

Meditation

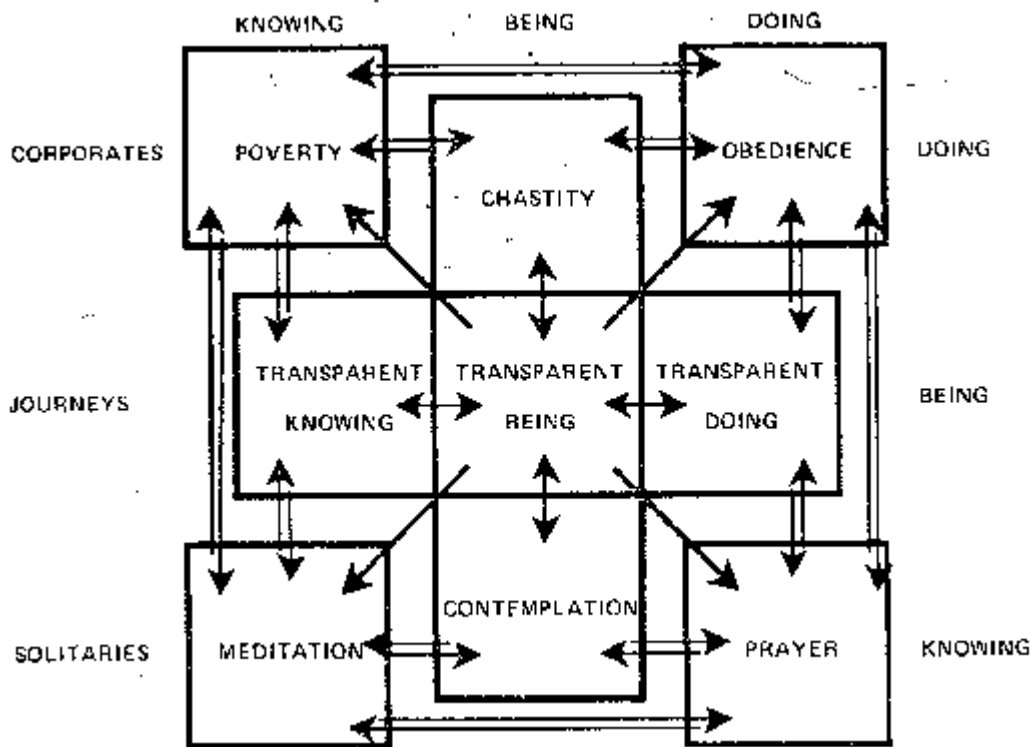
Without disciplined corporateness the reconstruction of the local congregation cannot occur. You are passe individualists if you think for a moment that you could do this as an individual, or that you could do it in your congregation alone. You're going to do that only as a disciplined body of people across this globe, marching together in step. But far more true it is that you'll not come off with the sociological reconstruction of the local congregation if you and I do not experience at this moment of our lives something akin to a new birth. We have to find the release mechanism for the pushing out of spirit within us, in ways that heretofore have not happened.

There is nothing very unusual about what I have just said. Whenever there has been a radical revolution in the civilizing process it has been built upon a new breakloose of the spirit. There are many, many revolutions in history that are not what I mean by *radical* revolution. Whenever radical ones have happened, they have been built upon a new breakloose of spirit on finding a fresh way to articulate what it means to pray, what it means to contemplate, what it means to meditate, what it means to be one of poverty, what it means to be an obedient one, what it means to be a chaste one, what it means to know transparently in the deeps, what it means to do transparently in the deeps, what it means - how shall I put it? - to be your being transparently.

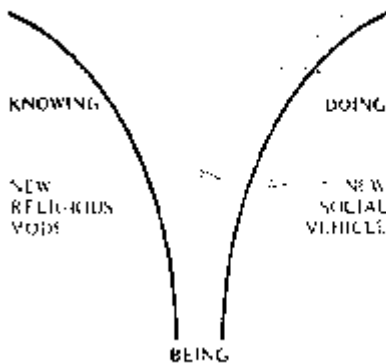
When you look back through the stream of history, this is easily discernible. Every social carriage that has been radically reconstructed has been preceded by a breakloose of the spirit spring of life. Think of the great social vehicle of Hinduism. It's not a religion: it's a great social vehicle. Think of how that oozed its way into every consciousness of the East and manifested itself in every social structure. That was preceded by a brand new invention of illumanness, if you please, which is finding articulation relative to the spiritual oozes that bubble up from the interior. And so it has been time and again in history.

