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THE ACTION OF TRANSPARENT DOING

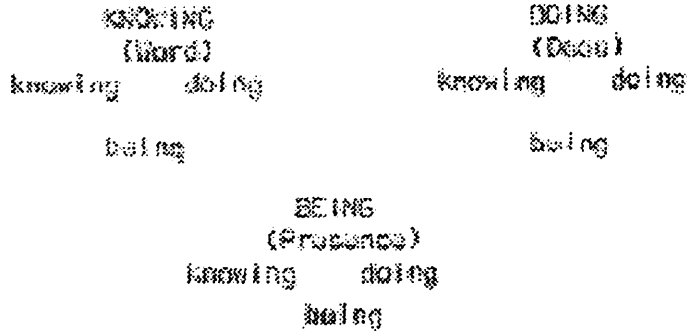
Last March as you recall we began the whole work of moving into another dimension of the spirit depth of the new religious mode. We began working on the three action poles on the right of the three sets of religious mode charts. These action poles are obedience, doing and prayer, moving from top to bottom on the corporates, journeys, and solitaries respectively. We finished that in the middle of March and it was about that time I left to go to the East. The imperative that came out of these three lectures was something like this: How do you take the images that have been built over the last few years that have brought into focus the spirit deeps and put flesh and blood on them in your every day living? How do you move to bring them into your daily life, into the practice of your daily action? This raised the question of a whole series of lectures. Where do we go now after we have completed the spirit lectures?

The first level of our work in the theoretical area of humanness was the development of the new religious mode charts. Last March and Summer '70 blew the bottom out of that with the completion of the nine spirit lectures. With this the second level of the theoretical has been completed. Now we need to move into the practical. The second level of the practical is the exercises, etc.; for example, the exercises of meditation, contemplation and prayer, which are the means that allow one to appropriate the states of being of meditation, contemplation and prayer, or sociality, mystery and freedom. But I want to work in the first level of the practicals today. I'm not too sure what this first level is, but feel that we need to begin to work on the practical daily embodiment of the dimensions of life spelled out in the spirit lectures.

This morning I want to pick one of these and work on it in the first practical level. We have worked some on the second level of the exercises, etc., but that will also require much more reflection. My title is The Action of Transparent Doing -- that is, the action that flows out of transparent doing, or the daily living of

transparent doing.

Before we start let me explain how I came up with the overall categories. We are familiar with the following:

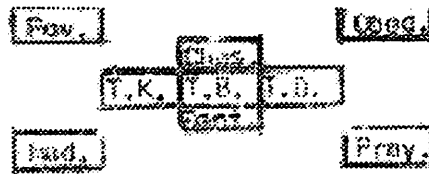


Note that within each category knowing, doing and being are again repeated at a different level. Let us pull out the DOING pole and look at the knowing, doing and being categories within it.

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Note that whatever else one is doing in the doing pole he is actuating or changing structures in the midst of his every day life. Then on the knowing side, he reflects on, or in the midst of, changing the structures. To move one step down under the doing pole would be action, and under the knowing pole, reflective action, or action within your action. On the bottom level you have the polarity of structuring (under doing) and structuring the structure until a break through of the structures occurs (under knowing). Within this dynamic, transparency takes place and "being" appears -- pure style reflects through. It is this area that I want to talk about under the category EXTERNAL THRUST.

So let us now look at the overall 4 x 4. It is divided into two parts: EXTERNAL THRUST and INTERNAL SIGNS. In other words, your action not only is always a thrust into the external, but there must be an internal sign for your action to appropriate its transparency, or to be transparent doing instead of just some kind of action. Under INTERNAL SIGNS there are two divisions: Visible Signs and Invisible Signs. These follow the distinction indicated by the positioning of the nine charts:



Poverty, obedience, meditation and prayer are related to external things or events. Whereas the others are related to the internal. Therefore, the Visible Signs are those that can be related to the external, and the Invisible Signs are those that are related to the internal.

Under EXTERNAL THRUST the subheadings are Missional Thrust and Never Loses. Under INTERNAL SIGNS the subheadings are Symbol Creation and Symbol Bearing. The image that holds the EXTERNAL THRUST part is "Creating Spiritual Reality" or "Exposing Action to its Ground." The image that holds

the INTERNAL SIGNS part is "All Circuits Activated" or "Lighting the 144 boxes." A quotation that holds

