

PROFOUND HUMANNESS AS TOTALITY

Global Priors Council July 28, 1977

Profound humanness is something that we have run into this year in a new way. It is something that when you've gotten the taste of it, you can tell the difference, and if you haven't you can't. It's objective. It's just there. And it's ontological. By that I mean that it is the way life is. Life is structurally interrelated, so that totality is not something added on to life. It is simply the way life is. There are four categories on the chart under each one of the boxes. Some of the talks have taken those very seriously and worked them through. Others, like the one I am about to do, virtually ignore the boxes, but not completely. They are still in a state of development. The chart came from the results of the collegiums you did in your Houses and sent to Research Centrum. Your work was gestalted and it's still in a state of being shaped. That means we have work to do on it. But it's not work about something abstract or something we don't know anything about. Profound humanness has happened in our time.

My topic is totality. First of all, I'd like to say something rational to locate the topic, followed by something phenomenological to get inside of it, then something profound to point out its importance, and finally something practical for obvious reasons. Now the first part of it, the rational part, is longer than the rest because the four categories keep getting mixed up. I want to read a word of poetry.

"Thirty spokes will converge in the hub of a wheel, but the use of a cart will depend on the part of the hub that is void. With a wall all around a clay bowl is molded, but the use of the bowl will depend on the part of the bowl that is void. Cut out windows and doors in the house as you build, but the use of the house will depend on the space in the walls that is void. So advantage is had from whatever is there, but usefulness arises from whatever is not."

This is really a talk about spokes and wheels and clay and doors and windows with an attempt to get at the hole which is the only important part. The totality that is profound humanness is unreduced comprehensiveness. how that does not mean knowing it all or doing it all or being all things to all people. It does mean finding your spoke and your lump of clay related to that hole in the center that makes sense out of whatever other hubs, spokes, and lumps of clay you happen to run into. Or to say it a little more rationally, totality means space blown out to the infinite and given back as art. Totality that is profound humanness means time extended to the eternal and given back to you as drama. And totality that is profound humanness is selfhood intensified to the transparent and given back to you as annointment.

Let me dig into those a bit more. We've discovered the significance of space this year in the projects, on the maneuvers for community forum, and even right here in Siberia. Incidentally, there was a TV documentary on Siberia the other night that was absolutely fantastic. That is great space. But there are two things about space that are important for profound humanness. One is the global extension of space and the other is the artful design of it.

The decor of this room probably has the greatest collection of comprehensive global decor of any place I've ever seen: that grid, these flags, the maps, the documents, the two campaign designs, its absolutely staggering. You walk in here and something happens to you. Occasionally we have visitors in the building and we take them through rooms like this. And in the midst of that tour, something happens. There's a pause. It's as though the world has impacted them. But I want to say that this kind of decor is not what the extended space of profound humanness is about. It may be a residue and it's a very important reminder, but it's not the reality within itself.

Once upon a time we had a program called the Global Odyssey in which we went on a tour around the world to extend our internal space. That was right for a time of knowing, and I'm here to bear witness to you that it worked in terms of knowing. And I will go to my grave with consciousness seared by the sights, sounds, and smells that we saw on that trip. The greatness and the squalor of this world. We never learned to give very good reports on those trips. They tended to sound like travelogues, but we were different people. You could see it in our eyes. The news wasn't abstract anymore. It was flesh and blood reality that we were a part of. That was something happening. It did something to our internal space. For a time of doing we did something like teaching treks. There, even if it was for a brief period of time, you got a chance to mingle your sweat and blood with a people of an irrevocably otherness. I'll never quite get over that LENS seminar in Sagata. Now Sagata is a six hour one-way Jeep ride up a mountain road. We did a LENS to Coleman lanterns with chickens and dogs running through the room. I met the most fantastic group of people I'll ever meet in my life, and it was an unbelievable happening. We got a chance there to have our space expanded, and we were never quite the same on the other side of that. That was another step in our corporate globalization. Lately it's come to me that we're doing the HDP's and that means actually being our being alongside that irrevocably other being. And we're finding in that encounter being itself in which we both share yet neither one of us contains. And it is not reducible to the two of us together. It is a remarkable phenomenon we've encountered, being in those villages. And it's fairly curious, isn't it, that the more particular we have become, the more global we are internally. I think someone who has been through a project outside his own culture, has had profound humanness yanked out of him and his face extended to the globe. And he is ready to go anywhere. My point here is that globality is not the opposite of locality. It's the opposite of reductionism. And as soon as anybody gets the picture that his little world is not the only world, then he's global. I believe that's what these trips the villagers take are about. And why they work to break profound humanness loose. Once the reality that you live in a very wide and varied world is incorporated into yourself then you are global and the motivity of profound humanness is released.

