

SPIRIT ANALYSIS OF THE MOVEMENT:
"THOSE WHO WAIT ON THE LORD"

The Shock of Eternal Demand		Waiting on the Lord					
		Spirit Laziness		Sleepy Weakness		Heroic Failure	
1	17	18	28	29	36	37	59

1. Do you remember the Bob Dylan song about the man who was wandering through the world and said that a hard rain was going to fall. I don't know whether rain means the final judgment, or whether it means the final baptism, but I always sort of liked rain on the other side of finding it uncomfortable.
2. Up to this point in time, the masses of mankind have nestled securely in their own Ur. Most men did not achieve the kind of self consciousness that now is common. You had Moses stick his head up and Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Buddha, and Confucius. They rose to a height in the midst of the low level of self-consciousness and returned to enable a few others to take that kind of a depth journey and to enable a crucial turn in history. But until this hour, the masses of mankind have probably never achieved the depth of self-consciousness that any one of these figures represent.
3. But today, as the global ur cultures clash over against one another like two violent symbols, every single atom that makes up those Ur cultures has to take a journey. Therefore local man, the last fat lady on the planet earth, is on a spirit trip just as profoundly as anybody else who might grasp themselves to be on a spirit trip. If you think of each one of those urs also banging over against the common future, a future that is so radical that you can't handle it without a complete modification of your whole life, again, you get the feel of why local man is being jarred, and not just some local men. Never before in history have men at large been forced to such heights of self consciousness. And in the midst of that, they have to grasp new forms for getting ahold of that self consciousness.
4. The six urs are real historical cultures that are banging over against one another and over against the future. But the banging does not take place only out there. It takes place also down inside of the selfconsciousness of each local man. That is the terrifying thing about our time, this wild self consciousness that everybody has to deal with. Wherever you go you run into people who are coming to and staring with wide eyes into their times. The incredible imperative is upon any responsible man to attempt to give form to this self consciousness that is breaking loose, to give people a chance to relate to it. Human beings are thrown out into a wild new world they never head of. They don't have a map, they don't have any way to maneuver out

7. Now this external situation is internalized in your will. But people attempt to ward it off, and one of the tragedies is that you find people who have built themselves a shield to keep themselves out of the twentieth century. There is no hope of that, of course, and finally you lose; you give up that entire people. Interior violence is a way that some of my colleagues used to describe this. It's as if there are loud voices screaming down there, arguments going on, angry debates, between these gods and those gods.

8. I have been intrigued with this particular psalm ever since it was introduced to me. The psalmist is talking to the gods and telling them about the Lord's power over against the gods. Now remember that when he starts off this psalm the Psalmist is talking to the gods of our time, to the family, to the job, and to the industrial success mechanisms, and so on:

Ascribe to the Lord, you

Ascribe to the Lord, you gods, ascribe to the Lord glory and light

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name;

bow down to the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

The God of glory thunders:

The voice of the Lord echoes over the waters,
the Lord is over the mighty waters.

The voice of the Lord is power.

The voice of the Lord is majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars,

The Lord splinters the cedars of Lebanon.

He makes Lebanon skip like a colt,

Syria like a young wild ox.

The voice of the Lord makes flames of fire burst forth.

The voice of the Lord makes the wilderness writhe in travail,

The voice of the Lord makes the hinds calve

And brings kids early to birth,

And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

The Lord is king above the flood,

The Lord has taken his royal seat as king for ever.

The Lord will give strength to his people;

The Lord will bless his people with peace.

9. When you stand over against the future you have just overwhelming soberness. It is a soberness of patiently waiting and dealing with the situation, while in midst of the historical situation man has been driven to the limits of human existence. In his interior being, man is experiencing eternality of power never experienced before, like a violent stillness in the center of a hurricane of spiritual experience. There is a sort of dizziness, and on the other side a merry-go-round of happenings in his life. When we talk about experiencing the other world, it seems to me that you experience it leaping at you from the wholly other, and at the same time from history. The other world pounds through the external realities that I'm related to at the same time that it pounds through the interior relationships to which I'm being related to.

10. What has always amazed me is how civilization seems to be on its own journey quarter by quarter. Quarter by quarter everybody else you run into is on the same journey--out in a religious house, in the academy, and at base. Wherever you run into people, the same thing went on. Different humanbeings have a different consciousness about what's going on, but--what's going on is what's going on. Quarter by quarter and hour by hour, externality decides what is going.

