

PROFOUND HUMANNESS as CREATIVITY

Global Priors Council 7/25/77

The chart of Profound Humanness describes a diamond with twelve major facets. If you look into any of those facets, for instance creativity, you may see the new face of the mystery itself. You can best express creativity in terms of these other aspects. Creativity is an event that happens in life. It is an encounter with the Mystery. It is the dawn of consciousness. It is pure action. It involves the totality of your being. It never happens outside of corporateness. It is a declaration. It is a presence. You can illustrate that to yourself just by looking around this room. It is integrity. Denying your own integrity is cutting off the flow of creativity. It is the only thing that can cut it off. Creativity is the expression of care. It is effulgence. I expect that you could take any one of these categories and express them in terms of the other eleven. These are really master images. We are talking about the same thing. We are talking about what is at the heart or center of those three campaign wheels. They spin or pivot on profound humanness.

There are four categories, one of which I changed. The first one is universal relativity. Creativity happens when you or your situation is thrown into a new context. Just the experience of walking into this council is the experience of creativity, not especially your own or somebody else's. Stepping into this hall is stepping into the presence of creativity because it relativizes everything you have been consumed with up to this point. You almost forget.

I walked into here from Termine and it's almost as though I had forgotten everything. I look and I see, behold! It's Area Paris that I come from. I had almost forgotten. I look across the room and see my colleagues. Everything comes flooding back and a completely new context is created. The universe you have built for yourself to live in has to be totally dismantled. That's what the Council is. It's dismantling your universe, taking it all apart bit by bit and putting it back together again so that you can continue to release creativity for another year. You almost want to use religious language. You know the story about the old man named Noah, who realized that the whole world was coming to an end. He experienced the total impossibility of the world continuing in the way that it had been. It was going to be destroyed. That confrontation with the judgment of God on his life and his whole world is what gave rise to creating a whole new universe, to building the Ark. This old man had to find a way to carry the great inventions of humanness, of life itself, into the future. Creativity is seeing that you cannot go on the way you have been going. Another way of saying that is that a contradiction is the mother of proposal.

The second one is historical engagement. What I have understood more than anything else this past year about creativity as historical engagement is that it is relentless combat. It is relentless warfare, both hand to hand and as part of a huge operation. There is not a moment of the day when you are not at war. It's like Mao on the long march. Even at night when he was exhausted, he knew that if he allowed himself to fall into a deep sleep, he would get knifed in the back. You think that this kind of engagement will kill you. The curious thing is that the more you engage in it, the more creativity, inventiveness, and alertness is released from you. I have never been more indignant about the injustice with which society functions. I find myself quite unexpectedly locked in combat against injustice that history continues to present me with. It's also combat with the despair that attacks you and your colleagues. It's combat against something that doesn't like life: anti-life. Anti-life is a very real, very active force which has, of course, been called Satan. It's a race against time.

I remember parts of a poem. I expect some of you know it. It talks about how creativity is always being absolutely engaged in history:

Had we but world enough and time

This coyness, lady, were no crime.

We would sit down and think which way

To pass our long love's day.

And you should, if you choose, refuse

Till the conversion of the Jews.

For, lady, you deserve this state.

Nor would I love at lower rate,

But at my back I always hear

Time's winged chariot hurrying near.

And yonder, all before us lies

Deserts of vast eternity.

Another line there that is not crucial, but rather nice, is: "the grave's a fine and private place, but none I think do there embrace." This poem has some good lines to express what we experience. What used to be just coyness, procrastination or forgivable liberalism is a crime. You experience it as a crime and you recognize it as a crime. Phenomenologically, that means that you are consumed with anger. I think very much of the time the anger we mistake for destructiveness in ourselves is godly anger. It's life-giving hostility. I was delighted to see in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* how smoldering with anger Jesus was all through that movie. It affirmed the murderous hostility I experienced this past year. It is hostility against crime, your own criminality and the criminality of those you are working with. It is a crime to let one moment go by in anything less than complete consciousness, profound humanness. It is a crime to let yourself or anybody else deviate from profound humanness.

