

## INTERNAL DYNAMICS

Just before Summer '73, we decided we were actually going to begin the primal community experiment called Uptown. We were all scared to death as we prepared for this absolutely incredible miracle. Several colleagues went out across the street, cut the grass, painted little yellow lines on the parking lot, picked up the paper and came back victorious. I can sense that you do not all see how that was a miracle. You have to understand that miracles are always appropriate to the situation. They are miraculous to the believer. We were all sure that we would be picked up by the police for creating a mob scene, or that we would be exposed in the newspapers as people taking over Uptown. Strange thoughts went through our heads. We voiced our doubts, saying to each other, "We're probably about three years too early to move out into this, or any other community. Let's work on 5th City a little longer. Are we sure that this is what we want to do?"

That questioning seems ridiculous, when we have 100 experiments, as of January 1, going far more extensively than that one was at that point. But our internal state was such that we were convinced that we couldn't do anything. Our courage only came when that first person walked across the street with a broom. We needed someone who would be obedient, without questioning the wisdom of our task. It became an internal sign to us that something new was about to happen, that we could, in fact, re-engage in the parish.

If you try that in your parish today, people would say, "Well, it's about time you cleaned up that mess." People in Uptown made that comment, too, because that was not a miracle to the community. It was only a miracle to us. It was only a miracle internally, but it was a miracle.

We look back at where we began. How simple it seems, but every time it was the very edge of what history demanded. We went into 5th City and built that model. We went into Uptown and developed the tactics. We went into Mowanjum and broke loose the idea that if you didn't deal with the heritage and uniqueness of the community, you get nowhere. Now, we are going into Majuro. In 5 years, if not in 2, we will look back and say, "Why did it seem so unusual or so miraculous? Didn't it seem miraculous to you as you heard about it?"

This school is similar to each of those experiments. Yesterday morning, we distributed this piece of paper, then we passed out this one. "How awkward" is the way it came to me. Yet I knew that it wasn't true. I realized that I expected to leave here with all the answers on how to formulate a complete set of rules and regulations on indicative battle-planning in your local situation. We are doing exactly that, but we are doing it at the very edge of our creativity. We are trying to answer those difficult questions about what is required now in terms of battle-planning. It is not RS-I yet. We are experimenting with some great things in this school. Yet, we know the way history operates is that you could take any number of versions of battle-planning, follow a few simple rules, and win in that kind of situation. All through our history there has been that kind of experimentation, building, testing.

The 5th City presuppositions have pervaded all of our work - operating within a very specific and delimited geographical area, in terms of the people of the area, with all the problems, all the ages, the depth spirit problem and working with symbol. We are beginning to get clarity that these presuppositions are generally accurate. Beyond that, we are still learning, still building, still trying to figure out what to do in a community. We are on a 20, a 40, a hundred year march. We are not playing games. We are trying to answer the question, "How do you actually participate in what is happening in history?"

We are operating out of an assumption that there is something going on in history, that it is worthy of the attention of man, that he can choose to reinforce certain points or not to reinforce at certain points, and that as a result, incredible things happen in the historical process. Beyond this assumption, we are trying to work out the answers to practices of what you do what are social methods?

This morning, we talked about the edges within the external frame. As edge we are not implying something out on the lunatic fringe, but where the very front of the 20 years is taking us. The edge is the clearest picture we have now about what we are doing when we work in a community.

I want to talk about internal or structural dynamics. Again, I am not going to provide any answers. It would be foolish to say here is the model, because we know that is not the way the process works. All of our models are tested by the historical process. With these insights, we go back and rebuild the model and move at it again.

This evening, we are going to talk about catalytic action. It is very clear that if what happens is only as a result of the people in this room, we'd be a big joke. If we break through to some catalytic action and move where we see trends, then things will happen beyond anything that we have imagined.

