

PROFOUND HUMANNESS AS CORPORATENESS

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I want to talk about corporateness. I found these profound humanness spins very interesting and as I sat through this week, I become clear that the categories we were assigned were nothing more than portholes into the Other World. If you look into any one of the portholes you would see exactly the same thing. You would see profound humanness. So I was not at all surprised when my lecture on profound humanness as corporateness kept getting given six, seven, eight or nine times.

I always come in here feeling that I am just a little bigger, a little taller and a little better than anybody else here. Therefore I'm never surprised when I have to do something like this. This time I was surprised and I tried to figure out why in the world am I supposed to be speaking up here? Did I do something that someone would want me to witness to this time? Actually, we have no particular corner on profound humanness. Any of us or perhaps all of us this week, have created our own spins and reflections on when we have touched the touchstone and have been transformed from creatures into profound human beings.

When Jesus left he said one thing. He gave one rule to the world and that was "Love one another." So that no one got confused, he followed this by saying, "As I have loved you." That was his rule for profound humanness. That was his foundation for corporateness. After seeing the movie, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," you cannot possibly be left with any romantic misconceptions about what Jesus meant by "Love one another as I have loved you." Jesus was talking about corporateness, the one absolute for the man of faith. There is no way to exist as a man of faith except through corporateness. You have no choice. God said, be corporate. The universe was immediately corporate. He said, if you don't be corporate, where are the rats. All of them are corporate, you know, and a lot less quarrelsome about their global assignments.

Let's move from the enigmatic. I don't want anybody thinking that I'm taking this too seriously and that I know what I'm talking about up here because all I know is what happened to me this year. That's all I know. I didn't read anything on profound humanness this year. I couldn't find anything to read on profound humanness. I didn't read anything on corporateness. I experienced this year.

A few years ago we talked about resurgence. One image for resurgence was a white elephant. You step out around a corner and this white elephant runs you down. You lie there on the ground, broken up and dazed, but you are wet all over because this elephant was wet. You discovered that the elephant was resurgence and the wetness on you was the residue of resurgence.

Somehow, we knew that wasn't enough. Later we got hold of care. We found that on the other side of resurgence, everyman was showing up as a caring human being. Every man was caring for the dying in Vietnam, for the genocide and dehumanization in South Africa or caring for the inhuman waste of North America. Every human being just showed up caring. I still wake up nights hearing the screaming babies; crying, babies that don't have enough to eat.

I was walking down the street between Stake 3 and Stake 4 in Ivy City one day. Mr. Swenson, the stake captain, called to me, "Carlos, come over here. I want to show you something." I went over to an apartment building across the street from his house and as I got closer, I could see that he had a baby in his arms. When I got closer I could see that the baby was oozing and bleeding all over. He said, "Carlos, this baby is beaten." When the police came, of course the parents said the baby had fallen down the stairs. The force of the care that was

reawakened in me within that moment! It was not a soft, compassionate care. It was anger. It was frustration, not because that baby had been beaten but because I still had to care. I was not released from care. This is profound humanness.

I remember my second little dog, a cocker spaniel. You know cocker spaniels with the curly wavy hair, and this was a little red one. One summer we were going down to my grandfather's in Mt. Eden, Texas, the old homestead. As soon as we opened the door, this dog jumped out of the door and zoom, was off into the woods. We hollered and whistled and he wasn't coming back. We forgot about him, and a few hours went by. I was looking out the window and all of a sudden, I could see my dog coming through the brush. I mean he was really coming through the brush. His tail was wagging and he was grinning.

I wondered, "Now, what in the world has gone on with Wuffy?" I got a little closer and I could see he was all wet and slimy. I thought, "He must have jumped into the water." When he got a little closer I could smell something. When he started into the yard my grandfather jumped off the porch and grandmother jumped off the porch, and everybody jumped and said, "Oh my God, he's been in a stump!" But I swear I have never seen an expression on that dog's face like this one! That dog was profoundly dog! I remember we had to stay at my grandfather's an extra week.

I am so tired of being ineffective, uncreative and I'm tired of failing. This has been a very painful year. I am tired of being ineffective in my priorship, my role as a male and in model-building only to come up with the same old answers, models and procedures. Lord knows, I need some victories. I'm scared to death of corporateness. You know, I have scars 400 years deep. My psyche is like a spaghetti bowl. You have to understand that my generation is the first on this planet to get enough education, health and technology to be an independent son of a bitch, and I thoroughly enjoy it. The last thing that I want is to be corporate. If you want to see me blush red, run up to me with some corporateness -- although you might have to look into my eyes to see that I'm blushing.

This year I ran into corporateness, my family ran into corporateness, the auxiliary ran into corporateness and Ivy City ran into corporateness. What we discovered is that's the only enemy. The only block to experiencing your life and your expenditure as profound humanness is non-corporateness. I have refused my birthright this year; I have refused corporateness. I refused to drink from the cup and I have been the heretic. I have been ruined by one command.

I decided after I discovered how crummy our auxiliary was and how broken down Ivy City was, that I was going to trust nobody, just me. I don't want to trust anybody's wisdom. Just mine. I wouldn't want to trust Ivy City, a bunch of thieves, dope smokers, women molesters, quitters, beat up people. I wasn't trusting them. I was going to trust myself. The only person that I could trust to do the project was me. I even got that theologically grounded. I said "Now, if you want to see what profound humanness is, that's me. Keep up with me. Here's profound humanness, right here." I was up every morning. I was up for Daily Office. I went through the day -- zing! I didn't eat any lunch, stayed up late at night and got up the next day. I went through life -- bang, bang, bang. I fooled my death or fooled that I was going to die to being a corporate boy. Lord knows, I fear corporateness.