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THE ACTION OF TRANSPARENT DOING			
EXTERNAL THRUST		INTERNAL SIGNS	
Action Structuring	Reflective Action Structuring the Structure	Visible Sign Relation to External	Invisible Sign Relation to Internal
Missional Thrust	Never Loose	Symbol Creation	Symbol Bearing
Primal	To Obstacle	Actional Signs Corporates	Detachment
Comprehensive	To Images or Structures		Engagement
Contextual	To Failures	Exercise Signs Solitaires	Meditation
Inclusive	To Impossible		Prayer
		Integrital Signs Coherent	T. Being
			Know Your Selfhood
		T. Making Coherent	Milling to Die
			Trust Intuitions
		T. Making Coherent	Reaper/Sower
Creating Spiritual Reality Exposing Action to its Ground		All Circuits Activated Lighting the 144 Boxes	
"Action makes the end of the thread fast; it is the knot that holds in existence."		"The best help in action is to pray, that is true genius; then one never goes wrong."	
"The difference between a man who faces death for the sake of an idea and an imitator who goes in search of martyrdom is that while the former expresses his idea most fully in death, it is the strange feeling of bitterness which comes from failure that the latter really enjoys; the former rejoices in his victory, the latter in his suffering."			

the EXTERNAL THRUST part is "Action makes the end of the thread fast. It is the knot that holds in existence." For the INTERNAL SIGNS the quote is "The best help in action is to pray, that is true genius; then one never goes wrong. The quotation for the whole which I would like to use (all of these are from Soren Kierkegaard) is "the difference between a man who faces death for the sake of an idea and an imitator who goes in search of martyrdom is that while the former expresses his idea most fully in death, it is the strange feeling of bitterness which comes from failure that the latter really enjoys; the former rejoices in his victory, the latter in his suffering." I use this quote to remind us again that to fool around with action in this manner is dangerous. We are in danger of being burned to a crisp, because action can be just as much in service of the demonic as it can the Lord of history. The fine line that exists between these (which is also an abyss a billion light years wide) becomes sharper when we push into the deeps of the spirit dimension.

Under EXTERNAL TRUST there are two parts, Missional Thrust and Never Loses. Under Missional Thrust there are four areas: primal, comprehensive, contextual and inclusive. I am forcing some of these terms a bit and I'll come back and talk about that later.

Our missional thrust must always begin with our primal mission, our overall mission. Obviously this must be your election before God -- your vocation. This is your final obedience; this is your freedom. Out of that freedom you have welded out your global mission, and your various relationships and thrust within. You always have to start with your overall mission. This gives you your context. It forces detachment and gives you a way to hold all your sub-missions in perspective as you carry out your actions.

This is a very practical thing. In other words you never start with your problems. You always start with your overall mission. You always start with a context that gives your problem an arena in which to be viewed. That is why the word "contradiction" is of such help. You never look at your problems without asking what is the major contradiction, or what is it that is standing in the way of your mission. It is so easy to get bogged down in your problems and let them finally negate your task. I don't mean that you don't deal with those problems, but that in dealing with your problems you never let the mission slide away. Therefore, you never start with your problems, you always start with your mission. That's always primal. Your mission is what you are out to bring off. And your problems, whether they be psychological problems, sociological problems, or whatever other kind of problems you may have are not important. Many times you have been in meetings and somebody begins with his own problem, his psychological problem. "Well, I didn't do a good job here," or "I wasn't clear there." And you want to say, "Well, forget that. What is it we have to do? Where is our mission?" Once you do that then you have a context to go back to if you need to and pick up your problem and look at it in a context that releases you to do something. That is why you always begin with your mission. That is also true of sociological problems. Someone gets hung up on some little dinky problem or some big problem. But that is not where you start. It's the mission that has to be done. It's there that

you shove in order to let your actions be the action of transparent doing.

A very similar thing is seen when we say that the missional thrust must be comprehensive. Within your missional arena you are always shoving to be comprehensive. This hit me over and over again on this last trip. When we would stumble or fall, we would forget not just our mission but the fact that it always had to be comprehensive. We found ourselves grinding pet little ideas or sharpening an ax in a certain area to whittle down something instead of holding everything over against the comprehensive. For instance, we would set out something like a quota for the ITI's and for each particular country that it was being held for. Then we would go to a country and talk to a national or someone there and they would want many more people from their country to attend. They would be after as many from their country coming as possible and you certainly wouldn't blame them for that. Yet you were always in danger of succumbing to that kind of thing. Instead of holding the comprehensive picture of your mission to do what you had to do, you would lapse or fall into yours or someone else's pet project. Once you do this, you have fallen into your own sin because you are justifying yourself or trying to show your action has meaning instead of your action becoming transparent.

Next your missional thrust must always be contextual. By this I mean you have to set the context. We have talked about contextual re-education and about setting the context for quite some time. Often on the trip we would go and visit people. The first thing we would have to do would be to set the context. In other words, we would give them an arena in which to operate. Otherwise, the only way they could operate would be out of whatever context they had been living or in which they had been seeing the situation. Therefore, we always had to give them the context out of which to operate, in order for them to be able to respond genuinely or to respond with authenticity to what we had laid out or to the mission we had put forth. If you went in and asked a man, "What do you think about such and such?" without giving him the context, it wasn't his fault if he responded negatively or poorly. By the way you asked him the question, you had handed him the club he was going to beat himself to death with. Therefore you always have to establish a context or the arena in which the dialogue will take place, and at this point you don't care whether it's a positive or negative dialogue, you are simply establishing the universe in which you are now going to operate. That is the only way you can give new possibility.

