

Spirit Life
INTRODUCTION TO THE ~~SUMMER LECTURES~~

It is now very clear that the work of every single Research Assembly that we have ever had has been on the pentagon. Another way to say that is that the five-fold explanation of what a revolutionary does is really what a revolutionary does. We were always doing it, and different parts of those five dimensions were being explored in various research assemblies in the past. It seems as if every Research Assembly has had a social and a spirit dimension. If this is the year of the social and the spirit dimension, ~~those~~ first three summers were primarily concerned with the task of depth awareness, or evangelism, or awakening. We might have also been concerned somewhat with education or with methodological eptitude-educating people to be the awakeners. We were training ourselves to go out and wake up the Church in this particular period.

In 1968 the Research Assembly almost literally spent its entire time on what you would call spiritual prowess. Maybe, some of you were here in 1968 and remember what time we got up in the morning...3:00 a.m! We had the strangest time design. It completely disoriented you and threw you into the other world. We studied Kazantzakis and RSI back to back and never came down to earth for the rest of the day. It was an unusual experience, and marked a critical turning point in the life of the movement, as it struggled with the breakloose in the New Religious Mode. Then in '69 we spent the whole summer virtually on education or on methodological prowess. We tried to put together the entire curriculum of the 8-week program of the Academy and held seven Academies all at once during that one summer involving a group of people up to that point in time.

In 1970 the Primal Community was a holding image. This is when we launched in full force working with the congregational dynamic in the primal community. It was a decision to "go for broke" in the local church which was to "go for broke" in the local community. This was probably one of the most amazing turning points of all. In a way, it was the end of an era, but it was a mighty end that launched us into a new kind of commitment to the local community, and for the next two years we were working on historical participation. In '71 we broke loose the social process triangle as our primary project. We wrote tons of material on what we meant by social processes, what the dynamics were, what the fundamental problems, issues and irritants were, and we didn't even have works like "contradictions" at that time. Our philosophy of revolution began to bubble up. Our LENS program began to bubble up. In '72 we went on and worked through the implications of the terrifying happening of '71 in what we called "pressure points" and "whistle points." It was in the social processes that the major contradictions were occurring so that, if you pushed those places, there would be an avalanche of change in the whole of society. The whistle points were dealing with blowing the whistle in such a way that an avalanche of forces would converge on the

pressure points and avalanche the whole society. This was, again, a phenomenal breakloose in our grasp of the real possibility of participating in history so that our action made a difference in the entire sweep of history.

Then in '73 we were working on the Primal Community again. This time we worked on the Guild. In 1970 we worked on the congregation pole, the tactics of renewing congregational life. In 1973 we worked on the guild, this time building from scratch. Renewing the congregation involved us in a new relationship with historical institutions that were attempting to be something of a congregation. Creating the guild launched us into complete oblivion. The guild dynamic was non-existent, and we had to begin that experiment of having guilds all across the world.

In '74 we were back on historical participation, and probably the key happening occurred in our grasp of demonstration as the going forth and showing the kind of ways in which society could move. We had been doing demonstration in 5th City and other places before, and now just experienced the whole feel of demonstration as a revolutionary activity that fit into the thinking that had been done here. What we now call the Forum, the Global Forum, was talked through during this summer. In the aftermath of '74, Town Meeting got quite a headstart, and only this year Majuro came into being. What has happened in that short period of time has been absolutely amazing. Now the image of having eight significant demonstrations all around the globe and 5,000 Town Meetings has emerged, and both of those are the aftermath of the research that the assembly did last summer. Now, what kind of an image of our research is in our mind this time?

It's complicated, isn't it? We have three bodies of us: the Historical Church, the World and the Primal Community, made up of cadres, guilds, Religious Houses and other dynamics that give primal community its substance. It's as if the Primal Community is making an end-run on the Church around this way, in the form of the Town Meeting or the Forum, or the Awakening and is making a big end-run this way on Social Demonstration. It is as if we are not even interested in the Church in our moving on Primal Community and yet the Church and other forces in society which claim to be concerned are being shown how to move and are being given an illustration of how to really care for the world. So all the forces of care, all of the statements of depth concern for humanness are being given a demonstration here. We are dealing with the whole task of awakening and the whole task of demonstration, and we are dealing with the Primal Community at the same time. Maybe we'll talk about this some more later on. I don't want to really push on any of these subjects because our morning lectures will deal with them. It is as if these are two flares of activity going on. One is the cavalry, the armoured calvary, doing a mass movement on the world. The Primal Community is the infantry and many of you who worked in Primal Community know that it feels like being in the trenches, inching up one trench at a time. As a matter of fact not retreating has been a real battle all year long. But, this is a key dynamic. These infantry forces inching forward here are really the main force of the entire move on the world. Without them you are lost. This awakening flares up in '76 and dies out in '77 and then, what are you left with? If you're

not left with the primal community, you are left with nothing. So don't forget the primal community next year.

The same is true with Social Demonstration. In one sense these are more long-term in their intent to be 10-20 year projects, but even social demonstrations are like flares sent into the civilizing enterprise to show how you can be relevant in catalyzing massive change. In one sense we don't care about any of these demonstrations in themselves unless they are flares that show tons of other people what to do, and when tons of other people start to do what these flares have shown, these flares are shown up to be what they were--just flares. People will probably forget Majuro, but somebody will have gone in and reorganized the whole Pacific. We will say, "Wasn't it great how this all started with Majuro?" They will say, "Majuro? Where is Majuro?" What keeps moving ahead during the next stage of the operation is this primal community. In one sense when we talk about ourselves as working with the movement here, the intra-global movement, you might call that the intra-global primal community, in terms of the pentagon--that fellowship of revolutionary society across the whole globe.