Then I received an assignment. I had been sliding around Town Meetings all year and getting around anything that took me out of my situation all year. Finally, there was a Town Meeting in New Jersey, the first in the campaign down there, in a county jail. Everyone thought, "Who can do this county jail Town Meeting," and they decided, "The only one with the experience is Carlos." So I did a Town Meeting in a county jail and the three campaigns came back to me. It came back to me with such a force and so much pain that all of a sudden I had my life back. I tell you, in that instant I was cared for. I overcame fear and frustration and I discovered a profound humanness.

Someone asked me yesterday how I will know when Ivy City is done. All I could say was corporateness. But I've come up with four ways. I will know Ivy City is done when there is focused power, covenanted collegiality, profound fellowship, and decisional obedience. Those are my four pillars for knowing when that project is done. I can move on when I see these four things going on. This does not mean that those programs -- commerce, industry, preschools, housing, jobs, health -- are not important. They are just proofs or evidence that those four pillars are firmly implanted in that community.

Our maneuver for the month of July was environmental beautification and I had this great idea that before Joe Mathews came back to Ivy City again, they're going to clean it up. We battleplanned and we planned a fantastic maneuver. Each Week II we were going to take the worst block in one stake and we were going to transform it. We didn't call it a miracle. We were going to have victory on that block. We set out to organize those blocks. The first block, Daudulet Street, runs right across the front of the Community Center and is one of the most horrible looking streets you have ever seen in your life. There are row apartments, all dull and red, with no doors on them.

The first Week II, we took the whole auxiliary and metro troops to Daudulet Street. We dug up all the yards, put dirt in there and planted grass, put shrubbery in, cleaned the streets, sidewalks, the gutters, cut out all the weeds, repainted all the boards, put in flower boxes and fantastic, shiny numbers on each apartment so you could see where they were. We transformed that block and the people on that block were so proud that by noontime almost everybody in their apartment had come out and were trying to find something to do to participate in that block beautification.

We had victory and all this was done in the rain. It was raining hard. You tie a scarf around your head so the rain doesn't come down in your eyes and you keep digging. I tell you, that victory scared the hell out of Ivy City. The next week was supposed to be Providence Week. Providence Street is the worst street in Ivy City in terms of care.

Their stake captain called them together and was trying to plan for the Week II. I sat in on the meeting and just as it started, a little lady stood up and said, "What have I done to you? I've done nothing to you. What are you trying to get us kicked out of this community for? I can't afford to have my rent go up anymore. I got seven children and I'm on welfare!" Then one after another after another said, "Why don't we leave Ivy City like it is? "It's never been clean!" "We don't have to clean it up." One man got up and said, "As soon as the landlord sees the improvement, he's gonna jump up our rent and I want to know if you can guarantee us that we are not going to get moved?" I said, "Well, I can guarantee you that we can fight." But that wasn't enough.

In the midst of that kind of melee and that kind of excitement, I knew that we were right. I knew that we had somehow gotten hold of the enemy. I didn't know whether we had him by the big tall now, but we had him. So I said, "Do you want me to believe that the only security that you have is to live in filth? Is that what you're trying to tell me? That you have to live with garbage up to your front door, up to your windows, before you have any security about where you are going to live?"

The fear in that situation meant awakening to a new possibility. These people who were asleep knew that on the other side of Daudulet Street, the people were alive. Provident Street was fearful. They didn't know what they feared but they knew something new was fixing to happen in their lives and they were going to stop it if they could. These people were excited and the Swanson House didn't even hold them all. People were hanging out all the doors. I kept thinking, "We have something here." Covenanted collegiality was in focus and the form was coming into being here.

Finally, I stood up and said, "Tomorrow morning at 8:30 I'll be down here with six people. Mrs. Swenson will be there and we are going to start at the end of the block on Capital Street and we are going to clean up all the public space on this street. You are all welcome to participate." Well, some of them weren't quite sure I was

right and the auxiliary wasn't sure I was right but nevertheless, Saturday morning, we got up and loaded up all the stuff.

We took enough cleaning materials for sixty people. It was hot. We started on the far end of the street. In one hour we had about ten people out. They joined in, and by lunch time 50 people from that block were working. We had to get more materials. We filled about 12 dumpsters full of trash and garbage. A man down the street asked how far along we were going to get down the street. "We intend to get all the way," I said. He said, "I'm so tired but I can't stand to see you all cleaning without me getting up and helping you."

Profound fellowship and profound collegiality happened in that victory and profound focused power was realized in that block. Decisional obedience was a reality. We went through the fear and on the other side we found corporateness; unbelievable corporateness! And in doing so, we discovered profound humanness ourselves. Corporateness or profound humanness is the Other World. When Jesus said, "I go to the far place for you and where I go ye may go also," he was talking about the Other World. He was talking about profound humanness in the Other World sense.

There is one stipulation. You must be corporate. It is as simple as that. The rich must give up their wealth. That's what corporateness means. The professionals must give up their professionalism. Lord knows, we had some struggle with our professions this year. Individuals in this individual universe, must give up their individualism. If you can't do that, then you can't enter the Other World right here in the midst of this world. Nobody ever heard of a camel going through the eye of a needle without unloading. But if you can't do that, you can't enter the Other World.

My life has been so painfilled this quarter. The horror has been so explicit and the victories have been so many that I hardly know how to contain them all. I found that the greatest fear I ever had in my life was when I contemplated the two suitcases. The greatest terror was when someone in my house contemplated the two suitcases because I knew in doing that, they were giving up the Other World.