In creativity, you find yourself participating fully in the drama of history itself. I could say a lot about that relative to the situation in Termine. It's the eternal struggle between the fascists and the communists. Creativity means to live in the midst of that and to proclaim, perhaps for the first time in anybody's living memory, a viable alternative for human endurance.

The third category is decisional impact. Creativity is the impact that your life decision makes on the world. I had a strange experience in Termine. They have a yearly celebration which is a procession where they parade their statue of St. Anthony. The statue is almost life-sized. It is made of chipped and painted plaster and has a little orange dumpling on his forehead which is supposed to signify the flame of inspiration. Every year four strong young men hoist St. Anthony up on their shoulders and carry him through the very narrow streets with the whole village following past where sewer goes out. (They still don't have a proper draining system; because it's very hard to get sewage out of a valley that's on top of a mountain. Soon we will find a way to do that.) The whole village stands just out of range of the smell of the sewer, looking out over the fields. They sprinkle holy water over the field and then everybody waits. Suddenly, from behind a thicket a few fields away, there is an

enormous explosion and then another, and another. They are the loudest explosions you ever heard. They echo all over the valley until all the hills are rocking with the violent explosions. Well, they are expressing something. I don't even know what St. Anthony did. All I saw was this very mild little man with an orange flame on his forehead standing there very quietly, modestly, and kind of smiling at these enormous explosions. Well, maybe they are saying that the decisions you make with your life have a shattering effect.

The consult is the same thing. At the end of the consult, when literally the whole of the universe of that village had been completely dismantled and put together in a number of extraordinary ways, somebody got up to thank "Mr. Avery and his friends" for what they had done.

You know, the man who made *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* died even more absurdly than John. He was battered to death with a plank a year or so ago in a muddy field in a suburb of Rome, and then his body was driven over by his own car. At any rate, you feel as though it is unimportant because the creativity is what is vital about him. History is very callous about what actually happens to you and your life. It is the impact of your decision on the globe that is left.

Now, the fourth category is called sociological creativity. I'd suggest it be called social pioneering, which means the same thing but is a more consistent term. As individuals and as a corporate group, a global movement, we are doing social pioneering. We are creating new forms and new structures of humanness, whether it's the simplest conversation you have on the street corner or the most ambitious battle planning session. A lot is inexpressible in the phenomenology of this.

I think of the story of Anthony Quinn, the actor, when he had to play the part of the pope in *The Shoes of the Fisherman*. The day he was supposed to be filmed being crowned as pope, he had a strange disease and his face swelled up. Someone told him that this used to happen to medieval monks before they were ordained, explaining that their whole being rose up in rebellion against letting that much holiness out of them. When he found that out, the swelling cleared up and he went on with the scene.

I found a similar parallel in the story our colleague told about discovering that our models are not working, that our self-story is on the wrong track and seeing that you have to redo the whole universe. Your experience is of wanting to lie down on the expressway and let history roll over you and discard you. You know you are a social pioneer in every instance. For instance, before a guild meeting, the experience is like the agony in the garden. It's helpful to know that you are on the threshold of profound creativity when that happens. It doesn't take the pain away but at least it gives you a point of reference. Creativity is social pioneering.

I believe that my own creativity and yours is found in what we are creating and embodying now: the company that cares. I think that is a very good name. I would not be nervous about standing on my death bed and saying that I lived and died as "the company that cares" and that was my creation and my creativity. Someone said the other day that maybe the great wheels of social demonstration and the great wheel of community forum will begin to flow together this coming year. I think we will begin to see the top one, the Global Servant Movement, begin to swirl towards the center as well. Already you can begin to see it as whole villages, neighborhoods begin to grasp themselves as the Global Servant Movement. That is our creativity. Perhaps our offering to history is this great wheel of fire where all three spin together. That is what creativity is, what profound humanness is.