

GLOBAL COMMUNITY FORUM

Grace is yours and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The hand of the Lord came upon me and he carried me out by his spirit and put me down in a plain full of bones. He made me to go to and fro across them, until I had been all around them. They covered the plain, countless numbers of them and they were very dry. He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live again?" I answered, "Only thou knowest that, Lord God." And he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones and say to them, 'Oh dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. This is the word of the Lord God to these bones. Hear the word of the Lord. I will put spirit into you. You shall live. I will fasten sinews on you, bring flesh upon you, overlay you with skin and put spirit in you and you shall live. And you shall know that I am the Lord.'" I began to prophesy as he had bidden me and as I prophesied there was a rustling sound and the bones fitted themselves together. And, as I looked sinews appeared upon them, flesh covered them and they were overlaid with skin but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the wind. Prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'These are the words of the Lord God. Come, oh Wind, come from every quarter and breathe into these slain that they may come to life.'" I began to prophesy as he had bidden me. Spirit came into them and they came to life and rose to their feet, a mighty host.

The other morning during the meeting there was sort of a semi-catastrophe going on and I had to go down to the basement. That is always a frightening thing for me, to go down to the basement. It reminds me a little of the Poseidon Adventure when most of the light bulbs have been burned out where I am going. I get in there and it is dark and there are long shadows and huge boxes and all sorts of weird-looking entanglements. In my fright, I am a little reminded of the Christians in the Catacombs. I had always thought that they went to the catacombs to escape persecution and I am sure this is right. But, not too long ago I was visiting Alexandria, in Egypt, and they took us to the catacombs. We went straight down in a circle, around and around and around; it seemed like forever until you got to the bottom, and then you went back in under the ground. The quietness and stillness there. Then, I got to thinking that maybe it was not just because of persecution, but because it was a place to dream.

So, I sat there, in the midst of the boxes and those weird contraptions and things that were in the basement and thought that maybe this is a place to dream. As I was sitting there, I heard something: "Psst! Psst! Hey, hey!" I did a double take. All my fears came back to me there in the basement in the darkness. I looked around but I did not see anything. I heard this "Psst! Psst!" again. It said, "Listen to me, over here."

I moved a little closer to the voice. I said, "What is it? Who are you?" and it said, "I am the Dream. You thought that this is the place to dream. Now here I am to talk to you. Now, I want to tell you something. You will not remember the dream unless you are 'teched --- 'teched with Hope."

Now, those of you who do not know what the word "teched" means, let me say something like this: it means you are odd, or maybe a little off, looney, most certainly peculiar; crazy, but not insane. But, that does not get at it. Perhaps "mad," if you use it like the New Testament uses it. Mad with Hope, I like to put it, "teched" with Hope.

So, I finally got courage to speak back to whatever this voice was and asked, "Dream, why do you want to dream this dream to me?"

The dream responded, "Well, because you are here now." I said, "Well, there are a lot of us in this building and around the world that are in the right place in the right moment. Are you dreaming to all of us?" He said "Yes, but do you remember the story of Gideon?" I said "Yes." "Do you remember the story of the wise and foolish virgins?" I said "Yes." "Well, all people today will dream. But only those 'teched with Hope will remember the dream."

I said, "Well, okay Dream, dream on. Who are you? What is your name? What dream do you dream now?" The Dream said, "Well, my name is Global Community Forum. But since by the question you ask you require me to start with basic things, maybe I will just start with the basic things and dream with you." I said, "All right, wherever you start, Dream, is fine, because I have many, many questions."

So, I began, "Whatever else a Global Community Forum is, whatever else my Dream is, it is the key to being an individual, for Global Community Forum awakens people. It gives them a Thou that is beyond the normal Thou that they have." I continued, "I understand that. There is selfhood in community: that I am only a self in relationship to my community; that maybe I am an "I" only in relationship to the Thou. But that Thou, what is it? Well, I guess it is my family. But it is not my family. My family is not large enough to be a Thou. Well, maybe then, my family is always in relationship to a greater and larger community, the community beyond it which holds the civilizing process next to it.

