Social Demonstration. Primal Community is being forged slowly, continually evolving in our presence. Primal Community is local, though it is neither a place nor a community. You can't see it if it is not local. The New Social Vehicle we have talked about for such a long time is related to profound humanity.

Primal Community contains the four ontological pillars. I was glad to see those pillars in the Town Meeting construct. I can remember light coming into people's eyes as you walked over those four pillars and illuminated them as the foundation of life. I am also glad the Global Womens Forum construct has become sharper around those pillars. The New Social Vehicle is very much related to that talk. *The New Human* talk deals with sociality, sexuality, phasiality and trans-rationality. These pillars are closely related to Primal Community.

Finally, the task of the Global Servant Force is catalyzing the building of Primal Community. This task also concerns the presence that we demonstrate. What makes those Social Demonstrations begin to hint at, point to, and allow people to see the possibility of Primal Community is not the social activity, though that is necessary or they wouldn't see. It is our presence that transforms a community. That is transmitting life where it was not. That is, interjecting a life quality that did not exist before. The presence that we are, the presence of the Global Servant Force allows hope to be reborn. It is the signal of hope. It is the sign, like the song of the same name that we stand up and sing. That is true. You want to know where the sign is; it is here. It is the signal which begins to reveal the form of Primal Community. We describe ourselves as the Global Servant Force which provides the possibility for every human being to posit their creativity into history. It finds the instrument which evokes the depths of consciousness and makes it available for every local human being. It reveals the wonder of being alive and shares that wonder, proclaiming it to every human being. One of our Ivy City residents is here in Chicago for one reason, and one reason only. He tells this story as he talks about what happened to him in that Project. One day, he walked into a structure and a group of people celebrated his birthday. Everybody sang, *We Celebrate Your Being Here*, and it changed his whole life. That is Primal Community, the releasing of selfhood where it was not, providing a way to participate in the historical processes of the world where it didn't previously exist. It is concerned with all of that.

I am always amazed when I look around at the wonder of the "no people" that you and I represent, that have "become a people." I'll never figure out how so many different people from so many diverse backgrounds, beliefs and experiences can be a people, and yet it has happened. I experience it and I still don't understand it. That is what we can offer to every single human being; the experience of Primal Community through the sign of fulfilled living and the sign of being alive. We talked about the wind that rushes through history. What you see are leaves trembling on the trees and dust clouds rolling up. The Global Servant Force resembles those images. It begins to create the residue for every human being defining humanness.

Acting on behalf of every human being, both external structures and configurations are absolutely critical in this whole subject of Primal Community. About this time last year, when we were preparing to return to our assignment. I had some real questions about the configuration of assignments in the Washington House. I kept saying, "Eileen and George are getting married. We can't handle a marriage. We can't handle a wedding. I know how much it takes out of you and how much has to go into it." And so on and on. "We can't deal with that. They need to go somewhere where they can be cared for." I found myself saying, "We don't need any students in the Social Demonstration Projects. They can't get cared for, they can't do this." But this year, I have become a believer, and what I have found myself saying in theory is true in fact. I have changed because the structures and style that define our identity as a people are the critical signs for people in Primal Community in demonstrating full humanness.

Last year, it never occurred to me that there were all of these people in this community to work with on that wedding. It never occurred to me, but they worked on it and they had the time of their life—dinner, showers and reception and baking the wedding cake and preparing the facility. Something so important happened to them that I would need to be condemned if I had prevented it. Thank goodness my colleagues don't listen to stuff like that about what we don't need. They came alive. Think again about Bernard Deno, the Ivy City resident, walking into our Sunday structure and leaving a human being because somebody sang to him, *We Celebrate Your Being Here*. It is unbelievable.

In Area New York, we required ourselves to take seriously the ground that we stood on this past year. We sharpened and focused our training and fundamental wisdom in terms of the Global Servant Force, equipping and strengthening the troops to stay on the road for circuits and to do their assignments. We did that in Ivy City. We had people experience an Individual and Family Course and return as resurrected human beings. It was unbelievable. What happened? The push on leadership development produced phenomenal results.

As I say, I am a believer. If you want to have a hint of where Primal Community is being signalled, then it is in that third campaign. The hint is contained in structures of justice, love and unity. It is manifest in structures that are transferable to any situation, structures which allow every human being to know and be what is possible as profound human beings. It is the factor that makes the invisible visible. It is the very base, the very ground of those other two campaigns. Without it, there would be no two other campaigns. They just wouldn't exist.

I now possess a whole new picture of Primal Community. It is not a place, but it is a place. It is not community, but it is a community. It is relationships, screens and images. And yet if you want to see it, the only place you can see it is in local community, but far, far more than that.

I would like to read you something:

PRIMAL COMMUNITY is relationships, foundational relationships. It is that without which there is no humanness. And this means that there is no selfhood, no neighbor, no mystery where there is no basic community. Such community is visible only in the local. It is immediate. It is concrete. It is either at hand or it is not. Primal Community is grounded in the mystery but it can only be in relation to the mystery. Self, other and God are totally independent. The Global Servant Force is sent to keep the flames of local community. The local presence of that force cares for the flame of faith, hope and love. This force is not out to promote itself, but to promote Primal Community. Where selfhood is born, the mystery descended and the neighbor is preserved.