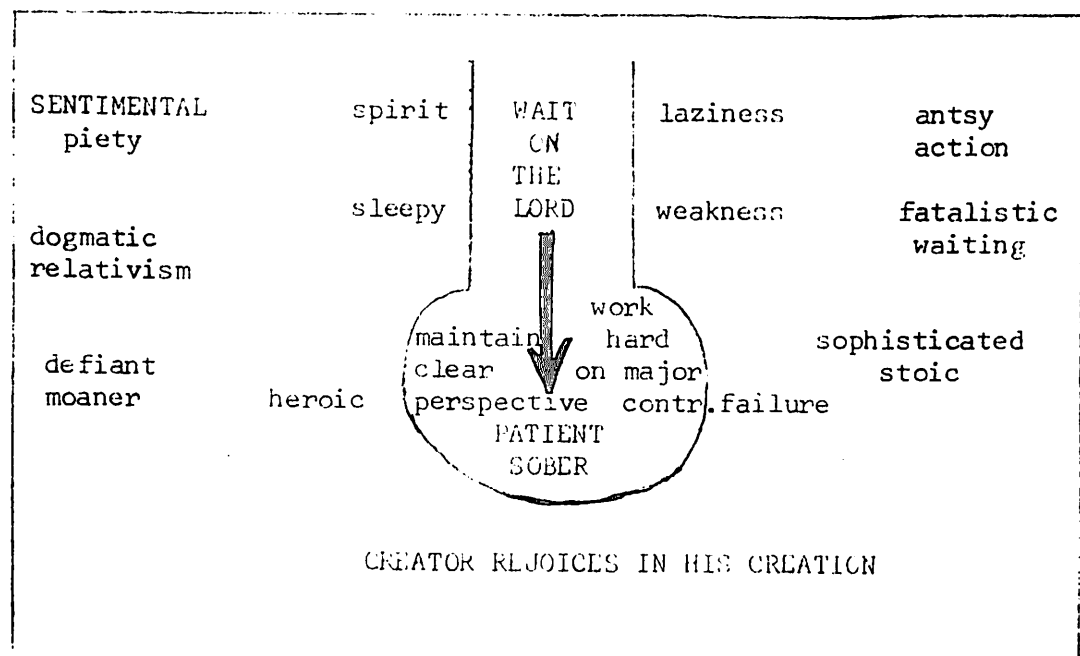
13. In the Spring of 1971 I was all prepared for hot issues of style, but it seemed as if people had somehow got that straight. Where they were struggling was with just the pain of being a spirit man. So the thing that came up most often was: The problem with this is it hurts." We were all clear that you had one day of crucifixion down there somewhere. But to bring that day of crucifixion back into every single solitary day for the next forty years was something shocking, and that awareness was what was being struggled with. There was despair over the prospect of bearing with constant handling of the interior war fare of life.

14. The word that holds Summer '71 for me is just contingency. People realized contingency of action, that their work, work, work out into the future was going to be built by people who literally did not know what they were doing, and who were in the midst of other people who literally did not know what they were doing, either. The sense of just utter humanity over against the wild demand of history was the struggle there.

15. Now, I want to say a word on this Fall under the rubric of the shock of eternal demand. This is not just the demand of everyday life. One of our temptations is to reduce the demand down to something that you can get your mind around. But it's the shock of the eternal demand. It is the shock of a demand that is radical and total breaking through all the other demands that so complexly surround you.

16. As we have taught the Kierkegaard paper before this Fall, it always seemed to me that people were struggling primarily with how to get out, through sensual extravaganzas or noble accomplishments, and they were always shocked to find themselves in that pathway, coming slowly to the realization that it was a dead end street.

17. This Fall, what surprised me was that everybody was already clear that it was a dead end street. And you smelled a new smoke that had to be labeled later as a very self-conscious kind of defiance. Something happened this Summer in the subterranean depths of the spirit that I am sure we do not have hold of. The plunge into escaping spirituality has now ended.



of his being. He has to be able to say "You telephone, you can ring your silly head off and you four pots can just boil away; I am going to the door." It is that kind of a decision that has to happen down in the deeps of the spirit man.

