

THE RECOVERY OF PRIMAL COMMUNITY

1. Resurgence shows up in our time in the reconstruction going on within the human settlement. How is it we participate in this breakloose of resurgence? Resurgence is the internal primordial decision of a particular civilization whereby it has come to terms with the new situation on its hands, and begun to grapple with creating the new response to that situation. Thereby they become human relative to their particular age. At other times in history this has involved part of this planet. In our time the entire world is involved. It is a particularly powerful phenomenon in our time because we have to come to terms with such an incredible shift in our situation. Never before have we lived in a global village. Never before have we had as radical a cultural revolution. Never before have we had the tools to grapple in the deeps with humanness as a total population.

2. There is no longer any running away from the twentieth century, from the fact of a global village and from our lucidity. As local men we are experiencing that we have only one choice, and that is to go ahead, move this age into the next. As people begin to see the breaking loose of a wild creativity, they begin to reconsider what it means to be a human being in this new situation. The creativity breaking loose is a sign of people moving into the future, assuming full responsibility for the new age and creating the style of life appropriate to this time. We are experiencing the transformation of human settlement into primal community.

3. What happens ontologically when this kind of transformation takes place? In the Middle East at the time of the great golden age of Greece there was a resurgence that impacted the whole of the Mediterranean world. It is manifest in the ruins of Pompeii which was totally destroyed and yet preserved by the eruption of a volcano. Excavation has disclosed what must have been typical of the creativity that broke loose at that time. On the East side of the city square was a temple, a holy place. On the west was the forum where the populace gathered for hard-nosed debate. One side of the square was the marketplace, still facing the common square. There was also the lyceum where you had the theater and the arts. In the center of that square there was a rock. They discerned a dimension of style from that. There were the symbolic, the political, the economic, the educational, and in the center the style. That rock was like the Ebenezer rock in the Old Testament, a place where a man could stand and articulate the deep groanings of that people and cast out a vision. As long as you stood there you could not be attacked, for that was a holy place. There was cultural protection. These five dynamics of society coming together with this rock in the center articulated what it meant to forge out a style in the midst of the temple, the forum, the market and the lyceum. These are obviously related to what we have talked about before as the definitudes of the ecumenical parish.

4. Let us look now at the dynamics of any human community. First, there has never been nor will there be a primal community without a self-conscious religious group present within that community. Save there are those who are able to stand before the way life actually is, and name the name, there is no primal community. It may be only one man, but someone must have the audacity to make the decision that they can stand and make the leap of faith. Unless one man representationally allows that community to live before the final one, before God the Father, self-consciously, there is no chance for humanness to happen.

The job of the self-conscious religious is to name the name and to articulate the story that allows every human being to live before Mystery, however fearful of that he may be. He is given permission to stand before the way life is and to create the necessary style. The self-conscious religious is one dynamic that is of the essence of primal community.

5. Second, there is pluriform sociality. Every community, however racially or ethnically homogenous, has to have within it the capacity to stand before radical diversity, and be able to articulate that diversity. If I do not have an occasion, in the midst of this community, to stand before the incredible otherness that is my wife, or that is my colleagues, I do not have a chance to forge out my selfhood. A pluriform sociality is that without which you do not have primal community, racially, ethnically, religiously or in terms of raw individuality. The key in this is structures that allow radical creativity and pluriformity to get out. Frank Laubach came to Seattle when I was a youth. I remember that I told the stories about Laubach and his each one teach one program, about the phenomenal work he had done in India with his methodology, but my only way to relate to him was to want to sit down next to him and ask him to say something. I wanted to see what it really means to be a great man. The demand, however, is to have a structure which gets your being overagainst the missional task. If I did not have a structure that demands I get my creativity into history I would be nothing. It is necessary to have structures which get our lives shoved overagainst the rest of human civilization. Wherever you have primal community you have structures that pull people toward the future, hold them against their memory, and demand that they fulfill their moment in history. Thereby you have pluriformity and at the same time solitary creativity. Corporateness breeds individuality.