But, then there is something beyond that community, it is the universal. Maybe the Thou is my experience of myself in that total complex. And the Global Community Forum awakens people and gives them a Thou that is Being itself; selfhood is born to the fullest. I, the dream of the Global Community

Forum are the key to the universal. And the community always has to posit or necessitate the universal out there to understand itself.

And the dream said to me, "You know, you can't locate your local unless there is something beyond the local." It said to me, "What was your local when you were growing up?" I said, "Well, Cisco." It said, "Never heard of it!" I said "I can understand that." "Well," said the Dream, "You can't locate Cisco unless you locate it in the universal that is beyond it. You know, you had a 'god-awful' universal when you were back there in Cisco, didn't you -- the old frontier image, the rugged individualist. All of that is the universal that somehow tried to freight that local. Now, what happens here in the Global Community Forum is that awakening gives you a universal that does not limit or constrict your selfhood, but allows it to blow open to the fullest and widest respect!"

And then, the Global Community Forum is the key to community. There are all sorts of vehicles of sociological pour soi. You look out into the communities. The Chamber of Commerce brings intentionality into it and is sort of pour soi. It gives you identity through that. In my senior year we lost every game and identity did not take place there; but when I went to a college I knew was going to have a great football team and in my junior year we were the national champs. Just think of that! The national champs! We won every game right down to the last and my identity went down the drain. And so, Global Community Forum awakening enables the community to grasp itself in such a way that finally it enables the Last Fat Lady to be a person, to have an identity that does not go away with the little things that are established here and there in the limited bourgeois.

And so also the Global Community Forum is today, key to major contradictions, for we live in a place of the absence of local community. The Global Community Forum now builds the primordial reality structure. It forms Community and allows people to participate in the decision-making process. The Global Community Forum gives people back a brand new way now to stand before the final realities of life as they participate in the total civilizing process.

So I speak back to the Dream and say, "Yes, you know it is nice to be able to participate." And the Dream cuts back at me quickly. "Now wait a minute! None of this liberalism going on. That is woven into you. In the Global Community Forum you are not after just giving people a way to express their opinions or to have an opportunity to converse, or to generate ideas by everybody getting out insights, and this sort of thing. NO! NO! NO! That is not what the dream is about. Global Community Forum gives people a chance to be corporate, to exercise their concerns as one of practical awakening and practical engagement."

And the Dream sort of whispers, "You know, this is what the Church has been about wherever you have seen it. All the Church has ever been about is Community Forum. Do you remember reading how Paul went to Athens and was thrown into the midst of the Ariopagus and he had to speak of the total body? Or, when he went to Ephesus and was turned away out into the market-place to speak? There he carried on his own Town Meeting so to speak--his own Forum. Do you remember the monastic movement when it came out of the desert and began to go into society, how it would go about and speak and hold forums

wherever it was? Do you remember how when the Reformation broke loose and swept across the country it went about from town to town to town and even created circuits? My, some of you were plotting yesterday like the dream had come true again.

Some of you heard Marianna talk about the Parliament in Iceland. When we got on the bus, the first thing we asked was "Where would you go if you were in Iceland?" The young woman we asked did not know how to pronounce the word "parliament," but with the help of a few Icelandic people we finally got it out. It was a bare place. The people climbed up a slope to the top of a small hill, and there in the cold weather for 100 years they met and held their Parliament, their forum.

In our own country, and probably in other countries in the west, about the 19th Century, there was always a crisis. The town people would be called together and they would come down to the center of the village, either to a town hall or a church building to meet the need of that crisis. So, the Church is the gathering of local man.

Then there were those who are trying to destroy community. The first way they destroy it is to refuse to allow people to assemble, to refuse to allow them to have a community forum.

