

THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS HOUSE IN THE RESURGENCE OF HUMAN MOTIVITY							
The Land of Mystery, where awe is intensified		The River of Consciousness where context is exploded		The Mountain of Care, where sociological passion is expended		The Sea of Tranquility where timelessness is experienced	
1	9	10	13	14	17	18	21

1. As I found myself yesterday saying, for what seemed like the fifteenth time, that there is nothing new in the work we did this summer, a very old piece of wisdom came back to me. The most radical disclosure in your life is not the disclosure of something new, it is when self-consciousness is brought to bear on the very deeps of who you are.

2. So what happened to us this summer is something like what happens to you in RS-I. There is nothing new and yet the most radical kind of self-consciousness is brought to bear upon the structures of your life and the style out of which you operate. I am persuaded that a year from now we will not recognize ourselves precisely because at this moment we are more self-conscious about who we are in history than we have been at any time in the last twenty years. The turn that has been made is that the new movement is going to happen, is going to manifest itself in history and it will be radically new, precisely because it will be a dramatic intensification of the old or a dramatic intentionalization of the old.

3. In this lecture we will look at how we see that already going on in the arena of the religious house. This is a fruitful place to look, for the religious house is where the movement, the order, the church and the world mingle.

4. We will reflect particularly in the arena of the religious house and its relation to the resurgence of human motivity in our time. I find it hard to talk in this arena without using the categories of the Other World. What we have known about the religious house is that it is a visit to the Other World. And more than that, it is the tactical operation that every historical order has used to bend history. You create enclaves across the globe. You implant new cells, cells that will transform the entire body of society. The presence of religious houses across the face of this globe is in itself the signal of human resurgence, and over the past four years has itself been a catalyst and participated in the resurgence of human motivity that is even now going on. I want to talk about that under the four categories of the Other World. The religious house is a visit to the Land of Mystery, a visit to the River of Consciousness, a visit to the Mountain of Care, and a visit to the Sea of Tranquility.

5. Our experiment with being an order in history took a turn in 1968 when we decided to create religious houses and to be those people who lead others on the journey. Campbell in his book Myths Men Live By has been very helpful to me here in describing the mythological journey which mankind needs to take. Reading that chapter again on Monday, "The Inward Journey," I found new categories with which to talk about my own relationship to this outfit. At some point I said a yes and began to engage myself in the dynamics and the structures of the movement. Then a split occurred. Taking seriously for a moment the language that I am a bundle of relationships, the split is always something like this: the whole bundle of relationships that I have lived my life out of is in radical tension with this whole new bundle of relationships (movement structures, activities, etc.). A split occurs, a painful split, and I suspect that that kind of separation occurs or has occurred for each of us in this room. There is the decision to go on a radical journey. It most often takes the form of internship, and an encountering of the fantastic demons of your own being. Next there is the return or the re-engagement or the recreation of all your relationships.

6. The symbolization of this radical journey is most effective when people do something external and objective, like picking up all their stuff and moving to Chicago. We saw that in order to enable that massively we had to multiply the possibilities for such a symbolization. Therefore it became picking up your bags and moving to the religious house in the regional center. The most radical thing about the Local Church Project is that we are out to take people on that journey while they are sitting in their own house, in their own local church. In the midst of all their friends, we are out to take them on precisely that radical journey.

7. To do this we need to use every spirit method that we have been able to create over the past four years. Our creation of spirit methodologies has been in response to the radical demand that we take people on that journey. I suppose the most dramatic form in the religious house of that journey is the Odyssey. It was not until a woman walked out of our Odyssey that I began to realize what a radical thing, what a radical visit to the other world, the Odyssey has been for people. They come in. You do not give them any context. You plunk them in a bare room, with nothing but a worm-eaten stump, or a boulder. And they sit there for forty-five minutes or an hour. Then they wash their hands and you give them some obscure pronouncement on their life. After that they have become pretty clear that something radical is about to happen. There is an element of the fast in the odyssey. You do not get enough to eat, and you are always struggling with that. There is an element of the watch. You only let them sleep three hours. They are always struggling with being in the odyssey. And the final feast is the element of the ball. A wild ecstatic abandonment occurs there.

8. The religious house as the Land of Mystery has its parallel in terms of the old category of the shrine. We need to talk about the religious house as a dynamic, but it is also true that the religious house is a place, a specific place. It is utterly critical in a movement like ours that there be a place of awe where that awe just lingers and lingers. We are clear that "Room E" is the name of a research coordination dynamic, and yet the

actual Room E on the West Side Campus has awe about it. So the religious house is a stronghold, shrine, an awe place, and not because of any particular thing you do in terms of decor, although that is important. It is because it is the place where people know they are going to experience awe, it is the place where people know transparency is going to occur. They anticipate it and they come from miles around, to participate in it. One woman told me last week that she wants to commute from Shreveport to New Orleans to be in the house and work in New Orleans Week I's, then go back home Week II. It is only an hour trip by plane, and it makes sense in many ways. The religious house has that kind of attraction because there is awe lingering there.