I'm going to talk about two basic arenas. The first of these is structural dynamics. Another term for that is the tactical systems. Be careful of that one, because you already have some ideas, and that is not what I mean. What are the dynamics that must go on in the primal community to get the external work done? It is not simply internal nurture. It is the structure of the whole community. There are four: the Temple, the Stake, the Guild and the Galaxy. These last two are a swampland. Then I want to talk about four tools, or four tactics, that seem to be emerging as central. If you don't do these, you're missing the boat. These are the community grid, community story, community miracle and community consensus. The tools which evolved in 5th City are still there, but our concern is to find which four are essential.

I want to tell you a story about temple activities. It happened in 5th city during Summer '66. When the exodus of people to the suburbs occurred, it scared the rats, and they did a reverse exodus into the inner city. I think the rats saw the possibility of the future, and most of them moved into 5th City. Those who went out early in the morning would see the pavement turn from brown to white. In one of those summer projects we volunteered to pick up old furniture. One woman said, "How about taking my garage?" We said, "Fine," and sent some people to take the garage down and put it in the truck. These people were gleeful about the whole thing and not exactly quiet. They took sledge hammers and banged on all the wood until it all came down. There was nothing but the cement foundation left, so they went after that too.

Now, pretend you are a rat for a minute, living underneath that, hearing all that commotion upstairs, and you looked at the neighbors first. After a while, you say, "Hey, George, the noise is getting closer. I think something is going on. Shouldn't we go check?" When that kind of self-story started, a few of the smarter rats were already moving next door underneath the ground. We began pounding on the cement floor, and as it broke through, the rats began to emerge. Everybody was excited. I have worked with statistics, so I was trying to count them. I couldn't begin to keep up with the live rats. The smart ones, who had heard all the noise, packed and left, before we even got through the cement.

We had organized teams of ten adults, who were waiting with hoes and rakes. They were doom. We also had a cadre of young men in the neighborhood who had been waiting for this opportunity for years. They were standing on the outer rim of the crowd with baseball bats, rocks and anything else you can think of, trying to catch the rats that got through the front lines. We proceeded to remove that whole cement foundation. When we were done, we decided to see how many rats had not made it. We lined them all up like fish and took a photograph of the 74 rats that were killed. We proceeded, late that evening, to hold a cremation ceremony of all the rats.

That was probably one of the most healing events of that entire year in 5th City, as a genuine symbol of overcoming the forces of evil. Nobody had any illusions that the rats next door were gone. Rats were not eliminated. It was not that kind of operation. It was a vast kind of Temple operation. You bring the community together, you celebrate, you confront the mystery.

We had some other experiments. Some of you know about the Uptown car-park cafe. That comes out of Singapore. Lots used for commuter parking during the day are transformed into night markets at the close of the business day, and all kinds of people come to sell food and clothing. We decided to do that here in Uptown. One afternoon, we cleared all the cars out of the parking lot (which was quite a miracle in itself) and invited the merchants of the community to come in and sell their goods. I could get into all kinds of stories there. Some of them said "Yes," about eight times, and didn't show, while others said "Yes, " and then sent their spies over to see

if we were serious. Several hundred people came that evening. That was a form of temple activity -- celebrational activity. We had a flat-bed truck at one end with music playing and with various cultures of the community participating in that entertainment.

That clearly is one of the structural dynamics which has to be present. There has to be a way in which the whole community, maybe even formally, on a certain day, once a week, once a month, or maybe twice a year, comes together for a great festival celebration. The festivals in 5th City are another example of that kind of activity. With the Bicentennial coming up, that is going to be more important than ever before. We are going to see a lot of inauthentic temple activity being attempted as every town tries to find some way to celebrate, and has not yet broken through to the way you celebrate life through temple activity.

Another dynamic, or way of operating is the stake. We borrowed that term from the Mormons. It means a hunk of geography. For us it means the hunk of geography that you are responsible for. This is roughly what the church has always sought to define. How do you care for everybody in your parish, your specific piece of geography? We have the hardest time grounding that both for ourselves and with the people in the community. There was an elder's residence at one end of 5th City. We would go down there, talk about stakes, and everybody would say, "Yes, that is important." They then would fall back into the type of care that involves only the people you know and the people you like. A woman was found in that building three days after she had died. We were able to use that event to say, "Now how do we care for everybody?" How do we take care of the people nobody likes and nobody knows and nobody wants to be taken care of? It is the question of how you do that kind of Job.