A small illustration of this took place when we left the ITI site in India. We wanted to do something for the servants. There were twenty of them. At first we had to beat them off in order to do our own work and have our obediences, etc. However, they still had plenty to do preparing the food, carrying a bucket of water to each participant every morning etc. They were a necessary part of our daily life. When we left we wanted to honor them for the great job they did. So we went to the head of the place and asked if we could have a meeting with the servants. We got all kinds of blasts. "Well, outsiders have just ruined the servants. They turn them into beasts. I give them one forty watt light bulb a month to show my appreciation. Outsiders come in and give a hundred watt bulb each week (to caricature somewhat) and it just ruins them" Or again, "You cannot serve tea to them If

you have tea, then they have to go outside and drink it and then come back for your speech and whatever else you plan to do." It was rather obvious that the context we thought we had set was not heard or else rejected. We couldn't possibly operate out of those images. So we set up the meeting and planned to go ahead and treat them as we had planned. Some members (not indigenous) got scared. "Oh, the management wouldn't like that. They would get upset. It would blow the whole place apart." All this may have been true, but we had to do what we had to do in our own context, or not at all. After discussion we decided to do it. Therefore we set our own context and brought it off. And the management had no idea what new possibilities were present in our context. They never would have unless we demonstrated it to them. As the meeting came off the management never saw the servants treated like that and didn't understand how it could happen, but they knew brand new possibilities were open to them now in their future relationships with the servants as human beings. And you can imagine how overjoyed the servants were. This is the kind of thing you are after in setting the context.

Lastly, the missional thrust is inclusive. By inclusive I mean that your action now includes everybody, not just your friends. Your enemies are included too. In other words, you give your enemies their due. You honor them for what they are and brother if you are in this kind of work, you have enemies. You have lots of them. Therefore, if you are going to exclude them from your arena, you cut your action way back. So you start out by honoring them and giving them their due. By this I mean you genuinely see that the Lord is sustaining them in being for who they are and what they are, and the value they are holding is a value that has to be considered and taken into account. Therefore, when you go visit your enemies or possible enemies, you always go with the image of honor. You always go to grant that person his genuine right to live and stand before the Lord. Then you place the situation including him in a comprehensive context. This gives him new possibilities. He may say "no" to it, but more likely he says "yes." At least this is what we found out on the trip. Whereas you went in expecting a "no" you got a "yes." In other words, new possibilities were being given to you by the Lord, and if you went in not honoring your enemy, you were the one who was responsible for the "no." You start out with the image: "He who is not against you is for you." You then throw it into a comprehensive context, and then the image is: "He who is not for you is against you," because you have placed it in an arena where he has a new kind of decision to make. I don't mean you tell him that little couplet or anything like that, but by placing it in a comprehensive context your action allows a whole new relationship to take place for him.

In all situations you have to press your structure to the bottom. But in pressing it to the bottom you are structuring your structure. Now the overall image that holds this column is you Never Lose. You never lose to obstacles, images, failures or the impossible. This cannot be thought of as "activism" or "successism." That can only take place in a reduced context, which makes it necessary to say what we have just discussed in the first column before we move into this one.

You never lose to obstacles. You know the old image of the river. It just flows on, and if it meets a rock in the middle of the river bed, that's all right with the river, it just flows around it. Or if it bumps into a ninety degree turn or a wall, that too is all right with the river. It turns ninety degrees or whatever -- it flows this way or that, for it is always moving toward its goal. So it is with our action, we are always moving around obstacles. We always flow, flow, flow. We never throw the gauntlet down before anybody unless our selfhood or whole mission is at stake. Oh! how I like to do battle with certain kinds of people. You know, stop and whittle down this demon here or that one over there. No, no, no, no, you don't give a hoot about fights or anything like that, or throwing the gauntlet down. No! you never have a battle unless it is necessary. You flow. You move around your obstacles, and you move beyond. You see, you jolly well never know what is going to take place in any particular fight with any obstacle. You might just get killed and then what about your mission? Therefore, you never attack head on unless it is absolutely necessary for the mission. And if it is necessary for the mission, then it becomes a primary contradiction and is treated accordingly.

