

## THE KINGDOM WAY

I remind you that Grace is yours and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen." That ritual means I believe that the one who prompts our beginnings promises our endings. I think it means that what the one who put us here starts, he finishes.

It is very good to be at this Global Research Assembly. I feel very much at home. I always enjoy myself when I am here. Years ago, I was in rural India and I noticed some people, older men and then young men and boys walking in a rather strange way. I had happened upon an occurrence in that village which took place only once a year, as it still does in many villages of India. And maybe those of you who were there in human development projects have seen it too. They were walking around the boundaries of the village and the elders were pointing out trees, or the stones or a well or a ravine which would mark the boundaries of that village and it was passed on in that way from the elders to the young ones. And I always feel when I come here, especially for such an occasion as this, that I walk around the boundaries of my spirit once again and I can repossess my soul. I believe you know what I mean by that. Also I realize that as I look out here and see so many people, though I cannot call all of you by name, I realize that I regard all of you as friends and colleagues on the Long March.

Now, when one stands at the center of the room, it is not infrequent that one stands in fear. Last evening I was asked to speak and I had no notion what I was going to say. It may seem to you as I go along that I never did become very clear. It will be a potpourri and in some sense a strange mixture. But I sometimes think when you make a speech, you prepare for it all your life and everything you have ever bumped up against is available to you. And then I also have this feeling that whenever I have spoken, I have always said everything I knew. That runs in the family.

It occurred to me that I ought to make use of a book that I threw in among my things as I came out here. It has the intriguing title, *The Winding Quest* and I shall use the very first selection in this book. It is the question of how can they live in the Kingdom Way? *"Farmer plowing the fields, proud of his goad, driving his oxen, lost to the world, talking of cattle following the furrow by day, watching the heifers by night. Blacksmith sitting by his anvil in a world of pig iron, scorched by the forge waiting the prentice heat, deafened by hammer's din, wrapped in his pattern firmed, finishing his work, fashioning it into the night. Potter working at his wheel, turning it with his feet, lost in his task of making up his talley, slapping and puddling the clay engrossed in his glazing, staying awake, cleaning out his kiln. These men trust their hands, their craftsmanship is their wisdom, without them cities would be empty. Nobody living there, nobody coming and going. You won't hear them at the city council or see them sitting in the assembly. You won't find them among the judges; they can't make head or tail of the law. They don't talk like scholars; they can't quote like critics, yet they hold the world in their hands. Their worship is in their work."*

I know this, that those of you who come from the ends of the earth have met these people. We couldn't do without them. If I had read that ten years ago, you might have conjured up something in your imagination. Now you have seen all this. It is a great and hopeful sight and sign to behold.

And then just as I was leaving my office yesterday, our sister, Alice, wrote me a little note. And she wanted to share this quote. I think she really wanted me, if I had the opportunity, to use it here. She didn't say so, but she is a sneaky person. That, too, runs in the family. It comes from *The Autobiography of Values*, by Charles Lindbergh.

I had not bumped into it before. He says, "*As I gained in age and experience, my inner striving shifted from the scientific toward the mystical. I found that any branch of science pursued to its peripheries ended in mystery.*" Sounds familiar, doesn't it? "*And I could neither explain the miracle of action nor the fact of this awareness, nor conceived the end of space and time. The miracles of science and technology become trivial in the face of the unknowable.*" Then Alice wrote in the margin here, because she spent a large part of her life studying *Moby Dick*—it reminded her of a reference from *Moby Dick* on page three of whatever text she had. "The unknowable is the key to it all." This other quotation is also from Lindbergh. "*I think of the forms of man, of myself. I am at once my past, my present. and my future. I am the concentration of millions of ancestors.*"

I suggest that we are primal community. Now in whatever else I'll say here, I will be roughly following the themes of Awakening, Formation, Demonstration, and Interchange; but I'll also be calling on a friend whose name is familiar to all of you and it has to do with four stories which are recorded under his name. One is about *a faith to live for* and it is the story of a dietary test. Two sets of people, who were quite scientific, went on a different diet. And then down the road, ten days later, we will take a take a look at them. See the difference. The next phase was about *a faith to die for* and this is about the experience of a man who was in a very not place, a fiery furnace. And the third story was about *a faith to witness for* and this was about an experience of being confronted by a lion in his den. And then the fourth story was about *a vision of the future*. It is a story about a lion, a leopard and an unnameable beast in which he was able to get a clue for the meaning of all of history. That is what you are in for.

