

Opening Address

4/11/75

PENTAGON

It seems to me that we get fuzzier every day about what we concretely have to do, and clearer every day about the inclusive and profound task that we are about. I want to try to say what I mean by that. I would like to say that I know now what life is all about. That is sort of silly, isn't it? It is not so silly, in a way, that we are trying to think about what we are now, what it is that we have to do, and when we try to push those questions into the dimension of profundity.

I began to look at my life and Primal Community started me thinking. By Primal Community, I mean something other than what you can bite at. I am very clear that the family is not primal community. No family by itself can open up the deeps of what I mean by the primal. Ada, Ohio, the town I grew up in, was far closer to this than my family. In one sense, my family did not have the slightest idea who it was, save it was in the context of Ada, Ohio. Now, in our day, that neighborhood sense is gone.

If you get discouraged about our family situations today, you had better look at that without which no family can ever grasp what it is as a family. Yet I do not mean simply that the neighborhood in which a family exists is primal community. As a matter of fact, as a little boy I did not know about Primal Community in the sense of a the thereness that you could point to; however, the dynamic of Primal Community was working on me.

I could put it very simply and in sociological terms, that a dog only grasps that it is barking when other dog barks back at its barking. That is, there is no such thing as individuality except inside of community, or another way to say that is that our society is prior to our individuality.

Later on I grasped more concretely that Primal Community in the abstraction is the People of God whose fundamental intent is to be Primal Community itself. But by the time I woke up to that, the People of God had lost their sense of being People of God, and therefore primal community did not exist there. This is all by way of getting around to saying that what we are about is the recreation of Primal Community.

The second thing stumbled upon when I began to relive my experience (and it was forced upon me) is what I want to call my Solitary Awakening. I had been well conditioned by Spock and Gesell and everybody else who said that one way or another you are made what you are by the neuroses of your mama and your papa. You can just hear them beating your papa over the head because he was not home with the kids enough. When I think about how it is that I am who I am, I do not see that as right. Do you know what I see? I see moments of profound loneliness' About two miles south of Ada, Ohio is Grass Run. It is about 4 feet wide. and maybe 4 feet deep in places, and most of the time it is 6 inches wide and 2 feet deep. I never cared much about fishing. I did fish, but mostly I would go out there and sit all by myself.. When I try to grasp the deeps of who I am, that is what I think of. Very frequently, the days I went there were days of great tragedy for a little boy, whatever form that took.

I remember Walnut Grove. I used to go by myself and pick up those nuts, then get a board with a knothole in it. Did you ever do that? You could not get the stain off your hands for weeks. You were proud of it, not ashamed of it. I would hull those walnuts, as we used to call it, all over myself. I also remember when we lived on the Main Street property in Ada. I would get up in the morning before anybody else. I would go out and sit on the back stoop and look out towards the sunflowers on the side of the woodshed in the back of the lot.

Did you ever wake up in the morning, as the sun comes up, and watch the sunflowers wake up too? Alone. Solitary. You are not interested in my life. I could tell you about the sibling squeeze of one brother before me and one after me, of two sisters on each side of both of them and how my older brother was sort of a wayward one. My mama used to pay too much attention

to him, and all of us know the young one had the brains and that he had to be taken care of. But the way mama took care of me was to just look at me sometimes. That was all she needed to do. She was enabling my solitude.

I am talking about Awakening. Yet I was far into my manhood before what I mean by Profound Awakening took place. I am trying to grasp our mission. I am talking about the early church, and I am not talking about Christianity, but about an instrument, a means of how something could happen. Who ever thought up that fantastic work for "good news" - evangelism. We think of it as some silly piety or some abstract theology. No! The good news was what people were trying to talk about when they experienced some kind of Profound Awakening in life. What poetry you would use to talk about it is quite beside the point. What is it we are up to? To enable profound awakening. I do not know what I would do if that happening that unveiled the depths of consciousness about consciousness had not happened to me.

I want to school a long time. I went to college and did graduate work. I did not get an education. It was not until World War II grabbed me and knocked my head up against a wall and enabled the profound awakening that I got an education. I got what you might call these days, a classical education. But that does not communicate what I am talking about. I really am talking about transrational training. I did not get an education until I grasped what I mean by transrationality.