Another thing is that you never reduce the situation to what you can do individually, for that is a way of losing, losing to an obstacle or to an issue. In one of our planning sessions a person scheduled three courses for his region over the next year. Someone said, "Why, my God, you can have three times that many courses." His reply was that he didn't have time to work on more than three courses. Instead of putting his energy into mocking up ten courses in the same amount of time by soliciting the aid of his colleagues which in this case would have been rather simple he was just going to do the three. This was his way of losing to an obstacle. He turned a legitimate issue into an obstacle because he reduced it to what he could do individually instead of what needed to be done with the forces and time available.

Another dimension of this is that you never hand your life over to an obstacle. You are always in control of every situation. You never hand your life over to somebody else. One time we went in to talk with an assumed enemy. The fellow I was with went in and asked the person what we could do about a situation. Well, our enemy jolly well told us. My friend just dumped us into this character's lap. And you know what that guy was going to do. He was going to take it and chew it up and say "no" to it. If you start out with the stance that you never lose, then you are always responsible for every situation. You never give it up. Now, you might say, "But how can you be in control of every situation?" Well, you are not talking about contingency. You are talking about imaginal control and missional thrust and the creation of what needs to be done at the next moment. This leads us to the next point.

You never lose to images or structures. You know that every situation is man-created, so to speak, and therefore it can be man-changed. This is because every situation is made up of images and structures that someone created. The reverse of "All is good" is "Nothing is sacred." That is, everything you bump into is yours to recreate or change as your mission

dictates.

An illustration of this took place at Ooty. The building made it impossible to bring off good decor except in the dining room of the main building. Someone (actually hear say) had told one of our people working on decor that we must not touch the walls. If we did this there would have been no effective decor at the ITI. We tried to reason with the person that we would be glad to repaint the walls. (Later when we repainted, it cost us \$2.50 for three rooms and this included labor and paint that is mud.) No positive response. Finally we went ahead and put maps and other decor on the walls which, almost caused tears. The amazing thing was that it pleased everyone, including the management.

Never losing to images or structures requires that you never assume the situation is the same as it comes to you at the first blush. The situation is always different from the way the situation looks in the first instance. And, therefore, you have to shove and push to the bottom. You are always pushing to the real limits. You are always pushing toward the actual images out of which people are living, where the social structures are out of which they are operating. That is the only way that you can get into the deeps of the situation and not lose to the images and structures that are there. A person who lives before taboos, hear say, gossip, etc. always loses for he never deals with the actual situation that he is in.

Next, you never lose to failure. Many people are willing to say that what you do is a failure. You never lose to what other people (or even yourself) may think is a failure. For a failure, in the first instance, is not something that didn't come off the way that you planned. That's not a failure. It is whether that happening furthers your mission down the line, or whether that happening negates your mission. And you decide that. Do you get that? You decide whether that happens.

Let me give you an illustration. For one part of the ITI at Ooty we went to a city by the name of Mysore. Our trip was horrible chaos. The buses showed up two hours late, then broke down; for example, it took four hours to get an axle. Half of the people in the buses got sick. The staff arrived late at a certain place, people got lost and people that were to meet us didn't show up. Everything was a helter-skelter mess. That weekend was a failure. But you see, no! that's not a failure. That was a happening in a given situation and it was a mess, but it was not a failure. That we had to decide. So the next trip we took was to a town named Coimbatore. So what we did was to connect the two trips, Mysore and Coimbatore, together. In other words, imaginally, we wove the two trips together so that Coimbatore would illuminate what took place at Mysore and release it to contribute to the mission. In other words, you don't lose to failures unless you choose to. And if you don't choose to, then it is not a failure. It's a gift for you to create. You recreate both your past and your present as you deal with your future. Your "failures" are a gift to you to use to create tomorrow's missional thrust. That is why you never lose to your failures.

Also you never lose to the impossible. The impossible comes in various ways. Sometimes it comes in defensiveness. Defensiveness makes things impossible because it reduces things down to an issue that is not the real issue and makes you operate in an illusion. Therefore, you must never lose to that. You always blast through defensiveness to get at the real issue that it is covering up. That is true whether it is in yourself, your colleagues, or your enemies. So you never lose to the impossible when it comes as defensiveness.

Then you never lose to the impossible when it comes as "You can't." When someone says that something is impossible there is no way to argue with that. He already has a thousand reasons up his sleeve to justify his position. Now in India this was really an easy thing to grab hold of because it is so extremely difficult to get things done anyway. So when anybody wanted out of rebellion to destroy the mission -- and this is always what you are doing in rebellion -- he would say, "You can't." One way to say "you can't" would be to *load the situation so that you couldn't do it. For instance, you would wait to call somebody far too late. Then you'd say, "You can't."* Well, when anyone starts the "you can't" image, you have to blast through it, which means you have to do the impossible. This is true even though ordinarily the particularities would be of secondary importance. For when someone starts the "you can't" negativism, even though it is many times over some nit-picking issue, it spreads all over the place and begins to trap the group and sap their morale. When that happens you have to pick the task up and bring it off. Otherwise it is impossible to break that kind of negativism. And I mean you have to do the impossible. You have to go in and tear down the whole society and rebuild it for that to happen. And, my God, that is usually costly. It is costly in psychic energy, it is costly in your enemies, and it is costly in taking time from your head-on mission. You have to discern when to do this, of course. But to do the impossible brings possibility back into your situation like a great gush of fresh air.