In these hours together we are trying to get at the bottomless bottom of the new religious mode. The black revolution is waiting, the youth revolution is waiting, the feminine revolution is waiting, the revolt of the non-Western world against the Western world is waiting for this task to be done. And it shall be done! If you and I cannot do it, that will not upset the Lord. And if we choose not to do it, he'll not be upset. He'll just raise up a stone or a stick or a mountain-a little here or a little there and accomplish it. The times demand it! The one thing that's very interesting about the Lord: he always does exactly what the time demands that's how we've got being-in-itself by the tail, if we've got guts enough to crank it a little bit.

The complexity in the charts which describe the solitary office, as we call it, is overwhelming. I find it extremely difficult to hold in my mind. When the charts are put on the wall, this is the way I believe they should be put up (see chart). (I find that life is rather exciting when you go around expressing your opinions as long as your guts are in them. I don't care for people w ho express their opinions and then don't deliver their presence into their opinions. But it s fun to go around expressing your opinions as long as your guts are in them and then allow other people to do whatever they like.)



Here are the charts: this is poverty, chastity, and obedience. This is meditation, contemplation, and prayer. And this is transparent kknowing, transparent kbeing (you have to say it a little hit differently here because you don't mean what most people mean when they use the words know, be, and do; for us they are under the rubric of the intensification of knowing) and this is transparent k-doing. Now the interrelationship of these is tremendously important. You have to draw arrows as are shown in the diagram. This is a dynamic construct and not a static one. If you are to know what you mean by prayer, you have to see its relationship to contemplation and meditation and also its relationship to obedience and to doing.



Those of you who are familiar with some of the graphics of our group know that we began with the knowing pole, which shoved us into the doing pole. Then the bottom broke loose, and that drove us into the being pole of

life Now being does not exist. Someone said to me the other day that a halo over any spirit man was a brass hero. I like that very much. That is, a spirit man doesn't exist. He is sheer presence, if you please. His being does not exist: there is nothing there. It becomes pretty clear that being is an intensification of knowing or being is knowing become transparent And being is the intensification of doing, or it's when doing becomes - utterly transparent Having been shoved into the being pole, we began to try to grasp what the intensification of knowing is And in our opinion, this illustration shows what the intensification of knowing is.

Now as we begin to move with rigorous seriousness into the sociological or soc-spiritual reconstruction of the local church. We have to move in our own reflection to the understanding of the intensification of doing, and then hopefully we'll be able to grasp something of what is meant by the category "transparent being." And when you begin to intensify the whole right hand side of the chart. Prayer is the knowing on this side. When you begin to think in terms of the way life actually comes, you do not think; according to the relations of the horizontal arrows. You think according to the relations of the vertical arrows in the diagram. When you're dealing with the abstractions, which you have to do, you think according to the relations of the horizontal arrows. When you are dealing with practical manifestation, you think with the relations of the vertical arrows. And at this moment I'm concerned with the practical manifestation.

Now, I have to stop and talk a little bit to myself. I'm uneasy, because before I do what I'm going to do now, all of you need what I call "lecture number one," in which we look at just the basic meaning of meditation. What I want to do today is to take that basic meaning and blow the bottom out of it. And so I'm uneasy. I've got to try to do both give the basic meaning and push it to the depths.

The second word that I have to say to myself because of my overwhelming insecurity is that what I'm going to do this morning has never been done before. I'd like to be in a small group with our collegium in the morning before I start out over 70,000 fathoms of water. But I thought that because this is a research assembly and we've come here to push, you could put up with me and my stuttering which manifests that I am nervous, and I'll try to put up with your response to it all. So I think; that I'm prepared now to start lecturing.

In our day, and I mean this is a wondrous day, man has rediscovered himself in ways that sometimes he just doesn't realize. And I mean *man*, not some asinine religious character like myself; I mean just man in on the street, secular man. If I had to say what were the three most important discoveries about himself. I'd say we have discovered sociality in our day as if we never knew it before. We have discovered that a man is in society like a fish is in water that there is no such thing as an individual, no such thing as an individual, no such thing as society! Both of these are abstractions. There are only individuals in society and society in individuals. Those of you who want to be gigantic individualists are going to have to learn all over again that only in the midst of corporateness are you an individual, and by corporateness I mean the intentional manifestation of sociality. That's the first thing we've discovered.