9. The intensification of that awe is going to occur because of the religious exercises--the watch, the fast, and the ball. It is going to intensify because those are the exercises of the corporates. What they intensify is our embodiment of the corporates or the common memory. We have deep old colleagues in New Orleans. When I got there I discovered that they knew as much about the movement as I did. The only thing different about me was that when they bumped into me, they bumped into us, all of us in the movement. And to the extent that I embodied the common memory, they bumped not only into us but they bumped into our memory which goes back to the beginning of mankind itself. That is to say, when they bumped into me, they bumped into mystery, because they bumped into the radicality of human existence. If we intensify our being in the world, it is utterly critical that we intensify our not being of this world, which is what the religious exercises are going to do to us. The religious houses are going to be radicalized as they participate in those religious exercises

10. Let me move on to the religious house as a manifestation of the River of Consciousness. This can be seen primarily in the contextual explosion that the religious house creates in the region. If you have never had the experience of starting a religious house in a region, it is too bad. Everybody ought to have that, because of the contextual explosion that occurs. You often see it in an individual, but when you start a religious house you see the whole region's context exploded. It has to do with freedom. It has to do with people in the region becoming aware of a body of people living there who control their own context. There is nobody else in society who does that. Everyone else turns over this aspect or that aspect of his operating context to somebody else--mass media, boss, family or whatever. But when people walk into a religious house they are clear that here are people who have invented their own context. They control it, and therefore, they are free. There is radical ambiguity, radical arbitrariness in that. But it is the rawest freedom that people experience in society today. It appears as the reflective structure built into every gathering and into every encounter with the movement, the church and the world.

11. We had some fun one Regional Council. I had been an advocate for a long time of the need for a bestiary. In the medieval period they had a bestiary with a page and a picture of the demon, his name, his identifying characteristics, and the procedures by which you could exorcise him. We need to identify for each state of being the form which Satan takes. This gave you a way of getting distance on what was happening in your own being. We fooled with that in Regional Council one time, and it was fantastic in the sense that people were able to identify the self-talk in themselves and their colleagues that was dragging them down, that was ripping them away from the mission. It brought the struggle into consciousness.

12. I remember one of my primal images of how that journey of consciousness goes on. One Sunday afternoon after a course a member of the Order asked my wife and me where we drew the line in our relationship to the movement. Where do we say we give this much and that is it, where do we stop, where does our commitment end? Extremely helpful questions. I did not think so at the time. but it gave me a way to get a handle on the struggle that was going on in me. The reflective structure that we build into the Regional Council, the metro meetings, and into the interior structures of the house enables people to do that. Every historical order has done this. They create a catechism like the Reformation did. They create retreat structures. Ignatius of Loyola created a thirty-day discipline that produced self-consciousness in terms of the interior struggle.

13. The intensification of this dynamic in the religious houses is going to be the Other World charts. For the first time I am excited about the possibilities for the Solitary Office. I have been clear from the beginning that we are after one thing with the Solitary Office and that is to give me and to give every man the possibility of possessing every shred of his self-consciousness, to give me and everyman the possibility of being present to all of his presence, of being conscious about all of his consciousness, to own his entire life. That happened to us in a radical way this summer with these charts, and therefore I anticipate an explosion relative to our consciousness here. I do not think we have begun to experience the kind of inventions of consciousness that are going to come in terms of decor, songs, the solitary office, and reflective structures that will be birthed by these charts.

14. The religious house is a manifestation of the Mountain of Care. The presence of the religious house gives people the sociological passion without which they do not have that possibility. When people bump into a religious house, they bump into people who are radically expending themselves. We joke about the grim drawn faces and the baggy eyes and the ghostly flesh. But by God, that gives people permission to see that you could be serious when nothing else around them gives them that possibility. Our life style permits us to say to local church pastors that what it means to be a pastor is to see that every sheep in your flock gets himself significantly sheared and alaughtered. That is what it means to care for a human life. This is the foundational issue that we have on our hands relative to that experiment and relative to society--what does it mean to care for a human being? How can we get it said that Jesus was right that what it means to care for a human being is to give him a way to get himself significantly killed? That comes as a great surprise even to churchmen who ought to know better.