In these two columns we have talked about structuring and structuring the structure. To carry out your missional thrust is to structure the situation. This in itself is always done in the presence of and in the midst of the mystery. No one with eyes to see cannot behold the transparency that takes place when one dares to structure his total situation. On the other hand to structure your structure intensifies the structuring. To say that one never loses forces radical intentionality and therefore radical self-consciousness. The polar dynamic between the two, structuring and structuring the structure, forces one into transparency or to be up against pure style. One's action then can be the act on of transparent doing,

The next two columns come under the major heading of INTERNAL SIGNS. When we are carrying out our action as just described, how can we hold ourselves present to the total dimension of our religious deeps? Or to express it in another way, how can we hold ourselves present to the structuring of the religious deeps as it is laid out in the 144's? In other words, how are we going to keep all the lights burning, or all the circuits going? Only then will our action be transparent doing. This I hope to point out under Visible Signs, or the relation to the external, and Invisible Signs or the relation to the internal.

Under the former is Symbol Creation and the latter Symbol Bearing.

Under Symbol Creation we have detachment and engagement, under the corporates or actional signs; and meditation and prayer, under the solitaries or exercise signs. All of us create symbols to hold before ourselves. Under this column they are listed as visible signs - signs that you do to hold yourself symbolically present to the deeps of your action or to transparent doing, so that your action continually be's transparent, or be's transparent doing. You carry these signs constantly in order to hold yourself present to the activity of God or the mystery in all of your doing -- all of your action.

The first is detachment. The other side of comprehensiveness is detachment. Detachment demands that you stand back before the totality of everything, Or maybe it's like you are a radar scanning the horizon. You are constantly spinning around scanning in 21 directions. You are utterly detached from everything, which is at the same time being utterly present to all things. And detachment is necessary if you are to take into account all things -- to consider everything so that nothing is left out. Everything contributes to the mission. All is pulled into the totality of what you have to do. Now it would seem that one has to create a symbol or sign to hold before him the demand for detachment -- or that he will never lose himself to any situation. The way I work personally with that sign is in my anger and coolness, that is, that I will never lose myself to my anger or coolness, and that will serve as a sign of detachment. To do this, I try in every situation to show both poles. If you choose to be angry in this situation in order to bring off the mission, you always pause or tangentially bring in utter relaxedness, as if you could get angry or not get angry. Now, they may not see it, and you may choose not to let them see it in the first instance, or to make it readily apparent. But you always have it as a sign to yourself. Whether you reveal it or not depend on whether that will help the situation and the person or persons with whom you are dealing. On the other hand, if you are playing it utterly cool like you could care less, then you let the steel show through. And again I mean this as far as your self-consciousness is concerned. Thus in all situations you are carrying, visibly holding, your sign of detachment before you so that you will never lose your soul to any particularity.

In the area of engagement, you can't think through a situation unless you are finally willing to become every situation or the total situation. I like that one box on the eschatological side of obedience or engagement called "Total Identification." This really struck me in going to India this time. I think that I've always hated India, and I think maybe I always will all my life. But this time, for the first time, I fell in love with India, and I don't know what did that except maybe the people we came up against. Great people they were. One of the things that happened to me was while I was walking down the street in Bombay where thousands of bodies were sleeping, There was a dirty dark man, and dark in India, as you know, means lower class. He was covered with sores, and his skinny frame made him look gaunt. Beside him was a character -- a redheaded fellow, a European or Westerner, or at least a white person, and he had on a brand new white suit of some kind. And they were both lying there on the street asleep, and the Westerner had his arms around the Indian. Well, my initial reaction was that he was some kind of hippie, But his

short hair and clean white shirt disabused me of that. Then I thought he was probably some romantic Westerner. He may have been; I don't know. But it surely was an address to me just the same. The address that came to me was that unless I was willing to use my life to be obedient to the totality of that situation or become that Indian in that, situation with all the horror, all the outcastness, with all the poverty and disease, I could not participate in that situation. I could not be obedient to my task.

How do you signify that to you yourself? I'm not sure. In all of these mind you, I'm sure there must be other ways, and maybe we have to by jointly digging find the way for our age. But the way I have tried to symbolize total engagement is to "eat and sleep" the mission. There is never a moment that in some way you are not doing your mission. And I mean you eat and sleep it, to where it is visibly apparent to yourself that you eat and sleep it, You are symbolizing total involvement, total obedience, total engagement, total action, where every action, every ramification, every consequence is constantly held before you in the things that you do throughout your daily activities.