6. Third, there is local-global village, or local-global humanness. A human being grasps himself as a citizen of the planet, the global village. Seeing the earth from the moon enabled him to sense that he is a part of the network of human creativity. He is at the edge of the creation of the common will and the common mind. He is this planet's creative edge. He is the future of this planet, not just a little local man over there doing his own thing, taking care of his children, his job and his car. We have known this since we began to anticipate the 5th City project. 5th City finally exploded when Mowanjum came off and 5th citizens had a concrete picture of what it means to have assumed direct responsibility for the recreation of primal human settlement across the globe. Knowing there are spirit men who have decided to bet everything on the local church in the local community throws me overagainst the fact that this is who I am. It demands of us that this whole planet come off with that kind of signal human community.

7. When I was in college I decided to take a black student to visit my folks unannounced. By the end of that weekend we had had some fantastic experiences. My father was rocked. He had never met a black man, and his whole montage was altered. That was a signal event in his life. We took my black friend through the mountain streams, and he said, "You mean that thing runs all year round, and you can drink that water?" Every human being must experience pluriformity in his own community, globality in his own life.

8. Fourth, there is the convergence of the secular and the religious in common mission. Here you are pointing to the guild dynamic in history. Save every human being, religious and secular, is involved in that common destiny, that common task, you do not have the recreation of primal community, for you do not

have a breakloose at the grassroots level of foundational creativity. Every man knows that he is grappling with the same primal decision. Will he go ahead or run backward? Will he pay the price of living on this planet or opt out? Will he run off into the brush somewhere to get away from final responsibility for the future of this planet? It is in this concrete confrontation that resurgence happens. When people make the foundational resolve to say "yes" instead of "no" to life on this planet resurgence happens. The future implications of this decision are exciting. You have to have highly self-conscious men of faith who know the symbols and live out of them. At the same time there have to be those who do not know the symbols, or choose to reject or ignore them. We must allow these secular men the experience of the ontological deeps of life, mystery, freedom, care and tranquility. They need not articulate their experience in christological categories. They can experience their life and self-consciousness in that secular context. That will, in turn, allow them to deal with the twentieth century, here and now, in this community.

9. There is a fifth dimension and that is the religious overlay. Here I will talk directly to the Christian Church, to the self-conscious religious. We have talked about holy space recently. More particularly the job of the historical church of Jesus Christ and every self-conscious religious human being is to participate in the recreation of holy space. The religious are the walking embodiment of sacred space, the embodiment of awe, of the presence of the eschatological in our time. Only those who self-consciously articulate the images and the metaphors and the mood that come out of living before God and Christ and the Holy Spirit permit other people to decide that they can live in the deeps. In every primal community there is a locus, a concrete geographical space where you are called to consciousness, where you see all space and time as holy, which allows foundational humanness. This is the role of liturgy, the dramatization of what the church does in its worship life.

10. We have been experimenting with the Daily Office at the point of dramatizing the presence of the unsynonymous in the midst of the worship service. We have talked about this in the context of RS-I. You have to have a way to dramatize the unsynonymous. Perhaps putting a big rock at the front would do it. We have experimented with the recovery of the altar. The altar is that which, when you run up against it, you are broken. When you bump into the edge of that abyss and peer into the deeps you breathe from the bowels of Being itself. When you come up against it it is like you have had your spinal column banged with a steel hammer. You are reminded that you live with those deeps or you do not live at all. You live before God or you are not alive. That has to happen within every human community, day after day, year after year, with people from the community, or there is no chance of primal community. The self-conscious religious allow us to experience awe in life, to experience the fantastic age, the awful, dreadful, fascinating age that we live in.

11. The table is not the altar. How is it that you have in the midst of the worship the fact that there is the Father and the Son? In the last few years there has been a trend in the church toward trying to pull the altar and the table together, to take the altar away from the wall and put it in the middle of the room and make it a table. The two are separate. You do not know the Father save through the Son. Unless you see that it is only because of the Word that you live before God the Father, you have no chance of living. If you only have the Word of permission and do not know what you have said "yes" to, then you miss the terror of authentic living before the way life is, and live before some reduction, which is not to live. You have both the Unsynonymous and the Word that allows

you to stand before the Unsynonymous in authentic dialogue. These are dramatized in the Altar and the Table in the worship service.