Now a word about the artful design. That release is something of the humanness of significant participation in the otherness that is beauty. At the Kawangware Consult, someone happened to point out the architectural lines of some buildings on the square which were at that moment encrusted with mud, peeling paint and teeming people. But as soon as it was mentioned that those architectural lines had beauty about them, that place was changed. It was change from a nondescript forgotten place into something that had beauty and it was the beauty that linked it to the great cities of the world: Nairobi, London, Paris and so forth. The words changed the village. I'm sure deeds have done a lot more. That's why visibility and living environment is so crucial in these projects. It occasions profound humanness. It expands, it designs the space. It goes to the hole at the center of the wheel.

Now totality is about extended time. The hand-to-mouth, day-to-day existence is no more human than that of a dog. And that's as true for the affluent rat race as it is for the starving peasant. The factor is the scope of time out of which you are living, and it's the eternal. We once emphasized making your timeline. I remember an exercise in the Academy when we were forced to make our life timelines. And I was shocked, profoundly shocked, by two parts of it. One, that it was so short. And the other, that it was so long. There was an end, too. And that was an address. The real address was all those empty boxes out there in the future. Those timelines tied us to the future. In a very real way they blew out immediacy out into the distant future up against the otherness of the eternal.

Then we discovered the story. Every place has its story. And they are just incredible to hear. Probably the most important thing about these stories out of town meeting is the way each town expands the participants' operating context from that of his family or himself to the community to the nation and, in some of the better ones, to ties with the archaic, with the primordial. Now when that happens it says two things. It says both that this moment is the culmination of all of history. And then it says that the particular issues of this moment are not much more than a flyspeck on the path of history. It's a moment of finding yourself in a sweep of history with ancestry and a destiny, and that makes for profound humanness. Incidentally, I've been struck that if you wanted to get a historic reading on some of these same issues, you'd go to Wesley, Augustine, or Plato. This is not new stuff,

but its the dealing with the stuff of our time in getting said what it means to be profoundly human.

Now the latest thing we've stumbled onto relative to time is the maneuver. The timeline extended the future and the story expanded the past, *then* I believe the maneuver makes artistry out of the present. A good maneuver has cleverness, delicacy, suspense, surprise, wonder and all of those things which absolutely dispel the routine which is so killing. It's not practical, it's artful. It's not dull, it's invigorating. It's not predictable, it's victorious. I think I'm beginning to get a little glimmer of why it is that Shogun spent his time doing flower arranging.

It doesn't really matter if you are moving troops in a campaign or moving dust off a flower petal, you are touching and dramatizing the-profound significance of the moment. And that has to do with the totality that is profound humanness.

Now, just a word about selfhood. The totality that is profound humanness is managed total selfhood, conscious and unconscious, emotions and actions, mind and body. I suppose we have all been through the individualism that makes the self into the center of the universe. And we've seen the grimy unhumanness that it creates. But at the same time we found the self to be both an immense gift and a horrendous enemy. Time after time, I've come out of a meeting realizing that I've Just been whining or pouting or beating on somebody totally unintended and unrecognized until afterwards. Then other times when something goes wrong, you come away and reflect that you knew well in advance what would happen if that course of action were pursued, and sure enough you pursued it, and it did. It's like in the Ronin where the boy waits outside the door, walks in and gets beat by the stick. And his teacher says, "You knew. You knew, damn you. At least try to keep me interested in holding school." The self is a tremendous ally when its totality is managed for the sake of. That has to do with profound humanness. I would guess that last year's victories we've been celebrating these last 10 days suggest we've gotten a hold of the intuitive, the irrational, the transrational; the emotional. That kind of control accounts for the victories.