Next are the solitaries, or exercise signs, -- meditation and prayer, They are more like the signs we do in our exercises, yet that is not quite correct. But they are so closely related to them that I call them exercise signs over against actional signs.

In meditation, my God, we have to carry the voices of all creation in every situation. First, you have got yourself and your particular mission, you've got the order and its mission, and you've got all of creation and the mission there. It's in meditation that you've got to be in dialogue with all time, and this means with the demonic in it as well as the saintly voices working with you. This is the arena you are dealing with and you can't reduce it down. One of the things we use in our immediate situations to dramatize corporateness, and incidentally a sign of meditation, is to say, "Check with someone before you do anything." Well, I was in a situation where one person pulled a horrible booboo, so I said, "Did you check with any of your colleagues?" "No," he said. And I said, "Well, check with your colleague next time." A couple of days later he pulled another horrible booboo. And I said, "Did you check with any of your colleagues?" And he said, "Yes", And I said, "Which one." And he had picked out some bystander who didn't know what was going on, much less being a colleague. And I said, "Well, that is not checking with a colleague " And he said "You told me to check with someone." "Yes, but you check with someone who is in the same meditation universe as you."

You are always checking with your community in history within your meditation arena. This keeps you from succumbing to your own perversions. It keeps you from succumbing to inexperience and lack of knowledge. When you go into a situation you don't know beans about, well, you jolly well better find out. You begin meditating, and I mean you finally have to meditate with the whole universe as well as your own community -- or maybe better through your own community. This is that which delivers you to be missional. You have to stake out certain kinds of meditation arenas that you are going to

use to bump up against. And that comes out of your mission context.

Now what sign holds this kind of relationship for you? I find that I would use different ones for various situations. Like when I was working on setting up the ITI's, I would use the ITI of Singapore. I used it as a meditation event or colleague or group of colleagues that I was always in dialogue with. So in every situation dealing with Asians I would check with the colleagues from the Singapore ITI. On the other hand, you need your community that bears the word of life to you and therefore mediates all of creation so you can stand over against any reductions. Now the sign I used for this was the order. I always checked with the order. I never did anything as an isolated individual. I always did it as an order. And sometimes you have to call everyone you are with into question. Or maybe a better way to put it is that you say "No" to their recommendation and in its place take the order's recommendation. Of course, they are left wondering where in the world you got your data. By the order I mean the community that represents to you the whole meditating arena. It is the sign of the whole meditating arena. You are there as the order throughout the globe to do the task for all of history and that is where you start the signs for your meditation.

Then in prayer (and I'm going to move on rapidly because my time is out) we've talked so much about how prayer is the action that makes action a deed, an action before actions, and how it is a happening. It is creating in that situation what has to be done. It is bringing out of nothingness a new universe. It is bringing into being something that has never been there before. And so when you go into a situation, your action, first of all, is living the Christ story.

I will never forget reading Barth about Calvin. Barth said that Calvin remarked when he came to "He ascended into heaven" in the creed, that unless you ascended into heaven with Jesus, you are not repeating the creed. And when we come to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," unless the Virgin Birth takes place in you, you are not confessing your faith - so that your action is always a living out of the Christ story. Then in your freedom you are creating the future out of nothing. And that is what you are doing in every situation. You are not there to do something. You are there to bring into being a brand new creation. So when you go to speak to someone or do something, it is for the purpose of bringing in a brand new universe of possibility -- a new future to that situation.

The sign grows out of what I have just stated. You never leave a person or a situation without it being utterly different -- without a happening taking place, and possibility injected into the situation. Every moment is your grand moment of creativity. Your action is to inject that into every situation so that possibility is appropriated. Now you might say this is what I have called an actional sign instead of an exercise sign. Probably so, yet I find that I always have a prayer in a situation to which I bring intensification. When I was a kid I used to say something that was probably reductionistic, but nevertheless it has stuck with me throughout all these years I would find myself saying, "Not me, but Thee, O

Lord."

It was bad philosophical terminology. But it has come to mean that I must relate myself to the total universe. Am I going to love that situation that I am in? "O Lord, create here a new situation. Give this man possibility to love his life. Open up a new future for this situation." This then becomes a way of calling into being the arena of all the prayers you have ever prayed and all the prayers that you have written down or heard and bringing them into focus in that situation. As such this becomes an exercise sign for me or symbol creation in the midst of prayer.