We said that you have to take a community, delineate the boundaries and subdivide it in a process we called gridding. We took an area of about 5,000 people. We divided it into stakes, then into quads, and sometimes into units. We had stake meetings in the particular arenas. People would come together to discuss how they would care for the people in that particular geographical community. The perversion that the church has fallen into (mind you, I'm not beating the church, everybody who has tried to care for people has been trapped by this same perversion) is the one of people sitting around in a group feeling sorry for other people and calling that care. Sometimes the church divides itself up and goes out to see the people in what it calls an "every-member-canvass", but then it sees only the members of its congregation, not the members of its parish.

What would it mean to set up a care net, not as a systematic, door-to-door visitation, but systematically. Mr. Smith would have responsibility for the lives of twelve families. Depending on how Mr. Smith operates, he might be having a conversation with Mr. Jones and say, "Jones, I noticed you are coughing a lot lately." In the back of Smith's head is that tuberculosis is more prevalent in this community than anywhere else in the city. "Why don't you go over to the Health Center and check that out? You don't need to worry, because people over there are all right and it is a good set-up. They won't rob you blind. I've been there and it is worth going by to check it out. There's no sense in taking a chance on that." He has a sort of systematic grid in his head. He just keeps his eye on those 12 families in a consistent kind of way. That falls down, of course, when the other dimension is missing; namely, if there isn't a health or community clinic in this case.

That's where your third dimension, your guild, comes into play. The other route the Church has taken in the last 15 years is one of setting up Health Clinics, Legal Aid Clinics, all kinds of clinics. We had tremendous health clinics on the West Side of Chicago. But, for a number of different reasons, nobody would go to them. They didn't know the clinics were there, or it was outside of the geographic area with which they were familiar. They had gone to some clinics and had a bill for \$15 slapped into their hands. When they reached the point of life or death crises, they would go to the General Hospital, and wait for eight hours.

We saw that you had to have the clinic right there to serve the community, as a genuine function of the community. The job of getting that done required a group of people, a guild. A guild is whoever it is that brings these structures into being. But your structures are no good unless you have people who make sure that the structures actually serve the community. That's not simple, by any means. Your structure has to function throughout the whole of that community. One of the most important aspects of the 5th City Health Clinic is that they do preventive, in-the-home care. They don't just sit there and wait for emergencies. As you begin to bring those two together, you get that manifestation of genuine care that we all know finally has to be there.

We did a lot of work to computerize care in 5th City. The liberals reacted by saying, "Oh, you shouldn't do that, you know...numbers... bad..." There are excesses, but who has really experimented with getting the medical histories of everyone in a community so that you have some context out of which to decide whether lead poisoning vaccine, for example, is necessary or helpful. You have to make some hard decisions: are you going to let people's lives be destroyed because of a little bit of queasiness about computers or are you going to finally see that we have to take seriously dealing with every single human being? That illustrates these two dynamics of the stake and the guild.

Now, look at the guild in the galaxy. We have come at the question of that force working in structures in two ways. One has been through the congregation. We have focused on the congregation in order to build the cadre, though the only thing we were finally interested in was how to care for the parish.

Then, we came at it the other way, through the guild, the operation to rebuild structures, working through secular organizations, and the secular people in the community. We are still right in the middle of trying to figure out how to hold these two in a healthy tension. This question is not going to be answered for several years yet, I would suspect. Feel free to set loose on them, use your good sense rather than some abstract theory to decide in your particular local situation, how to bring these two elements together.