The profound humanness that is totality is totally engaged in every situation without getting sucked into it. But I believe we are finding out now it is also corporate. I've experienced a strange thing this year. Your victories have been mine. And I've heard you say that mine have been yours. A man visited here from an HDP last April and said that Oklahoma 100 had saved his life. Let me witness to you that in Oklahoma we were reminded of that Old Testament story. Remember when Josuah went into battle and had to hold his arms up while the people were fighting. The minute his arms came down they began to lose the battle. Then he finally had someone prop up his arms. In Oklahoma we felt that somebody somewhere was holding his arms up awfully high. And that was an experience; that wasn't a rationalization. And I believe that corporate selfhood is something we know about. And we are in the process of resolving to corporately hold up our arms for one another for the year that's to come. We are learning something about the corporate that goes far deeper and further than a group of people sitting around a group of tables. The corporateness that we have sensed ourselves a part of and that has to do with profound humanness is unlimited by space. And I suspect it even extends through time, to our colleagues in history and in that community of the invisible college, the league, the crimson line where profound humanness is released. Now there's one other aspect of selfhood that I really don't know anything about yet.

It's unity. It is the "I and the Father are one" dimension. It's the "brother sun" and "sister moon" poetry. They say that after Plato died, his students were looking around among his manuscripts trying to find the latest work that the master had done. And when they came up with it, it was a bunch of mathematical equations centering around the concept of oneness. I was sort of interested. But whether or not we have any real grasp experientially about what this is, I believe that our times are experiencing a shift in that direction. One night right after reading a National Geographic article that was laying out the Marshallese use of the stick chart, we saw a TV special on the heroic voyages around Cape Horn. As you watched those two different modes of operation, you saw that one of them was a pitched battle against the elements, and your mind immediately flipped to the lunar shoots and landings. It struck me there are three completely different modes of relating to the world: One, the elements are in control and you cooperate. Second, it's man against the elements in a relentless pitched battle. Thirdly,

these days I believe with the ecology and the environmental campaigns and the other things, we've been coming conscious of it being a case of man with the elements. We're all in this together. Now that may be terribly poetic, but I believe that we can watch out for an inclusiveness beginning to emerge in the operating modes of mankind. If that's the case, its going to make our adversary systems of competition in the economic and debate in the political and exclusiveness in the cultural obsolete. It also makes some sense out of our push for consensus polity and tensional dynamics within a framework of unity. I believe that unity is a part of selfhood. the oneness with all of reality. Its annointment by the Mystery.

Phenomenologically totality is encountered as objective, unwelcome, heavy, and attractive all at the same time. Its objective. Have you noticed that totality doesn't seem to give a damn whether you want it or not? It's just there. I find myself from time to time this year resisting some of the relationships that I've been a part of. And you know what? They didn't go away. You still find yourself in those relationships. This is probably what Lela was getting at the other day when she talked about being in the projects just day after day after day. Those relationships are just there objectively, demanding and relating you totally.

Secondly, it is usually unwelcome. Several times this year, I've been stuck in the role of playing one end of the area prior -centrum prior tensional dynamic, usually by telephone call. And its been something. Those contextually pushing calls are not friendly. People do not easily give up their end of the pole. You have no idea how many people were actually offended at coming to the Research Assembly this summer. Everyone was very much into the campaign and wanted to stay there and do it. The maneuver we finally used was to get two house priors making the calls, and this worked out fine. But the interesting thing was when you got here, the tables turned completely. We centrum priors here in Siberia got struck with the intrusion and unwelcomeness of the globality that's the totality that is humanness. But I believe that we profoundly depend on each other for maintaining that push back and forth that allows us all to be profoundly human.

Thirdly, it's overwhelming. You probably all know of the fellow who went into a bar in Texas and ordered a small glass of beer and they brought him this five gallon jug and he said: "I just ordered a small glass." They said, "In Texas, that is a small glass." He didn't want to be offensive so he began to drink it. After awhile nature called, and he asked the directions to the men's room. They told him, "Now go out that door, turn left and down three steps you'll find it." Well, being slightly inebriated, he went out the other door, turned right and walked up three steps and fell into the swimming pool. In the bar they heard this horrendous thrashing around outside and went out to look. He was yelling, "Don't flush it! Don't flush it!" Totality is a little bit like that.