The last column is entitled, Invisible Signs or the relation to the Internal. The subtitle is Symbol Bearing. This is more difficult for me since we don't have signs for them or exercises and are in the process of working through what they would be. In the meantime I will call them "Imaginal Signs." They would hold the relationship of transparent being, chastity, contemplation and transparent knowing. They are respectively; know your selfhood, willing to die, trust your intuitions, and the reaper/sower. Now to go back to the previous column, we saw that Visible Signs are actions that you do in every situation so that your actions may be transparent. In this column Invisible Signs are images that you carry with you as you are acting in every situation. However, these are invisible actions, or better, basic relationships that you take in all your actions. So your signs must be part of you, part of your self-talk, part of your dialogue, the images out of which you live and operate.

The first is know your selfhood. That is a cumbersome word, but I didn't want to use "know yourself" because of the images that phrase carries. But that may be the place to start. It would mean to know your limitations. And I don't mean "Oh, I can't do this" as a limitation. No, no, you look at the situation objectively as it is. For instance, I've got five fingers on this hand and only three on this one. Now what do you do when you are an eight fingered man? How does that contribute to your mission? How does it fit into the logistics for the battleplan?

Also, one should know his own neuroses. For example, I'd hate to be the people working with me, I think, because I have a short fuse. Little things irritate me and I'm sure my colleagues must think they have a time of it. Also, I know that I can work for years in some situation in order for it to come off. I've got that kind of long-term patience and short-term irritability And I don't mean I collapse before that. That is part of my eight fingers that I have to work with. That is the kind of situation I'm in

Also, we must know our own perversions. I'm not going to tell you about mine. You probably know them better than I anyway. But you know your perversions. That is why I have this by "transparent being" on the overall chart. When Sister Teresa talked about getting to Mansion Seven, she said that was where the intellectual vision of the Trinity took place. In earlier mansions we knew the Son or the Word, that your life is received,

and that Word is just there. Later we began to know the Father, that all of life, and that your life, is to be embraced as good. After this comes self-doubt. And this calls everything into question. Have you trusted the Word? Every time you ask yourself that question, you know you have not trusted it. Have you embodied the situation? Again you know you have not. Self-doubt is like a whirl pool. It sucks everything into question. The spirit lecture on Transparent Being talks about going to the center with aridity, blindness and apostasy. That is what it means to know yourself, or your selfhood. Or as Sister Teresa said in Mansion Seven, you have reached the Holy Spirit, and that is what allows the vision of the Trinity. Finally the only thing you have to hang on to is your decision. That is the way you are going to live -- In the Word and loving the Father. There is only one Word that you have to live out of and your decision now is to live out of that Word.

Your perversions? Oh! my God! Maybe for the first time you can begin to see that you know the depth of that dimension. But a light appears at the center. That is the invisible sign. Or again it is Sister Teresa and her Intellectual Vision. But we must carry some image in the back of our mind that informs us that we operate out of transparent being. That is what I mean when I use the term know your selfhood.

In the area of chastity the sign is the willingness to die. Unless we die there is no possibility. So the willingness to die must always be there. We have talked about how God always wins. I saw a movie recently which relates to this. After being gone and not seeing television for so many months, I turned on the first TV set I came to, and there was some class "Z" movie I never did know any of the characters and I didn't know what was going on, but I got in the last two or three minutes, and the last thing they flashed on the screen along with the end was "Nobody ever wins." That hit me. "Nobody ever wins." I thought that was a good thing to put on with the end There couldn't have been a truer statement, the end. But on the other hand, the Lord lets us win. If you want you can put it this way: He's established the arena of where we are going to live, and He turns us loose in that. And the rest of our life is to operate determining the limits of that arena. So you and I go about faithfully attacking every situation to change being itself. That is what you are after. Unless you are willing to die, you are never going to do that. Being willing to die means you are going to probe the deeps of every dimension, because to probe to the deeps has your final death in the midst of it. It has the death of every situation. Your calling to die means that you win, willing to die, until the Lord says, "No." But then you know that you also win that situation when you don't win, because that changes being itself. This means that when you go into a situation you have to be willing to die -- otherwise nothing is ever going to happen, because you are within an ever decreasing spiral of reductionism trying to protect yourself.

Another way of talking about this is that you have to be willing to operate out of what is needed for the mission. You are constantly giving new possibilities. And if people don't respond or if they respond negatively, then you have a fight on your hands. Another way to put it is that you have to be willing to fight to the death everybody you meet. Earlier, relative to the external thrust, I said you don't fight anybody. And that is right. But on the

other side, you have to be willing to fight everybody in a situation. Otherwise you are not willing to die. One illustration is when you go in to convince somebody of something or try to persuade them to do something. They may turn out to be a friend. Great. They may, on the other hand, turn out to be an enemy who has become a friend. Great again. All of these are new possibilities, but unless you are willing to move in to bring that about, unless you are willing to die, you will never find that out -- you will never bring your action off.