I have wondered how training and nurture gets into this picture, mainly because some of us are doing training and nurture here in this congregation, and I have had a little picture that has helped me. Training and nurture is a sort of quarter-master corp not in the front-line trenches, but sitting in the back lines bringing up supplies which are people. Some of these people are awakened, some are pulled back here, flipped around and accelerated back into primal community. When you think of how many demonstrations and how many Town Meetings we are going to have to staff, and how many parishes we are talking about staffing, this had better go on. It better happen that people come into the primal community, ready to give leadership there. Now this nurture and training, this spiritual prowess, this methodological aptitude goes on in the front lines, as on the job training. It goes on in special strategies, but it seems as if this summer we are dealing with the whole pentagon in a way and yet a focus on our training and nurture may wait for another summer in the future when we will flip back and give a hard push on the building of a global training strategy, or the building of a global nurture strategy. This summer we are marking time and doing long-range planning and thinking. This is probably not a very perfect picture, but represents some image of what a fine summer we have on our hands.

The spirit life, also goes on here, and every summer is breaking loose something in the spiritual prowess dimension, our own grasp after the basic models of the spirit world. Through 1968 we were just breaking loose the New Religious Mode with Kazantzakis, the NRM itself, and all the related charts on detachment, engagement, freedom, and meditation. Those were our spirit concerns during those summers. I suppose we began to get a curriculum into history in this period of time. I'll call it the religious. The motivational methods began to take on form so that we could train people to actually help others be proficient in spiritual prowess.

Then a strange, wonderful series of things began to happen in '70-'72. You might call it the coming of transparency. Do you remember the spirit conversations that were done in 1970 and the Luke conversations that came into being? Those were both experiments into the deeps. Then in '71 we had the Psalms and in '72 the Other World charts sort of finished the job. We were visiting the Other World in those Psalms, those Luke passages, those spirit conversations and then we drew a really good map of the world we were visiting and initiated something called Visits to the Other World. We don't do visits to the Other World any more--we just live there. We visit this world, I think. But in those days it seemed as if we were living in this world visiting the Other. The breaking loose of the transparent spirituality was our concern. This summer again a strange kind of completion has occurred in which we will begin to look head on at Hope and Living Endlessness. With the coming of Hope the whole triangle on Faith, Hope, and Love emerges and we have been given a chance to clarify it.

Well, the spiritual life this summer is a strange kind. It is very clear that we are preoccupied with the solitary deeps in a way that is new and fresh for us. We are concerned with the visual, with getting a lot of things to look at and with sound or music. We are concerned with taking care of ourselves with whatever tools there are to help us to remember to do that. I have the feeling of our being on our own this summer. I have the feeling that each man has his own profound deeps that he and he alone can recognize and deal with. Nevertheless, we want to talk every evening on this arena. We will see this Faith, Hope, Love triangle up all over the building. The realities on this triangle deal with the timeless essence of humanness. We were impressed here some years back with the image that came to us from the religion of Buddhism - the fourfold path. This triangle represents the threefold dynamic of fundamental humanness. This is just the way it is, the way it always was, the way it always will be. This is the threefold dynamic of consciousness. This summer we are going to be pulling together, into a screen that helps us interpret all of our experience, a rational model, a picture, a better map, and reflecting upon how it helps us to see the Profound Consciousness that has been coming to be in all of us for a good long time. Of course with consciousness of the profound consciousness that's coming to be, your power and capacity to go ahead and be what you already were is increased. That kind of increased consciousness is taking place. I think it is good to get organized in this kind of a moment. It reminds me of Thomas Aquinas when he was on stage. It was as if the awe was so thick you had to organize it to keep from being engulfed by it. We are leaning out over the abyss, leaning out over the world full of spirit, trying our best to get some map of the scenery, so we can live there. If we are going to live in the other world, we need a map, and this is another map of the Other World, a map of the Profound Consciousness that has been extremely helpful over the years to begin to let us talk more accurately about what is happening to us. These lectures in the evening are not going to be spiritual analysis of last quarter; they are not going to be a social analysis of our century. They may provide us with a screen for looking at last quarter, and a screen for looking at this century, but in one sense these triangles have nothing whatsoever to do with this century;

they have to do with eternal reality. That is true of every century that has ever been or will ever be. And while our models keep shifting and being improved, what we are drawing a model of is not something that changes.

The first three lectures are on the three profound dynamics: the Faith beyond Faith, the Love beyond Love, and the Hope beyond Hope. These three dynamics are simply what Profound Consciousness is in its deeps. There are no others; this is the total picture. Then we want to spend two more lectures on Hope, and talk about it in a more interior way, as what it is like in the affective deeps of a man's life to be living in hope. Then we will turn to the residue of Hope, or, what happens in human history, what sociological consequences take place, when Hope is passing through your lives. Then we want to come back and look at these triangles one more time in terms of three profound questions. You have heard these questions before, but now Faith, Hope and Love come forth to give you the eternal answer, if you like, the truth about who you are, the truth about what you must do, the truth about what you must be, or how you must be it. This is a mighty boast, a dangerous claim, that such a profundity is coming our way. I think we are going to have an unusually fine time in terms of seeing through our experience and finding a way to finally see whole realms of reality we have had going all this time. And to have this happen to us - clarifications that are here in Faith, Hope and Love, and in our more sociological activities - all in one summer, is, I find, just a little bit amazing.

--Gene Marshall

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