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Seventh Guardian Consult

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### **PROFOUND LOVE AS PRIMAL COMMUNITY**

Jesus once was asked which of the Lord's commandments was the greatest. He replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and your whole soul and all your might. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like unto it. You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself." The whole structure of society, the whole process of human development and the whole journey of mankind rests on these two commandments. Jesus called it the Law and the Prophets.

It is difficult to grasp how simple that is. When someone asked the same question of Paul, his response was as profoundly simple. He said, "There are just three things in life that are final and significant. One is faith, one is hope and one is love, but the greatest of these is love."

Two or three days ago I had a birthday. As most people tell time, I was sixtythree years old. Since I have begun to take "phasiality" seriously however, I understand that I am three years old, in my last lifetime.

When asked what was the most compelling happening of the past year for me, I first wanted to say that for the first year in our history, we were financially solvent according to our principles. Then I wanted to name the "practicalization" of our globality symbolized in the gathering here of the priors from around the world at the end of August. Or, the Majuro Consult. I finally said it was learning from my stay in the hospital that the fear of death is not the fear of oblivion, but of the mystery of dying. Like a little boy, I had to discover that mystery is my father. I found myself at home in the fear and fascination of dying.

Today, I would answer that question by saying in the past year, the meaning of love has come to me more powerfully than ever. I am speaking about profound love. As sensitive awake people of the twentieth century, most of us have spent our mature lives struggling with what life is all about. I remember with a sense of nostalgia the years when the question "Who am I" was being asked by anyone halfalive. In theological terms, of course, that is the issue of faith. We were given the unbelievable privilege, the painful Joy of raising the question of faith from the ground up.

To grasp ontologically that life is finally life is to open the possibility of understanding the meaning of love in the deeps. The meaning of love becomes clear in plumbing the depths of one's relationship to the mystery. Love is a happening which no man can escape.

As man comes up against the meaning of faith, he sees it as part of humanness itself. This is true of the happening of love. When it happens, it emerges from life's deepest deeps. It is part of profound consciousness itself.

I was reared to see love as a quality of the disposition, as a virtue at best. The passion and the realities that we point to with the term "love " are still inherent in the term. But profound love is something more.

One quality makes profound love essentially unique. Profound love is an action. When someone who worked in 5th City tried to explain what he meant by this dynamic of love, all he could do was point to 5th City, because love is a deed. Love is a concrete deed, a deed as it is being done.

Secondly, love in the profound sense, is universal. You cannot point to this love, for example, as love for your children. Jesus said that it appears as if lions and tigers love their children, too. Sinners as well as saints appear to love their children and sometimes sinners seem to love them a lot more than the saints. This love has nothing to do with loving your church, your nation or your friends

Love is present only in activity that is an attempt to respond to all there is, all at once. In Majuro, as I experienced playing the roles of lawyer, doctor, businessman, farmer and oceanographer, I experienced myself in an astounding way as being the church.

I was also asked to speak at a Majuro prayer meeting. I pulled out as a text the first words in the Bible, "In the beginning, God created." It was fun explaining to those assembled that their people did not create this world; my people did not create this world, nor did I. God created this world.

This is the most radical sociological statement ever uttered in history, for it unavoidably means that all the goods of nature, all the decisions of history and all the inventions of man, belong to all the people.

Love for everything that is, has been and will be, is profound love. Anyone looking at this statement through a reductionistic stance would see it as sheer psychosis. Those who understand the Hebrew and Christian posture in life can grasp that this love is "other than" and always will be. Fifth City was done on behalf of the globe and that fact exemplifies this kind of love.

One evening my three boys were roughing me up as they were taught to do by their culture. They were trying to tell me that I didn't care about them.

They were trying to tell me how to live my life. I responded, "I am going to live my life and I don't care about the way you live your life. I don't care about you. I do not care." Three mouths dropped wide open. To this day, I do not know if they understood what I was trying to communicate. I was trying to communicate to them my care for the world, trying to make them see that because they are a part of this world, I care for them.