What happens in Global Community Forum or the Town Meeting, or whatever local name you want to give it, is a "happening." It is the place of the cross. I will never forget the time a happening came into my own life. I was listening to a fellow holding a seminar about Bultmann's paper with a group of people in a local church. They were just talking about it, and I listened, though I really was not paying much attention to the tape -- I was working and doing other things. And suddenly it dawned on me that with the collapse of everything going on, he was pointing to that final reality with the term G-O-D. And, my God! I came alive! And I went around saying "Look! Look! He's saying that's God! That's God! Just look! That's God, that's God!" A happening happened to me. All my world came into a brand new relationship. A happening took place.

Well, today, that same kind of happening happens in Global Community Forum. And it happens in the cross. The depth contradiction you push into takes you beyond the immediate and allows you to affirm the past.

Last fall in the pilot meeting in Philadelphia, in working to prepare for that Town Meeting, I had a chance, perhaps for the first time in a long time, to think through what it meant to be an American citizen -- in wrestling with the heritage we have as the great trust that brought our country into being that has now been stifled and held down and covered over with all kinds of guilt and perversion and twistedness that our country has indulged in and been. And now, the daring to thrust through that and to regrasp your heritage of who you were and to dare to receive it and to move into the future. My God, it was sort of like an absolution took place that you could not even believe. The archaic takes place in that cross.

And then the universal is at the top of that cross. You take your little old petty local concerns and all your little petty gripes and now you begin to

push through, to use them through the screen of universal sociality. A whole new perspective comes back. You live in a breath of fresh air that sweeps the whole dimension of the world and comes in the midst of this happening with the others that are there. The same happening is going on for them.

Now, you transcend all the little petty relationships, and immediately, as you hit the universal, you hit the bottom part of the cross or the profundity. Oh, the profundity that is there! You know that the power of resurgence is going on around the world. Now you dare to let it sweep through this community. All sorts of claims are pushing at you, and all sorts of people. Now their uniqueness can flood out at you and you can let them be the uniqueness they are. You can let the insights they have rise up. You can let history as it is given be history as it is given. You can honor it and one another; and all that is taking place in the whole resurgence just boils up in you in its profound deeps. A happening is taking place.

And then the futuric. You look out and you plan for the future. You can dare to write proposals that go beyond the pettiness, reach out in their tomorrow, and freedom is released. Creativity takes place and selfhood is occasioned. A happening! A happening! As if you and I did not know it was a happening we still have not told ourselves that. Perhaps we never use that word, but a group is set aside to come back and sing the happening, to tell us a story of who we are, and to pronounce the word over and over when we say it -- to hold it before the future. So a happening takes place. The cross has happened to people's lives. But it is an invisible cross. We do not know yet it is a cross.

But what we do know is that Global Community Forum, the dream, is a sign of Hope. For what takes place in that forum is that resurgence is revealed. What is revealed is that Hope is in the midst of the world. Not that Hope is here or there or somewhere, or something I have to whomp up or wish I had. Hope is given. Hope is taking place precisely in the midst of the world which I am living in. And now a community can come to life again just as the world is coming to life again in the resurgence that is taking place around the globe. My community, my world can have Hope and can live out of it.

The ICA presence, "teched" with Hope, allows them to see the hope that is in the world. And only those that are "teched" with Hope are going to allow others to see the hope that is present. Once they do, they can see that Hope is everywhere. Hope does not just appear out of nothingness. It appears out of the profound intensification of faith and care. That does not mean it may not take place. In fact, it does take place, in one happening and probably more of them, although that invisible cross is there. Because everyone that is present in that Global Community Forum has had every relationship burned out of him. He knows the alien image that has chewed up every temporal relationship that is there. And he knows the deeps of the Dark Night. He knows the bottomless pit of the darkness that shoves him, although he does not have the road map you and I have. He therefore, flounders around in it and sinks lower into its deeps. What happens is that he sees that he can dare have Faith. He can dare to relate himself to whatever is going on that gives him this situation, and he can plan to respond to it and live before it. Profound Faith happens.

And then, Care -- the care that is welling up in him; the care that is seeping out of the pores of every man around the globe -- the care that just almost drives us insane by shoving us deeper into the humiliation of caring in ones being for every last person in this globe, yet not even touching them. That care is revealed and allowed to be released. Methodologies are there, all sorts of ways to create a New Social Vehicle, which will release that person to genuinely stand and exercise his care before this globe. So lives can dare to care. So the Faith and the Care now bubble up in Hope.