I grasped that when you come right down to it, it is methodology. It is that no man is his own man in the realm of the mind until he has not the data that is given to him, but the methodologies by which he can make his own mind work for him. What do you mean by creativity? What are we about? It is to communicate methodologies to individuals, groups, communities, and indeed, all of history, that will enable individuals and groups to be themselves, to release their creativity, to genuinely participate in this strange, mysterious process we call history. Why did that come so late to me? As a matter of fact, I believe that the whole revolution in education in our time pivots around becoming aware of precisely this.

Now, when I look again at my life and try to think what it is about, I come to words like Authentic Engagement. It has something to do with your vocation. The word vocation turns me sick in my mouth these days, and I think it is because of the superficiality of it that I grew up with. I am a clergyman, and I think I am a pretty good one, but that is not enough. That is not what I am talking about.

When you read the news these days, you know you are living in one of the most remarkable moments in all of history, and sometimes you wipe that sweat off and think, "My God! What if I would be a damn good clergyman, and die a damn good clergyman and some way or another had not hooked this ball of creativity into what was happening in my time? You see, you can ask that question as a clergyman, as a lawyer, you can ask it as a businessman, you can ask it as a surgeon.. It is the question of Profound Engagement.

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What it is we are about? It is to some way or another enable profound awakening. I am not interested in Majuro for the sake of Majuro. I am interested in some way of getting something done that could be a sign for anybody in this world of what it was possible for them to do, if they chose to do it as a doctor as a lawyer, a businessman, or as whatever they were.

Now comes the one that is even harder, if you try to get this in secular language, and this is the hour in history which demands this. You are going to laugh, I suppose at this Transparent Prowess. How is it that a man knows his way to that other world of consciousness which is always present in the midst of this world, which is the only one you and I know anything about? How do you find your way through the humiliation of contingency, through the weakness of contingency, through the resentment of contingency, through the suffering of contingency, through the rootlessness of contingency, through the sense of ineffectivity of contingency, through the sense of spent-ness of contingency, through the nevergoingaway sense of unfulfillment of contingency, and find precisely in the midst of these without these every going away the glory of living and dying?

This is when hope appeareth. How do you find your way around this world, that is the other world, that is only present within this world? When I taught at Colgate, we were still talking about the well-rounded man, but people were pointing to the moral level of life. NO! When you push that to the profundity of the ontological, this pentagon is what it now means to round out your existence. When you walk around that pentagon and come back is primal community, then you know what primal community is.

One thing, does disturb me a great deal. The people in bureaus have become terminated. If you call at 4:30 or even at 4:25, you will not find anybody there. If you go into a bureau with a creative idea, you might as well stay at home. They grind out what

has been told to them. You go from one, you hear the same story at the next one, and at the next one. They are told what to say and they are given a certain amount of money to do this with.

Of course, there are exceptions to this. The legislative side can see the creativity and keeps injecting it into bureaus both in terms of deciding what programs they administer and also in funding, and then, of course, they oversee them and check them. When you try to get a program like Majuro though, you have to walk in between these two, where the fire flies. When you are in a dominant Democratic House and Senate and meet only Republicans on the other side, you have to be ready for warfare.

Originally, we planned to fund Majuro by going to each one of the bureaus for each single program, and yet to be able to move down there, you have to get certain outstanding congressmen and senators to call them or write a letter or send their aides, or you cannot even begin to break through with any kind of novel program.

I am not really talking about just seven weeks, I am talking about 10 years of trying to get 5th City funded. I wish I had known then a little more than we did. Anyway, during that battle, it was recommended that we initiate legislation to fund the whole program in Majuro and with Congressional help, that came to \$1,800,000. We may not win it, but there is little doubt that Majuro funding will get to the floor of both the House and Senate. You may not think that is a wonder, but I do. It has nothing to do with Majuro or with us. If you want to move in Congress, you had better get to the key men.