*A faith to live for* has been made quite clear in the work you have been doing. It is great to see the North American map all yellow. It was a patch work affair, last summer. I don't know where the map of the rest of the world is that shows the counterpart, but I understand a good bit of that gold is being scattered around the whole globe. And then, of course, not only Town Meeting but the Social Demonstrations. I have visited nine of the projects and participated in the creation of one of them with many others. I received an insight last night as I saw the film, "*The Circus of Dr. Lao.*" It was a story about all those villages which were simply nothing and then they discovered, under wise and skillful guidance, that they were something. Sometimes, I wonder about Maliwada. I passed that village several times nearly forty years ago. At that time, I was not going there to see Maliwada. I was going there to see the sculptures of the Elora Caves and in those days I even climbed to the top of Dalautabad Fort. I don't feel much inclined to do that nowadays but it was a wonder that was there forty years ago. I know a little bit about the language of the people and I just passed right by Maliwada. I suppose not many people 40 years ago took notice of Maliwada and there are simply hundreds and thousands of villages in this world which nobody takes notice of. Then some people began to notice Maliwada and they began creating primal community there. It has been astonishing to me when I have visited that village, now at least twice, since the Human Development Project has been there.. I was astonished to find a communal kitchen. Anyone who knows anything about the villages of India, knows that this is quite impossible, but there it was. We had a guide on the bus the last time I was there. I talked to him a little in Marathi; I had remembered a little bit of the language from years ago. I had no business, in these enlightened days, asking him about his past but I did. He said he was born in Bihar and that, of course, told me a volume right there. That told me that he was part of the scheduled class which is only a euphemism for many of the horrible names which have been directed to those people in the past. We listened during the tour all too short a time, but there was one of our party who was listening most intensely and this was the Bihar guide who was from a village. He said, "I could not help thinking—Oh, if only something had happened like this in my village as I was growing up." From his comment, we were able to understand the power of that Project for those like him.

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I don't know where Desmond Avery is; he keeps moving around and assumes various disguises. It was a great thing to go to Termine to hear the people say what must be familiar to so many of you. "When Jesus came to Termine he must have come at night. He never even saw us. I wasn't noticed either." To be in a place which literally means, the end of the road, and to see that Project which is a venture of faith to live for is something. That community has been turned around! I have been to Kwangware twice. I was there before the Project began and then, a few months ago, when the two years had been completed so that I was able to enjoy a before and after. It was delightful to take a walk in the garden and to see the model house. Then I went to Zambia. I haven't seen the project there, but I felt so good about it. I don't want to sentimentalize, but I do want to say that in one of the last conversations I had with Joe, he asked me to go to Zambia with Martin Pesek and others. And I am so glad I went, for a multitude of reasons. I was there with Neil Vance, brother Spencer and, of course, Martin Pesek. We had a tremendous visit with President Kaunda. That has been embroidered I suppose by this time out of all relationship to reality. I'm sort of sorry that that's happened because I really wanted to embroider it myself. But you know the way bishops are. I thought you can't visit the head of state and not suggest that we close with prayer. And he didn't respond—that is, no oral response. His response was to drop to his knees. I want to confess to you that I have that degree of piety which would have been willing to settle for standing there reverently with heads bowed. But when the President of the Republic drops to his knees, so do I and so did all the others present, including Martin Pesek. I told Martin, "You haven't been on your knees since the last time you dropped a collar button under the bureau." But it was music to our ears, when once again we were telling about all the social demonstrations. You know how it is—I always like to say that if I tell this story one more time, I am going to believe it myself. And we told it one more time and the President said, "Well, why don't you get on with it." Now can you imagine that! And then we asked for a few things in the way of authorization. Now, I'll say the following as a footnote. If you ever felt bold enough to want to take on a whole country, remember there are only 1500 villages in Zambia. And there are only about 4 billion people! I don't know how long history is going to allow that to be possible, but wouldn't it be great to take some other color, like robin's egg blue and make the whole country blue!