Finally, totality is irresistibly attractive. You just can't get enough totality. You see it time after time in Town Meetings when the steering committee out there setting up decor and wrapping tape, all of Friday night, just stays around a couple of hours afterwards talking, wanting to be a part of the big picture that is going on. You see it in projects when people just keep showing up to do and to do and to do. That story our colleague in Fifth City told about the wins in 5th Clty is just one example among many. And we've all experienced it. Around here at the priors' meetings, people just keep coming, whether or not there is anything really big brewing or whether there is anything to deal with. We all have this drive to be where the action is, and we are privileged to be in a spot where there is action, where profound humanness is released. And then there's another side to that. Occasionally, you find yourself in a position where people do not see you at all. They just see right through you to where the action is. You experience in yourself that quote about Gandhi: "wherever he is, there is the capital of India." Occasionally, you experience people just flocking to you not because of your neurosis or your gifts and graces, but that for some strange unaccountable reason you have for a moment become a mediator of the center of totality. It does not much matter if you like it or not, or whether you're good at it or not, you just sniff that somehow you've been privileged to participate in profound humanness.

Now a few words on the profound side. First of all, you find yourself universally responsible. Profound humanness that is totality is never having to say, "Who's in charge here?" I think the really addressing thing in the work that we've done with Sun Tzu so far is the sense that you never have to lose. Any battle is winnable,

any gripe is curable, and it persists just because I've decided not to deal with it with all the resources of strategy. Now, in addition to being universally responsible, is the infinitesimal detail. I've never really quite gotten over the straight cup handles at RS-1. Or this past year, we've heard some talks in development that went to the infinitesimal detail, about the type of shirt you wear and the type of socks you have on when making a call. Just every minute detail is significant. Totality doesn't have to do with doing everything. But it has to do with seeing everything you do as a microcosm of the whole universe. That's totality. Frankly, that's one of the frustrations about Siberia here. This place is awfully large for a few people to have the infinitesimal care that it takes. We've all got our blind spots. My blind spot is a red flag to you. What saved us is just simply immersion in the mission. One of our saints was talking about being in a state of outrage at having to make his fifth trip paying his own way by L to the bus station carrying a load of Town Meeting materials. And then he looked up and realized that he was having the time

of his life. Profound Humanness is evoked in the midst of doing the infinitesimal detail.

Or another thing is the historical wave. Somehow or other, we've gotten on the back of one of those historical waves with these two campaigns of ours. It's probably because some people were attuned to the total with the totality of their being. But in any case we are on an absolute joyride now. Don't you sense that? Especially considering this time, over against some of the past times when we were struggling to probe here and there to find that wave? I firmly believe that if this room were to explode in the next 5 minutes, there would still be a sweep of awakening and engagement of human communities across this world. That's what it means to be on an historical wave. I think that's really a call to vigilance. That we keep ourselves just vigilantly attuned to the shifts and currents here and there and then we keep on having a few probes here and there looking for the next wave that's coming over the horizon. Totality, totality, that's profound humanness. That wave experienced is that kind of totality.

And now, finally, Just a practical note or two. The comprehensiveness screen is still an immensely useful tool for guarding your own Xavierism or caring for the whole in whatever spot you found yourself in. These worry lists that I tend to make are 10 times more useful when they have some categories on them. They allow you to plot your anxieties. They've been lifesavers. Secondly, I believe we have learned this year to protect your troops. I think we are probably the most singly neurotic and kookie body of people that history's got right now, but every last one of us is absolutely indispensable in getting the job done. And I think of going out and doing maneuvers, whoever we turn out to be with, care for the corporate in engagement and in totality is absolutely critical. That's part of profound humanness. Finally, keep the charts up. My sanity was saved more than once this year by that gimmick of having a chart that held the big picture and let anxieties and intrusions get themselves plotted on that chart so you could tell which ones had to be dealt with now and which ones were your intuitions about the long range future. Totality is part of being profoundly human, and it's a great gift we've been given this year.