12. The third element here is the Holy Spirit. This is dramatized by having the community face one another across the table and before the altar. Someone suggested the baptismal font as a possible sign of the Holy Spirit, the baptism by fire, the commonizing that is the Spirit, and the appropriation of that Word before the altar. You walk past that symbol entering and leaving, remembering that only in the style of the Holy Spirit do you live before the Mystery through the Word. In the ecumenical parish, in primal community, you have to have holy space until you mark the boundaries of your space. Until you say that this community is my community, and here is the boundary, you have no chance of filling that space with awe, with holiness, with presence. That is just the way it is. It may be an utterly arbitrary line, but the point is that you or someone has to experiment with creating space. This is how you symbolize that you care for the community. The liturgy dramatizes holy space and allows the whole community to see that all space is holy. In the midst of the community there is the symbolic center, the temple or the local church, with its sacred space. You begin to get a swell of consciousness going about what it means to live in the midst of this fantastic community and to tell the story of what it means to be the body of people who live here. You decide to be a sign to the family and to every other structure of what it means to care for one another. To decide to be a human primal community is to enable the encounter with God the Father in a chunk of space.

13. When the Roman church divided this planet into parishes, every square foot of it symbolically and later actually, they began to move out with power. That is what is going to create history in our time. It is the decision to take space with utter seriousness. I assume final responsibility for this space and you are assigned responsibility for your space. Then every chunk of space is cared for and all the life therein. That is where you get creativity. If you are just a wandering minstrel you do not have a chance. It was not until I entered the covenant with a particular woman that I had a chance to come off as a male. Unless you have a particular covenant you just keep bouncing from one covenant to another. Finally you have to stand up with one hunk of reality and deal with it for the rest of your life. As in marriage so it is in the ecumenical parish. It is when you decide that you are going to die there that the community has a chance. It is the claiming of that space as my home, in which I intend to see that every man experiences getting his creativity into history.

14. One other thing on the recovery of space came when we went out to that moon and looked back at ourselves and saw that we had nowhere else to go. It did not look very good up there for living. We saw that this planet, this space is all we have. There is no other option but to live on this planet at this time. We were given back the space that is ours and began to live that instead of some illusion. I was talking with a colleague from Anchorage and he said that even there there is no more space to go to be by yourself. The only possibility left is to create a community where there are human beings.

15. There is one last dimension. What would it look like to begin an experiment on January first, to pick a symbolic date. What would it mean to start with twelve signal metros on this planet? Half of these would be outside North America. What would it mean to create not just one signal parish in each of these twelve metros, but two hundred sixteen per metro? It would mean to make a concrete decision to face a time and space reality and work backward. It would look some-

thing like this. Out of two hundred sixteen parishes there are thirty six micros and six polises. If you need one person per micro you would have thirty six colleagues who decided to assume responsibility for the future of this planet by raising up a signal metro, and you could do it. A good group for this might be a Religious House. Each of these would have one other human being that he could pick up to go along with him. He would not have to be in the same covenant but he would make a team of two. They would visit in their micro, and visit six parishes on a regular bi-weekly basis. They would be in one parish on Tuesday of the first week, another on Wednesday, and another on Thursday. The next week they would visit in the other three. Those two people would see that swirl at the micro level get birthed into being through RS-I, LENS, PLC and follow up structures.

16. A metro that we would move on like this would have five hundred to three thousand grads already there. Your micros would have fifty to one hundred. If you had fifteen or twenty you would meet with the three in this parish, five over there, two there, ten there, and so on. You would pull them together when you showed up and begin to get some momentum going relative to recruitment over six months. You would have a large LENS course every quarter in each micro, and one or two RS-Is. You would begin to get that body of people at that level to assume responsibility. Within a year you would have a galaxy. Say that you had at the end of one year six galaxies. You would have one per micro. One church in each micro would be in parish B. The next year when you replicated you would have all the parishes in that micro, and the next replication you have one galaxy per parish. In a four year period you could saturate a metro with one galaxy per parish. And you start with only thirty six disciplined colleagues.

17. We have a lot of work yet to do to prepare for that day. We have to build a backup system, advanced training models and the penetration methodologies. We need a picture of how to get there as well as what we are going. We have to have a rationale for penetration and for deployment of forces. We may need a micro, or polis ecclesiola the first year until you are ready for the level of the parish. We would have to have structures all geared for the local level. We need to have the guild going.

18. Local man is living in a global village, conscious of the fact that he is and can be a global man right there. We live in an age where we are experiencing a phenomenal breakloose in consciousness. It is now or never, and it is here or nowhere. These, for me, are the ingredients of the recreation of primal community.