Then, as he looks at his community, he can see that now the en soi and the pour soi is profound. Every part of that community, the en soi, every givenness that is there now is honored in a new way, and now seems to be part of the creative process in a new way. And the pour soi -- the Chamber of Commerce -- it just touches you; the football team, and the Church. This has always been the task of the Church, has it not? To awaken individuals in communities and give them a chance anew to see that they live in Faith, Hope, and Love.

And you know what this means, perhaps for the first time. This is the Dream speaking of Global Community Forum. That, whereas before, you and I touched a few here and there that talked a certain kind of language and belonged to a certain kind of ghetto community, now we have a vehicle that moves beyond that. It is a vehicle of the secular world. It is a vehicle that has already proceeded into secularity, into the uttermost parts of the world. So now, Global Community Forum, that Dream, tells us to go to the masses. We can go to the masses.

For the first time, now, the Dream of the Last Fat Lady is a reality. The Last Fat Lady is not a vision beyond the horizon, but a practical vision to be met as we step into the future. But it is not just an individual here or there. It is communities here and there. But it is not communities here or there. It is groups of communities; it is nations being awakened; it is the whole globe. For without the Global Community Forum's Dream, there is no global settlement finally taking place.

And so what it means is there is a new evangelism around the world -- evangelism in every place. You go to the chiefs of Africa. I think of Kwan-gware and the Social Demonstration project there. Can you see yourself with Social Demonstration going on with Global Community Forum following behind it, going to chief of the tribe and saying, "Look what is taking place here -- a community forum." The chief knows about forums. He has that in his memory. It may be true of all the tribes in Africa. It is not the horrifying economic issue, it is not the political difficulties that are the major contradiction. It may be in what it means to participate in decision-making. For those tribes do not even know how to exercise their heritage, how to make a decision anew. So you go to the chief and he brings people out to the Town Meeting, to the Community Forum and they begin to participate. He gathers the people. We were told the other day that in Majuro if they ring a bell about 50 or 100 would come by. Beautiful ladies on the way to Mass. The young men on the way to Mass. All of them coming down now to the Global Community Forum. Think of Jeju-Do. Wouldn't that be great? Here

you go to the new village movement that is going on throughout Korea and you talk to the leaders of those communities and they see and they send their people to the community forum throughout the whole land. Or, maybe we go to India and go to the village Panchayats and talk with them. And the Panchayat sits down and talks among itself and calls the people of the village out and they go. Or here in the U.S.A. and in Canada, we still honor the tradition, do we not? Or in Australia, you go and you talk to the mayor or the town leaders or to the council or whatever it may be and you ask them and they talk with others and invite the people out, all throughout the world. Evangelism around the world.

In fact, Global Community Forum, the Dream (oh, Dream, speak loudly!) only happens if it happens around the world. For you and I stand in the time and place where the happening has that proportion, that possibility. And any lesser dream would refuse to be "teched" by Hope. And so the global design: to take 1 percent of the globe, 3.5 million people and 175,000 Community Forums around the world. This is done in three phases over five years, to be replicated in another five years.

What is the first phase? Preparation. Can't you just see the preparation in countries that are getting ready? They may do it sometimes in the Local Community Convocation. They don't yet know that that is Global Community Forum in embryonic form. And the people begin to awaken. They begin to prepare. They do it with the preparation of the Primal Community where people are beginning to see, and move.

Then the experimental phase. You can see places now like England and Australia are ready to move. You can see people coming from places over the horizon like Korea or the Philippines or Kenya. They are already in experimentation. There is Jeju-Do. Perhaps, right after the consult, we can begin to experiment or even before the consult, to prepare for it. Local Community Convocations are embryonic Community Forums beginning to take place, and these Community Forums carried on in conjunction with that Social Demonstration. So wherever people are ready, wherever the Social Demonstrations are breaking people loose, the experimental phase will take place.