Now *a vision to die for*. A few days ago, my mother-in-law, who lived to the grand age of 100, died. She had a few friends and acquaintances in here vicinity but for most people, she was simply a nobody. When you have lived 100 years, you finally become a nobody. During the service I took 40 minutes to tell about who she was. I won't do that now, but I will say this. She managed in a mere 100 years to crowd into that 100 years a 100 years of living. I know this, too. It was the exemplification of every one of these four qualities which you are setting forth in this Assembly. Why awakening was almost her middle name! Being associated with her was a teaching and learning situation. People simply came alive when she was around, but in a quiet way. She went to India as a missionary, 80 years ago and served in Kendur, not very far from Maliwada. Her first job there was a shocking thing. There was a famine and it was her task to go out in the morning with a little little cart and take the babies from the breasts of the mothers who had died during the night and rescue these children. And that was only the beginning. When she came back to this country, the neighbors knew about it. So that when my wife was closing up her little house in Iowa, a young man about 21 came over and said, "I only wish my brothers had known your mother." He mentioned that some of his brothers were into drugs and other things. He told my wife, "When we would go over to her house and work a little bit, she would always invite us in and give us some lemonade or something. Then she would talk to us as we had never been talked to before. We wouldn't leave without her giving us a book. I didn't know there was a dictionary, until she gave me one." It made all the difference for this man because he was awakened by this experience.

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As to formation, why she knew the secret; you can't really grow boys into men if you only have men teachers. Now that has been tried and it hasn't worked too well. She knew that the woman's touch was needed so she became a pioneer in India. She was the first one willing to row against the stream and have women teach boys. But that is, of course, pretty well universal at the primary level there now. She had a school which she operated as a demonstration all her life, but that was only a beginning because she raised money to keep 1,000 boys in school for 60 years. This little school was a demonstration pilot. She went with nothing and made the compound self-supporting. She planted food, she planted gardens, and she planted boys and that school became a model in that whole part of India.

As to interchange—I had to work a little hard for this one. I remember one time her telling how she had the grain stored in her room for the whole year and along came a flood. The grain expanded with such pressure that it cooked the wheat. She was not about to let this wheat go to waste, so she sent out messages to all the surrounding villages for people to come in with their vessels for the wheat. They shoveled the cooked wheat to feed the people. One is also tempted to refer to her correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi about discipline in education. This correspondence went on for 25 years and in fact, could be called interchange.

Well, they buried her a few days ago. Once in a while I like to inject things into the ritual which aren't there. During the service I turned to those present, to the living, addressing each one by name. I asked them to now live their lives, just as in the baptism ceremony. My sister-in-law has a 16 year old son. We never got around to baptising that boy. She wanted his uncles to do it and finally it fell to me to do it. He was 16 and his father said to him, "Now, Jon, I won't be able to carry you." His name was Jonathan Donaldson Neil and I interjected into the service, in addition to all the other questions you ask, "Are you prepared, by the power of God, to be all your life, Jonathan Donaldson Neil?" Will you try that out for awakenment. Well, I must hasten on. If I don't hasten, that too takes precedent in this place.

I will hasten on to *a faith to witness to*. You know that in the very first gospel and the very first chapter and the very first time Jesus came on the scene, he came preaching. What he preached about was that time was fulfilled. It was filled full and God's will was within your reach. Therefore, turn your direction and put your confidence in this perspective. That is what he said and he never ceased to talk about the Kingdom. God's rule was not remote but within people's reach. He was really talking about time. We know about time on our hands and we know about time in our hands. Some people use the expression, "live for the weekend." That is not utterly unfamiliar here. Some folks think if they can make it to Friday night, then they can really live. It is a sure sign that they have not yet entered the Kingdom. For all time is significant and I observed that once again, you are making time significant by having a week occur around here every four days. That time design also offers us a new experience of space. We used to think the world was where we lived. Now, we know it is in the whole world we are talking about. If we feel that where we live is insignificant, that is a sure sign that we have not yet entered the Kingdom. I used to like to kid my wife about being born in a village in the north of India. No one ever heard of that village. Then some visitor came to visit her parents one evening. It was getting along towards dusk, and my wife made an observation which has become a saying of hers, She said, "What a wonderful sunset for such an out of the way place." For the citizen of the Kingdom, there are no out of the way places. Every place is of significance. Of course, it means a new experience of ourselves in relationship to our situation and the whole world. If our prayer is about, "Lord bless me, and my wife and my son, John, and his wife," and no more, that is a sure sign that we have not yet entered the Kingdom.