What I am interested in is that if we move to twentyfour social demonstrations around the world, we are going to have to learn to work with finesse with the civil structure, not only in our own country, but in South Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, India, Kenya, in West Germany. Do you know who opened up this possibility? You . . . the Guardians. You know, we always dreamed of a Global Guardians dynamic, but when you try to set up something without the necessary mission, you always end up with a Boy Scout troop. Have you noticed that? The time is at hand when we are going to have no choice but to have a Guardian's network because we are going to have to have the pressure and the clout and the knowhow to operate in many different arenas in this world in order to do social demonstrations.

Social demonstrations are important right now for us, but they are not as important as Awakening. Awakening is the Town Meeting. For awhile, you know, we thought of Town Meeting as social demonstration, because everything that is serious is a demonstration. But Town Meeting is Awakening. Those of us in the Church, like myself, get all mixed up and do not know it.

I almost hesitate to say this because I love the church, but we in the Church reduced Awakening to somebody believing a set of ideas. Can you imagine? That is not in the New Testament. The New Testament talks about somebody being born all over again in such a way that you can see it. When the New Testament writers talked about someone becoming a new creation they did not mean some ridiculous thing going on in somebody's head. They meant that their whole posture was profoundly altered into the concretions of their life. I am not interested in Christianity. The Buddhists have done the same thing with the category of illumination.

What is Awakening? Awakening is when somebody becomes aware of the profound depths of their own consciousness. As I listen to the Town Meeting, do you know what I see going on? People are waking up. It gives you something to nurture, if you want to nurture. They are waking up about precisely what I was talking about. Would it now be funny if a group like this stumbled on the way mass awakening could happen at our moment in history? It has happened before, and where it has not happened, there have not been great leaps forward in the process of human settlement and the refurbishment of the Image of man.

This Town Meeting that we are doing does not have anything to do with the Bicentennial celebration of our country. It is nice to be 200 years old and to have our nation stand up and have somebody tell us it is good to have our being in history. As a private citizen, I am very pleased with that, but I am not just a private citizen. I am part of a strange body that cares.

I am interested in Community Forums in the whole of Australia. As most of you know, I dropped the idea of Town Meeting in our meeting there with the Australian Prime Minister. I am interested in Town Meetings in every middle sex village and crossroads in Japan and South Korea and India. I am interested in local man finding a way once again to directly participate in the determination of his own destiny. I am interested in the recovery of grassroots man. I am concerned with human beings having the opportunity to awaken deeply. I am interested in the geography of the United States, the geography of Canada, only because they are part of the geography of the globe.

A colleague in London told me a few days ago that the expatriate community is really excited about Bicentennial Town

Meeting '76 and that they were going to see Elliot Richardson, the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain. Now Great Britain needs a Town Meeting. It is where we got the idea. What we are about is the whole of these strange islands and every community having a Town Meeting. Germany is ready, I think.

Finally, no one knows that is going to happen across the globe as a result of this, of course. Who make it possible for us to dream of doing 5,000 Town Meetings in this county, let alone the globe? Well, you Guardians did. For the rest of our lives as a group, we are going to be interested in Town Meetings and social demonstrations.

This is what the civilizing process is all about. The People of God are standing there, waiting for this. Our whole Order - symbolic, extended, movemental or whatever stands there. Then you sum it up in this those who are standing there. This means again that you have to go to one of those symbols with the word love or care at the center.

If somebody were to ask me now what it means to profoundly love or to profoundly care, I would have to point for my concretion of being about the building of primal community wheresoever; to being busy awakening man to the deeps of consciousness, to giving him methodological skills to enable him to release and use his own creativity, to constantly pioneering with social demonstrations, and finding ways of nurturing people in the realm that everyman knows about, the world of transparentization.

You can understand how this time the body is gathered to be of service. In a way we have no choice but to do what we will with Town Meeting and a little bit on the social demonstrations that will follow. I am thinking that here in this strange moment of solitude, we had better take a pretty good look at ourselves now, because a year from now, when we gather, we are not going to know each other; we are not going to recognize ourselves. That might even be true if this thing breaks loose by the time we gather in October and November. Who knows?

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