Then, the full phase, actuation, on the other side of that. That has already been started here in North America. Then the third year we will come to Area Delhi and the Taj Gunj Social Demonstration. And in the fifth year of this dream, which only those "teched" by Hope can grasp, the fire over India takes place. Just think of every village Panchayat calling the people out, and now they see they have demonstrated here in Delhi.

What are the consequences of your dream? All you have told us about is the fact that the Community Forum goes about doing the task of being the Community Forum. Is there no follow-up? The dream says back to you, "You don't think about such things as that. For a dream to dream this way, you are a revolutionary. Those that are 'teched' by Hope are revolutionaries. And when the lines open up they move ahead. But then, you have critical intelligence, don't you?" And I sit back, "Well, yes, yes."

This means, then, that probably every community will have a new practical vision. Every group of communities, every nation, indeed around the world, a new practical vision. In fact, with something like this -- 5,000 of them in the U.S.A. alone, 175,000 around the globe -- the whole social fabric changes. The world tilts. Without blowing apart, 3½ million people can be historically engaged in a brand new way -- Primal Community and Metro Cadres and penetration where already now you have built up a kind of network around the globe that has not been seen in history since the beginning of time.

Oh, the consequences are beyond our comprehension. One has to speak of it in grand images, like battle images. Take the three -- Social Demonstration, Primal Community, and Global Community Forum -- each a dream in its own right. First of all, it is as if Social Demonstrations are the paratroopers. They fly over and land and establish a beachhead here and a beachhead there and a beachhead here out behind the enemy lines. Then comes the Global Community Forum. It is the tanks. They break loose here, they break loose there. They run through the countryside down here, through the countryside over there. The tanks have broken loose all over the place. Then, along behind them comes the Primal Community, the infantry. Marching marching -- cleaning up here, cleaning up there, mopping up here, securing positions there, making it secure all behind the troops as they move out there. And guess who is supplying the airplanes and driving the tanks and firing those guns at the infantry? You've got it! It is the Metro Cadre, is it not?

What happens with the Global Community Forum is that you could send these people out on Social Demonstrations and let them get out there and explode all they want to, but the world would see it as just one other act of liberal do-goodism if Global Community Forum did not awaken people behind them in order to grasp the depth of what took place there. Then, of course, the Global Community Forum provides the troops for Social Demonstration. On the other hand, Social Demonstration paints a practical vision out there so that consciousness can continue on its journey and thrust into the future, as well as providing a picture of vocation. What it means is to awaken man to live in relationship to all that goes on.

In relationship to the Primal Community the Global Community Forum creates that Primal Community and at the same time provides it with the task and the troops to operate. Yet, on the other hand, Primal Community is the context for the awakening that takes place. At the same time, it is a product of awakening, it is a tool of awakening, and it is the end of the awakening.

Then, you ask yourself, "Well, Global Community Forum Dream, is the congregation dynamic back in a brand new way to the local church?" The historical church is beginning to smell this. I was talking with a few people the other day in the historical church who are saying, "Look, here's our task." And so the historical church perhaps is finding a way now to pick up its task anew. In the midst of the mutation going on now in all of our lives, is beginning to emerge in whatever form that mutation will take, the new sociological form of the Church.

Well, Dream, I can think of 100 things that will keep this from coming

off. Dream, in the real world I live in there are all sorts of obstacles. There is just too much to do. And I know you are out to get me sucked in. And in the world's time limit and in our time limit, how can I operate? It is too hard to get consensus. It is too hard to get people to do what you want them to do. We do not have enough people to do it in the first place. And not enough finances. And this whole damn thing is probably not going to work in the first place. Can we go on? Dream?" Dream just sort of pauses and says, "Well, the sorcerer is after you again with his mirror that reflects these realities into your eyes that keep you from the dream." And I say "Dream, you're impossible!" "Yes," the Dream responds, "and many will forget me. But those 'teched' with Hope will live with me into the future. Those that are not will not even remember the dream."

---- Joseph Slicker

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