25. Spiritual laziness is just the opposite of that. It is to live all day long in some kind of frenzy before the complexity. Or perhaps it is to find some meaningful distraction where you can forget everything. Or you say, "Well, apparently I am an inadequate person anyway. I am spiritually underdeveloped and nothing really can be done in the first place." How do you get something like that said across your images of spiritual inadequacy and give your spiritual inadequacy to your neighbor and let God straighten out your spiritual inadequacy when he is ready?

26. Faith in God is openness in this sense. It is openness to do a social act, patiently, thoughtfully, deliberately and from the bottom of your being, in some kind of celebration that this is the day which the Lord has made, and we can rejoice and be glad in it. That means maintaining a clear perspective. It means just hard work on the major contradiction. That's what waiting means, maintaining a ruthlessly clear perspective and maintaining day by day by day hard work where it counts. That means there is a certain kind of patience going on there, a certain kind of soberness. It is sober when you realize that maintaining your perspective and doing the next deed for the next 175 days is what you are facing.

27. And yet there is a certain way in which you can talk about what waiting on the Lord means as just watching the creator rejoice in his creation. You see God smiling over how complex you made everything. You see him with a broad smile over the frustrations that you are having. Everything that is going on is being eternally rejoiced in up above there.

28. You have to listen for God's forceful comedy on all of Satan's wiles. Satan is all around, trying to wile you out into antsy action, and the Lord is making big jokes about all the antsy action that comes up, and all the sentimental piety that comes up. Once in a while you hear one of these jokes and get to repeat it to yourself and tell other people about what a joke it is that somebody got hung up again in 19th century piety, and what a joke it is that somebody went off and did something utterly ludicrous in his own eyes once he looks at it.

29. Now let's look at the next stage in slipping out of waiting on the Lord. There is a fatalistic type of waiting that one can be wiled into. You are waiting for something to change. You say "Perhaps this will all go away. I am in a tough spot right now, but I will just sit down and last through it. When this rough spot is done, I will join in the real work later on down the road. I will just go back to bed until I feel better, after a month's rest."

30. Waiting on the Lord means waiting on a Lord that keeps impinging on me right now. It's a creative waiting, not fatalistic waiting. It is self-consciously knocking on the door for an illumination of what you're to do. It's prayer, it's tension, it's insisting until responsibility is organized for you and then this happens you are always unclear whether you have created the new vision or whether it has been forced upon you. That reminds me of an old Scripture text that says "Ask and it shall be given, knock and the door will be opened." Then it tells the story of a widow who came up and pestered a magistrate until he finally opened the door and handled her problem. Then Jesus says something like, "Even wicked men in this world will finally give in if you pester them long enough, so don't you think your father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? But you have to ask."

35. Somebody said Jesus must be a man of unfaith to ask the Lord to let this cup pass, that Jesus was a coward or something. But that is just the way it is, when you are over against a rub like that. You have one prayer on your mind, and that's "Lord, if we can avoid this route, let's avoid it." That is your prayer. The faith in that is the surrender of which way it goes, the "whatever might be thy will."

36. How do you get ahold of the fact that, no matter how weak and trembling your flesh is over against these moments of horror strickenness, your real problem has nothing to do with your body or your external situation? Your real problem has to do with a spirit decision. That adds new force into the waiting on the Lord. "Those who wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength"--while the rest go to sleep. "They shall mount up on wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

37. Another stage of the abyss in slipping away from waiting on the Lord is the sophisticated stoic. The sophisticated stoic has achieved the ability to put on a cool smile in the face of the harshness of life. He comes over against the impossibility of living in this moment, and instead of struggling with it, wrestling with it, and living through it, he puts on a cool smile. "I can take anything." Or, "This is the way the cosmos works. I will make it." He is always bargaining for some kind of a word that gets him out of the pain, or at least gets him out of having to struggle with the pain as a significant part of his life. He seeks some way to find a little emotional security, a little intellectual security, or lucid unperturbability that he can get said in just a tolerant smile.

38. There is worry inside the stoic. It is a worry about practicals. He is always seeking resources from various angles to help him deal with life. He is looking for resources that will increase his ability to smile at life and not crack. It is as if he can anticipate for ten days ahead an address of the word that he has to live his life and can start building up resources to resist it. If a hard blow to his life takes place, he moves to a sort of mild restlessness, mild uneasiness.