Somebody used the image of a gunfighter. You're a gunfighter, and in every situation you have to be willing to see whether you are going to outdraw the black hat or whether he is going to kill you. That's just the kind of situation you are in all the time.

Another way you have to be willing to die is to your status. You are a nothing in every situation, and by that I mean you have to eat crow when the mission demands it. I was in a situation where a friend of mine banged into a situation to ring it off; and he met a steel wall. So he backed up and banged into it again and the situation changed a little. And he said, "That's not the way it is, this is the way it is." The other fellow said, "No, it's this way." But it changed a little. This kept on until the situation was changed quite extensively. My friend had to say, "Well, you were right in that situation, and I was wrong." And another friend said to him later, "Man, you really had to eat crow." And my friend said to him; "Yes, but you saw what happened, didn't you? We almost reversed his position." What I am trying to say with this illustration is that you don't care about your status, about being somebody, You are there to eat crow in every situation if necessary to bring off what needs to be done. Now sometimes you have to preserve the symbol that you never eat crow from any man, only from God, so to speak. But your willingness to die means that you are always willing to fight to the death, or you are willing for your image to be crushed, or to be nothing, or to eat crow.

For contemplation I have used the image of trust your intuitions. Once you have made a decision to be a missional person, you train your intuitions -- you are constantly training them. As long as I've been working at being a pedagogue, I've so trained my intuitions that I can smell unselfhood thirty feet across the seminar table. All they have to do is to walk in and blink an eye and I can sniff out who they are. And I move intuitively in response to people in seminars. This is what I mean by saying you can trust your intuitions.

Now some of our intuitions are not well trained. Some are very shadowy and vague. Some of them you don't even know you have. Therefore you brood on them. You wake up in the middle of the night, and you have great anxieties about them. So your intuitions run a wide range of awareness. Yet, usually when I made mistakes on this trip it was where I did not trust my intuitions,

Now, on the other hand, you jolly well know that your life is one where you have to decide over against your intuitions. And in a new and strange situation I'd better not move in on somebody as a pedagogue without thinking twice, even though I have all these years

of training behind me. I have to stop and check my intuitions. But this doesn't relieve you from ambiguity for you could say that now your intuitions question your previous patterns of intuitions.

But to so trust your intuitions is to trust the mystery. You trust the mystery in your contemplation. The mystery is going to give you what it is going to give you. and that is good. And that is what you are after.

The last is transparent knowing, which is held for me by the image of the reaper and the sower. You are always the reaper. This certainly came clear on this last trip. You stood on the shoulders of the nineteenth century missionary movement in all its crumminess. You stood on the shoulders of the perverted historical church and all that it means. You also stood on the shoulders of the many penetration teams that have been over there the last number of years. You stood on the shoulders of Mathews and Morrill when they did a similar kind of thing last year. You stood on the shoulders of the Singapore ITI. You reaped what they had sown. That is, you reaped some great things that others have done and you reap some crummy things also. On the other hand you know you are always the sower. You know that the credit for many of the things you do will be reaped by some colleague down the line. He will reap it, and you did all the sweat. But then there are many thorns you let loose that somebody will get credit for too. So you are both the sower and the reaper. All things are given to you to receive and to participate in. And that is pronounced good.

Again, the S. K quote at the end of the Internal Signs column is, "The best help in action is to pray, that is true genius; then one never goes wrong." Well, the following prayer holds this last column for me: "O Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who has safely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the same with thy mighty power, and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings, being ordered by thy governance may be righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Well, the phrase "that all our doings, being ordered by thy governance, may be righteous in thy sight" is what I'm trying to hold with the image of the reaper/sower. All of your doings have just been ordered by God's governance. Do you get that? Once you acknowledge that all that you do is God's gift in that situation, then it is righteous in his sight. That is the decision we have to make about all our actions, about all actions. Maybe it is only then that action becomes transparent doing -- when you dare in the internal dimension of your life to pray that "all our doings, being ordered by thy governance, may be righteous in thy sight."

The Ecumenical Institute

Collegium

Joseph A. Slicker

October 10, 1970

This talk is a reflection on work in Asia for seven months setting up the ITI's in Hong Kong and India.

The first part of the talk will focus on the experience of setting up the ITI's in Hong Kong and India. It will discuss the challenges faced in both environments and the strategies used to overcome them. The second part will focus on the experience of working in Asia, including the cultural differences and the impact of the ITI's on the local economy.

The ITI's in Hong Kong and India have been successful in providing a range of services to the local community. This has been achieved through a combination of government support and private sector investment. The ITI's have also played a key role in the development of the local economy, particularly in the areas of education and training. The experience of working in Asia has been a challenging one, but it has also been a rewarding one. The cultural differences have been a source of both frustration and inspiration. The impact of the ITI's on the local economy has been significant, and it is hoped that this will continue to be the case in the future.

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