We now see that the guild manifests itself in many ways. We have a guildsman in San Francisco who is a top executive in the Bank of America. He has had a LENS course. In terms of guilding activity lately, he has talked to his boss who is in charge of all the training in the world center of the Bank of America. He has begun to nudge him to get more and more people from the Bank of America into LENS training

Guilding activity is not just the people who come on Tuesday night. Yet, that's where we are seeing something happen. That is the glue that holds people together when they are working. You don't want to settle down and think that because you have these fantastic things going on here that you don't need any kind of activity in that community.

In another sense, we have done all three of these activities, the Temple, the Stake and the Guild, through the Galaxy. We recovered the celebrative dimension there. You know that in your own galaxy, the image of accountability is stake activity in which you check to see where people are. Are they sick? What do they need? That kind of accountability is concern, and care is taking place. Of course, the guilding activity of rebuilding structures in the community is taking place. We have combined both guilding functions in all kinds of ways. One way has to do with the issue of community. Working with some of the noted community organizers in the country, I came clear on the "mealy-mouth" approaches. We would go into a neighborhood, hold a meeting and ask everyone what they wanted to do. That is what you would do because the people ought to decide. We did not see the problem, that people operate out of images which tell them that community organization means whitewashing the bases of the trees and putting up Christmas lights. When you ask them what to do, what else can they come up with?

We saw that several dynamics had to be there. One was a community congress which brought the whole community together. Again, the idealistic romanticist in me objected, "Well, the whole community isn't here, there are only 200 people." Yet, if you looked at the actual statistics, you would see that out of 5,000 people, there were roughly 2,000 adults. We had 10%. Sol Alinsky says that getting 6% of a community involved is a miracle. The Roman Catholic Church is clear that if they get anything close to 5% of their parish through that building, that is a miracle. So, that 10%, in the light of life as it actually is, is a fantastic accomplishment.

The Congress is an event in which the community brings together, not selected representatives, but everybody who chooses to do so. They gather, report on the past, celebrate and plan the future. It's not a democratic convention. If you intend to have anything happen on that night, you get groups from those guilds and stakes working in advance--planning, presenting, consensing, building, forming--until you have a clear picture of where people are. Then, people come together and move at that kind of activity. You need a Board of Directors, or a Presidium, a group of people to take responsibility for executing the decisions of the Congress. The guild stands in relation to that.

Tactically, the community grid is crucial. Can you imagine not having a grid? One way I understand that is that if I did not have in my head a grid of this building, every time I wanted to go to the bathroom, I would have

to run out to the front desk, if I could find the front desk, and ask them where it was. You see how elemental gridding is. If we did not have the capacity to grid, we would wander around in total aimlessness. There is no community until you grid it; until you decide what that community is. Exciting things happened in 5th City, when we finally created that grid. It started operating in your head. I would be walking around and say, "I'm about to leave 5th City." There was an imaginal line in the middle of the street which told me that I had walked out. I could sense that this was 5th City and that was not. People in the community began to operate out of that internalization. When you rebuild community, you grid.

The creation of a community story is so crucial that we cannot see its importance. For example, a hundred years ago, America had a clear-cut story of what it was about. Today, it does not. Because it is so lost, America is in terrible agony, trying to see that story is important. In local communities today, especially the suburbs, it is far worse because of the strange rootlessness that has occurred. Creating stories in the suburbs will be far more difficult than any place else. You use songs, rituals, rites, symbols, and you don't be cute about it. Some of you saw what happened at the 5th City Congress, December 15, 1973. That phenomenal Iron Man given to Mayor Daley excited him deeply. He keeps it in a prominent spot in his office. That symbolism, and the story about what was happening infected him so that to this day, he is deeply excited about what is going on in 5th City.

Then, consensus is not something superficial or imposed on the group. Consensus is determining what is actually there. Early in 5th City, we learned about consensus at a Christmas party. That was fine, because we were experimenting. Nobody came--800 kids, but maybe 20 or 40 adults. We had romantic notions that there might be a lot more. We became very clear that the consensus was not to have a Christmas party this year. I remember the reverse of that was a community congress which drew 220 people when we thought that 150 would be a miracle. For about three days we all walked around saying, "We have done something unbelievable here." Finally, it dawned on us that we had happened to hit a time when the consensus was that there was going to be a congress. What you are doing with the community is discerning the actual consensus.