39. When possibility just sort of sweeps over him one afternoon, then cynical cuteness breaks out. The spirit tone is like "Well, perhaps you can do that over here in America, but you can't do that sort of thing in England or in Georgia."

40. When that cynicism gets rocked another level, you may meet pouting and anger, for underneath that strength is a profound weakness. Underneath that stoic strength is a cowardly refusal to deal with the 20th century. Some day, some afternoon, maybe, that cowardly refusal breaks through that image of being able to manage, and then the word of God is to be declared: Living life doesn't mean taking it. Living life means to see the eternal celebration over it and living it to the deeps.

41. The other side of that is a passive moroseness, typified by the defiant moaner who is always saying "I am going to collapse in the future. My whole being is weakness. I am not going to make and therefore I had better not get out of bed." It is living out of self-depreciation, out of a sense of deep and profound weakness.

42. The defiant moaner is very subtle. He is always trying to trick you into giving him a rather stable excuse for being in his moan. He always makes a constant bid for attention. He comes up to you and says, "I am not going to do so and so." You think to yourself, "What are you telling me about that for?" You begin to realize that they want you to hear their moan hard enough and long enough and deep enough that you will say that anybody with a problem like that has an excuse. They say it in a thousand subtle ways: "I am going to leave. I don't see any way out of this. I can't hang on much longer." Or they tell a long dismal story.

and move on in a wild run into the future. It is a wild run into the future as the son of God, a wild run into the future as one who has overcome the world, and who, therefore, has nothing to fear in that future.

49. It is in that context, I think, that the spirit man is making a cry for a new, authentic kind of hero, the hero who makes that wild break and moves, just day after day after day, into the future. That is why our fascination with the New Testament has become so intense; it is our fascination with the figure of Jesus there. If most of us in the spirit movement were honest, we would have to say that our meditative council is sort of a vacuum in the middle. Jesus is there, but he is a very fuzzy character. In the center of your meditative council, as king over your life, is sort of a hole, a fuzzy outline of Jesus there. Standing around the hole and pointing into it are two RS-I teachers, Luther, two literary figures, and a religious house prior. Those five or six people are sort of taking the place of Jesus in the middle of your council, or they are pointing over their shoulder to a Jesus whose outline is not quite clear.

50. To fill in that outline, to fill in with power that central figure to see what that Jesus election looks like--there is a certain kind of healing dimension to that that is overwhelming. For the future to which you are called is the future in which you put on this character that wanders through the pages of the New Testament as your own style of life. You are called to put on radical humanness, that is, to dramatize that as your own style of life.

51. What that means is just constant conversion. There is never any final accomplishment. It is always a becoming, a radical becoming, a total break and a total new start every split second. It is as if God's history ushers in a new world of historical possibility every quarter, and you have to make a total break with the past and surrender yourself to the tomorrow. Or, every hour you have to make a total break with the past and surrender to the tomorrow; or sometimes it's minute by minute.

52. Now, the past is a funny thing. Even though the whole past is obsolete, it is useful to the future, if you have a future. If you are not willing to have a future, then the past is useless. That is pretty clear, but to have a future, means that the whole past is now gone. All of its sins are obsolete. You have bigger ones now. All of its good points are obsolete. You moved through them.

53. I think our tendency is to say that my past is so bad that I cannot live the future. or at least I can't live it radically, and at the same time say "My past is not as bad as all that." We try to hold onto both of those at once. "My past is so bad I can't live the future," and "My past is not as bad as all that." So I have a million and one narrow little stories of my narrow little past all designed to protect me from launching naked into the future.

54. One way you can see people able to transcend that is when they are clear that just looking at my own little past is not really what there is there to look at. I am the whole of Western civilization. That is what there is there to look at. My sin is the sin of the whole of Western civilization, not just my little old dinky years that are behind me. My crime is the whole decay of the twentieth century church, not just my little old dinky years. The whole sweep of history is my real past, so why am I preoccupied with my little old piece of it?

55. Yet, on the other side of having a future, my little dinky piece is incredibly significant, because it is my own experience through which I am able to appropriate the experience of the whole past of mankind, of all time. And so, my little old