A few days ago I spent a morning at one of the Senate hearings of the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill. Later, I went back into the building where my office was and had a lengthy conversation with some Native Americans. When it was time to go home, I found my car was blocked by some other car. Pretty soon a young woman showed up. She said, "I am here for a meeting about care rendered for the aging." Well, if any of you have looked into that Department of Labor, you know it can be abysmal. Then I talked with her a little further. She said she had her Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in social work. I pressed her further, "Why is it that you are concerned?" Finally, she said, "I have been a person who has cared all my life," Then I knew.

A few weeks ago, we were in Madras. Some of you have been familiar with a great drive along the marina, a long beautiful beach along the Bay of Bengal. We were headed south and the ocean was on our left and on our right were massive buildings. We were told that this was the University of Madras in which at present 70,000 students were enrolled. Two days before that we had been in another city, the twin city of Hyderabad in the heart of India. We insisted on being shown a street there named after an Englishman. His name was Pendergrass. Pendergrass Road. There is also a street named, Ross Road. Ross was the one who discovered the mosquito which bears the disease of malaria. That is aside from the story. Well, about 60 years ago, at a church on Pendergrass Road, my father-in-law was preaching. It was a parade service. The British Tommies were marched to church whether they wanted to go or not. There are, even to this day, brackets in the pews where they had to stash their rifles. That night my father-in-law chose an unlikely text, "Behold, I put before you an open door which no one can shut." Well, among the private soldiers of the Tommies, was a fellow named, Pendergrass. He was ignorant, illiterate, uncooth, foul of mouth, foul of mind and life and he rejoiced in all his deficiencies, which is not uncommon. But you know, he recognized a good thing when he heard it: "I place before you an open door which no one can shut." He went in and his life was utterly transformed. He was awakened all right. He began to clean up his life, clean up his vocabulary and he began to read and write. He thought if he had to be in India, he ought to learn something of the language so he enrolled in a secondary school. He enrolled later in Oxford University and came out with honors, earned his doctorate, moved over to Cambridge University, earned his doctorate, went back to India, taught college in Hyderabad and ended up as Vice Chancellor at the University of Madras. How is that for a future!

The last thing I was going to say has to do with the *vision of the future*. It has to do with that line about the bear, the lion, the leopard and the unnamable beast. A while ago I quoted what Jesus said when he first arrived on the scene. He had hardly been there when he seized upon another word. He quoted scriptures when he said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me." He was concerned about the future which involves economic justice. In our society, that would imply full employment. Some people haven't heard good news for so long they would not recognize good news if they heard it. I should think a person without a job would experience the good news in the form of a job. That is the reason I pounded the corridors over there in Congress with Corretta Scott King several times on this Humphrey-Hawkins Bill. He preached the good news also to the prisoners. I should think that another vision of the future would involve equitable criminal justice in our country. Prisoners, I think, would be experiencing the good news if they know there was to be equitable justice in this country and in all lands. To a man who is sick, good news comes in the form of health. We need a comprehensive health system. We are just about the only country that doesn't have it. And then, finally, he set at liberty those who were bruised. He put together what he called the jubilee. In those times for 50 years you could be in debt, you could alienate the family property, you could even sell yourself into serfdom. On the 50th year, all the debts were paid, all the mortgages wiped out and anyone who was a slave was set free. It was a great idea and Jesus added one note to it. He said, "I've got news for you. You don't have to wait 50 years,; the jubilee is here." And so I would think the fourth element of the *vision of the future* would be new social and economic life styles which our situation at this time demands.