Similarly, I have told the iron colleagues of 5th City that I am not remotely interested in 5th City. I am interested in this world. But underneath that, you can see, I am passionately interested in 5th City because I am interested in the world. Because I am interested in the world, I had to do something in 5th City because the only way to approach love is in concretion. Love is universal and only universal.

This strange love is a manifestation of mystery. What does this mean in my daily experience? It means that every time I try to articulate three good reasons for being concerned with the world I end up with none. Here I have one life to live and I spend it loving something. I cannot even explain. That is the relationship to the mystery. Often I bump into pious, secular characters who make self-centeredness the heart of life. They say, always with a smirk on their faces, "What are getting out of this? Is this giving you some sense of inner self-satisfaction? Are you feeling more righteous and therefore, content-filled inside?" Have you noticed you never have an answer for them? The moment a response comes to mind you see clearly they are right about you.

The same thing happens when asked, "Are you a man of faith?" Every time someone asks that, you feel like a fool. Of course, you turn from what he means by that phrase. But you know that in terms of your meaning of faith, you have not been loyal or obedient to God. If you are a spirit man before history, you grasp that when that question is asked you are not a spirit man. The very question give you the opportunity, however, to make the spirit decision to be the spirit man, Therefore you say, "Yes. I am a man of faith".

Are you in love with the whole world, or with your whole life every moment you encounter yourself? Anyone would say "no" to that question. But answering the question gives you the opportunity to redecide. Those who are universally concerned for all men, not for virtue's sake but because of an historical calling, respond to that moment of decision which determines who you are in the future. If you know this secret, there is nothing outside yourself that finally can kill you. Profound love is always deed, it is always inclusive and it is something you can never possess neatly in a little package. It is always beyond your ken.

Just as prayer always begins when you are at your wit's end, love is a reality that always comes to you when you are at your wit's end. If you think you can demonstrate this encounter with love using rational clarity, or your love, then we are not talking about the same thing.

We saw this love operating in the postmodern world during the Elder's trip. This love always manifests itself in the ceaseless reformulation of primal community. Our work in 5th City must be an ongoing process in every community. The only reason for singling out the ghetto was for its power in history as a prophetic sign for all other communities. It tells every community it must be perpetually reformulated in order to breathe love into humanity.

Bishop Roderick in India said, "Wherever the church is present, it is establishing local parishes." He did not mean establishing little church buildings, He meant it must be establishing local communities. God's people, wherever they are present, are breathing life into local communities. They are nurturing the individual souls that God brings in and out of being. If I am to be a man of love at this moment in history, I sense, wherever I am, my whole life must be engaged in breathing fresh life into primal local community, whatever its form.

The awareness that love is always social demonstration had a shattering impact on me. For years, we talked about being at the point of renewal. Now we have new clarity on what standing at that point means. The people of God, the men of the spirit, those who care, the ones who love profoundly with foundational intent, are those who use their lifetime in social demonstration. The demonstrations of the sixties were prophetic protests. People were screaming against injustice, not simply with words, but with living bodies. Now we are in the seventies; the sixties are gone forever. But we must still have social demonstration. People must take a hunk of the social fabric, tear it out of the whole and project into the future with their own being, and be social demonstrations. This process takes innumerable shapes and forms.

The People of God never do a revolution in society. They catalyze it by creating the demonstration which generates human power and illuminates the mind. Then mankind can begin like the rolling of a snowball, to creatively forge new structures for justice to replace those history has designated inadequate. The Majuro Consult was a beginning step. It was a fantastic advance, because it was the first step in social demonstration.

I dream, as I know you do, of girding this globe like a great wheel of prayer, with a wheel of social demonstration. You will not believe Majuro a year from now, From there, we will go around the world. We are ready to move with social demonstrations in Seoul, Korea, with New Village movements. We are ready to move in Hong Kong with a social demonstration in each of the thirteen districts of that colony. We are ready to move in the Philippines. I hope that we can get a social demonstration in Singapore, We have one in Oombulgurri, Australia. We want one in Calcutta. We want one in Sri Lanka. We want one in Bombay. We want one in Teheran. We want one in Nairobi, and one in Cairo. We want one in Berlin, Frankfurt, Brussels, and London. One in Montreal, Caracas, New York, Chicago, Houston, Winnipeg and San Francisco. We want one in Anchorage and Honolulu. And that takes us back to Majuro.