The key to community miracles is doing the impossible, relative to that situation. In Majuro, getting those ships is a miracle because of the way it happened. If we had arranged to buy those ships, it would not have been a miracle. If Rockefeller had given us the money to buy those ships, that would not have been a miracle. If we had worked it out over 18 years, that would have been just plodding through, just enduring, and that is not a miracle. But to be able to come home in a month and say, "Somebody gave me ten ships." A miracle. People don't go around giving away ships. It's utterly impossible.

In Mowanjumb, they started raising sheep as a miracle. Now, there's nothing miraculous about raising sheep. But, the context was that everyone knows that aboriginal communities cannot support themselves. Everybody knows that, and the aboriginals were more trapped in it than anybody. Then overnight, that miracle happened. The sheep came and for the first time in their lives, they were self-supportive. Or the little park across the corner. If we had gone in there with jungle gyms, it wouldn't have been a miracle. It would have been just one more example of liberal patronage. The impact on people's lives was utterly miraculous.

The shopping center over in 5th City was another miracle. It was a miracle that we finally got it, in one sense. Most of the inner cities in the rest of the United States, after the rioting of 1968, were not rebuilt. We broke through with a brand new image of shopping center. When you live in that kind of community, you don't expose the entire thing to the structural difficulties that encourage crime. You create a new type of architecture that is not a fortress, but community inside the shopping center, that does not put all the emphasis on trying to sell things that people don't need. That turned the shopping center into an incredible miracle.

Finally, engagement is the key to any community activity. I am going to tell you one more story. One Saturday, we drove around 5th City, picking up old furniture, which was worn out and then tossed into the back yard. The city of Chicago only picks up that kind of thing by special negotiations. We didn't know what to do with it, so we contacted the city. We said, "We would like to put three small truck-loads of refrigerators and so forth on an empty lot on Saturday. Then you could pick it up on Monday. We will have it ordered there and you can just drive it away! Well, Saturday came and we got started. People saw what was happening, so they brought out refrigerators, couches, chairs, and they brought out stuff as fast as we could move it. We had four trucks going, and put 28 dump loads of stuff on that lot. I thought, "Oh, my God, I'm going to Jail." I called the guy on Monday and told him. Then I went to one of my colleagues and said, "He's mad, he doesn't like what we did." My colleague

said, "You could be so lucky to go to jail at this time. It would be a fantastic sign to get all that publicity about cleaning up the trash in 5th City.

Now, we chose that model out of a careful plan. That is my first point under number four. Indicative battleplanning. We were doing indicative battleplanning, but we didn't know that was what it was. We asked, what can we do that will be effective and involve the people in, the community? It was a great sign. It did involve some of the people in the community. We knew that this was not going to solve the trash problem because in another month, it would look just like before. We were trying to break loose people's images, to train people in moving in an effective way in their community, and operating out of a clear plan.

The second point is grassroots participation. We knew that whatever we did had to involve the people of the community. We could not get some streamlined dump truck from the suburbs to pick up the stuff and take it back out again. That would get the community clean, but it wouldn't do the job of grassroots participation. So we knocked on doors and said, "Hey, do you remember that you agreed to come. I know that it is raining, but you agreed to come for an hour." Grassroots participation occurred, and that is always crucial in terms of your engagement.

We worked out of a rational system. We determined in advance where the junk was, then we carefully moved through all the key alleys. We couldn't hit them all, so we hit most of the symbolic alleys, that people would see and be excited about. That finally was an incredible manifestation of care. People went home that night saying, "I cared for my community." This was done not just once, but again and again. We would do it again, but not as that kind of a miracle or sign. This and several other things began the long, hard process of beginning to engage people in such a way that they could see the same kind of vision that we were operating out of. Something new was happening in that community.

Robert Vance