15. It comes from bitter experience when I say that to be a prior is also to take responsibility for people's symbolic life. We lost a church because the rectory had a bunch of sentimental decor on the walls. Standing before that symbolic life they had no possibility of reconstructing the Local Church. They might have a quotation out of one of our songs, and right next to it a poster that said "Somebody had the courage to give me a daily" with a picture of a flower on it. I do not know what I was thinking of. We know that what you have on the wall, what you are looking at, what you are brainwashing yourself with, either enables you to bring off the task you are about or does not.

16. It is our vows, it is our discipline that addresses people in the arena of the Mountain of Care. It is the fact that we live on stipends and they are bare stipends, It is the fact that we run our cars into the ground. As one priest who came to our first open house put it "I have to go home and throw out my pre-marital counseling book. I have to radically revamp what it means to be a family." This after seeing that it was possible for a family of six people to live in one room. This kind of caring is an address on people. The service orders always had this. But talk to people now in the historical religious orders and you soon realize the way they have sold out is that they understand their life style to be sub-human. They decided to be sub-human for the sake of getting something done. They could run parochial schools as long as they had sisters and brothers who understood themselves to be radically committed, who understood themselves to be the most human thing there was around. The other orders do not seem to understand that now. They think that secular people are human. They have decided to be less than human for the sake of the church, and once you have decided that about your life style it is not long before you collapse.

17. The intensification of the Mountain of Care is going to be in the arena of guru training. The kinds of manuals and documents that we looked at yesterday mean that there is going to be an intensification of our capacity to take people on the journey and of our capacity to release in ourselves and in others sociological passion. This is going to be the resurgence that will make the New Social Vehicle happen.

18. The religious house is a manifestation of the Sea of Tranquility. It has been clear to me for some time that the religious house has the capacity to give people a sense of timelessness about their own life. You have to be careful here. One of the remnants of second story-ism takes the form of being aloof or rising above the cares of this world as though the Sea of Tranquility were a negation of the Mountain of Care. It is rather the opposite. The Sea of Tranquility is the final return. It is the nonchalance of the man who is unserious about his own seriousness or has a sense of timelessness about even his own life.

19. There has been a shift in terms of the interior life of regional councils. This is true not only in my own region, but others I talk to have experienced the same thing. When I first came into the movement, you experienced a radical churning in your stomach at regional council. I will never forget the first one. I went to. You just sat there, and there was this churning in your stomach. What was happening was the warring of the gods. I did not know that then, and I could not figure out why I kept going back. But I did and I came to think of regional council as that place where we go and everyone's stomach churns. What was going on was, as the demands were objectified and the assignments were put up, you saw your bundle of relationships being jeopardized. You saw the impingements on your life style and your time design. As you tried to hang on to this piece of "time off" or this piece of "other obligation" it was just ripping in there and your insides are churning.

20. That dynamic is still present in regional council, but there is a kind of nonchalance now that comes from a new sense of destiny. Several things have helped that. One is the six year penetration plan and the fact that the local church project has shifted our context concretely to a six year projection. So we have new ways of absolving, new ways of creating nonchalance. Another is

the whole dynamic of celebration. People in the movement are a sign to the world already because they can celebrate. I do not mean what the liturgical renewal magazines mean by celebrate. I mean the people who celebrate the rapture that walks with woe. Movement people have that kind of abandonment now. We saw it in the way they picked up on the waltz, on the ball, on the religious exercises this summer. The religious houses have the capacity to generate on that celebrational dynamic. Our understanding of the Sea of Tranquility will be intensified by the fact that we now have a twenty year imagery and context. Thus there is that much more distance on life timelines, that much broader a context in which families can see their struggle to be a family. There is a sense that the service I am performing now is also preparing me for a greater service, not a promotion, but greater service, more radical expenditure. There is the kind of joy that comes in knowing that you are shifting history with that expenditure.

21. What a prior experiences in the religious house is that people are living off his spirituality. The one in charge of one of these things experiences it as if it were a wounded grizzly bear. It used to be when I would get a teaching assignment I would be filled with more dread than fascination. It is the other way around now; I am glad to get sent out teaching. But when I get back it's like facing a mortally wounded grizzly bear. And if you put your hand in the wrong place, it gets cut off. One time I walked into the house and everybody kept coming up to me telling me about this which is wrong and that which is wrong and it is as though nobody else can deal with these things. After getting above my eyeballs with that it dawned on me suddenly that the only thing that mattered was that I came off as a spirit man or that I was a man of faith. But your coming off as a spirit man is not for the sake of yourself. What the situation needs is a spirit man. That you can be it is unbelievable, but the dead really do decide to live and the lame really do walk. One man in our region last year used to collapse any time he experienced anything like a life encounter. The guy has now become a giant. He has no reason even to be standing. That is, he is still an ordinary, crummy human being. But people can live off of our spirituality, and to the extent that we deepen that spirituality, we catalyze the resurgence in human motivity for our time.

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