Like a great wheel around this world every twenty four hours we would have a social demonstration to catalyze humanity as it is presently formulated. For years I have been looking for a tactical instrument of this sort, and St. Paul had it all along. There are just three things in life. One is faith, one is hope and one is love. But the most tactically useful one of all these is love.

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The story of Jesus on the Mount with his three disciples illustrates this. When they came down, they discovered a social problem the disciples could not handle. Jesus walked in, created a wonder, and the disciples were humiliated. "What is wrong with us?" they asked. "There is nothing wrong," Jesus said. "Such actions are only done by prayer and fasting."

We have taken Jesus seriously. At the beginning of day II, at six in the evening, we have begun having intercessory prayers. This is going on every hour on the hour around the globe. This is not pious, for we are grounding our prayer in action. Praying for the church and the world without attempting to do something practically about the needs of humanity is silly. Jesus saw if you try to do something practically without prayer and fasting you might as well not get up in the morning. Do you know what astounds people most about us these days? Simply that we are still at it. We are still here. A Boy Scout trying to circle this globe with twenty-four signal social demonstration which blow the bottom out of the situations they were designed for will not make it. Jesus was telling his disciples, gently, that they had not yet learned about fasting and prayer.

The U.S. Bicentennial is coming up and no one in Washington knows what to do. We told the Bicentennial people in Washington our story about town meetings, tested for feasibility in thirtynine cities one day in June. We talked about doing five thousand town meetings to reach two million people, which is one percent of the population, in the year 197576. The fruit of the thinking of local man would be gestalted into something like a practical vision for the next two hundred years, whereby we could informally arrive at a consensus of the individuals in local communities. This blows everyone's minds. That is social demonstration. Social demonstration rocks the universe. It is going to open up opportunities we never dreamed of, opportunities for service to humanity in effective ways. In 1976 Habitat is going to be held in Vancouver. The UN will be pulling together people from around the world to think about

human settlement. Canada and the U.S. are searching for showpieces, social demonstrations that have succeeded, at least in relation to all those that have failed.

What if 5th City were to become one of these? What if the U.S. decided to pour funds into 5th City that ought to have been poured in five or six years ago in order to really bring it off? If that were to happen, people from all over the world would come to see 5th City. I am so close to 5th City that when I go see it, it looks really crummy. When someone from the outside looks at it, they become starry-eyed. They cannot believe it.

The United Nations is now interested in having showpieces. The U.N. is really in charge of Micronesia. Can you imagine the implications for our work in India, Africa or Europe if Majuro were selected?

At this moment, God is enabling us to grasp as we never have before the meaning of profound love. He is also working externally to enable us to find ways to put our Being into loving profoundly the world today.

The manifestation of love is the formation of primal community. The last form of love has to do with the religious. The religious is nothing. It is just a presence. Our presence has to be global. The religious presence is always global. In the earliest times of the church, globality was simply the Mediterranean world.

When I wear the blue, I am the presence of the religious. I am not pushing the blue, but what it represents. It could be symbolized by a pin or by cutting off your left ear. It has to do with presence. Decadent dogood liberals say that the Order does not seem to do anything. I never argue with them. In one way, they are right. The most powerful thing we have done, is doing and will ever do, I believe, is just being here as those who care, no matter how inadequately. The most important thing the Guardians do this weekend may not be great thinking, or creative practical solutions, although that will happen. Most important to the profound love of this world may be the Guardians just being here. Just being. I believe and deeply hope and pray that in some small way, beyond any intention or activity of my own, my being in history is a token of hope to all who pass me.

That is profound love.

Joseph W. Mathews