The second thing we've discovered is that we are freedom. This is overwhelming. It's not that *has* freedom. That is a degenerated seventeenth and eighteenth century psychologistic understanding of man that man has freedom. Today we have discovered that man is freedom: he is raw creativity, if you please. Or, to use a phrase from the lecture on prayer. We have discovered that man is act, that man is do, that man is thrust, as Luther would like to put it.

The third thing that we have discovered is that there is a mystery in life. Not the kind of mystery that goes away tomorrow when we learn more: but there is mystery that never goes away. And man is the consciousness of consciousness only when he self-consciously embraces his relationship to that mystery that never goes away. If I were talking on that subject. I'd like to illustrate it for you in the scientific disciplines, in the hippie movement and in the old youth revolts.

Those are the three things that man has discovered about himself. Meditation has to do with the new discovery by man that man is sociality. Contemplation has to do with the discovery that man is mystery; he is his relationship to mystery in the final sense. And prayer is man's grasp of himself as freedom. I am going to deal with sociality, so I'll not deal with all of these at the moment.

Man has discovered, I would say, that he does not exist except in a social nexus. When the Church uses this word, "meditation," it is pointing not to our sociality *per se*, which is the first step, but to our selfconscious embracement of our sociality. That is, not only are you in society whether you like it or not, but society is in you. I remember reading a sermon by Dwight L. Moody. I don't know where he got it, but he said that God got Lot out of Sodom, but he never got Sodom out of Lot. Meditation is the self-conscious embracing of our sociality.

The word is used really in two different ways. The first way that you use "meditation" is to talk about a state of being. And that state of being is the self-conscious appropriation of our sociality. The second way you use it is an exercise of contemplation which, whatever else it is doing, enables us to meditate in terms of a state of being.

When you do your solitary exercise and are dealing with meditation, that's nothing. That's a huge joke. And if you can't laugh at it. It's like going to church or participating in a liturgy. If that isn't the most asinine thing you know to go aside and spend thirty minutes going through that great big old play when you know good and well that life is out there! And so what that becomes is a means the play in worship becomes a living reality in ever!! life situation that you're in. That's what the exercise of meditation is.

I'm not much interested in that point at the moment. I am interested in meditation as phenomenological reality, as an inward state. There's where I want to begin. But before I do that in some detail. I have to relate to its counterpart in the diagram; and that is poverty. In meditation and poverty we're dealing with intensified knowing; the chart of knowing comes in there too. Then I have to say a word about its relationship to prayer and to contemplation. That will be enough for me to do. In order to do that I have to fool around a little bit in what I want to come to later before I'm ready to do it.

Meditation as a state of being in itself very obviously, is brooding. But brooding never takes place alone. Brooding takes place only when you are conversing with another. And this indicates that meditation is dealing with the community before community, the internalized community. When you use the word, "sociality," you are not talking about the fact that you are among people you can wave at. You are talking about the fact that people are in you. That's what the term 'sociality' means. And meditation deals with this. That's why I like to say that prayer is the act before the act. Likewise meditation is the community prior to the community, if you please.

Now, meditation as a state of being is a dynamic, like all states of being are. There is something going on, brooding, and mark you, this is a relationship with others. Brooding is like making stuff. Yet it's a funny kind of stuff: it's almost pre-stuff. It is almost taking the void and bringing order before order into that void; I call that "pre-stuff," but it's imaginal stuff. It's the stuff and it's a glob for me, out of which you forge your operating images.

That means then, in relationship to contemplation, meditation mediates the mystery. Maybe it would help you if I just say something really fast: meditation is that which creates God. If you let Tillich come to your mind, you'll remember that he talked about the God beyond God. The God that you and I relate to practically as the God this side of God. Idolatry is when you don't know that. You can bite here and not get any mystery and you can reach there and not get any mystery. I think that the reason people do not know what it means to wall; and talk with God in our day: is that they no longer know about the state of being of meditation, which mediates the burning presence of mystery. That's its function if you please; it literally creates God. Only I mean meditation prepares the stuff, the glob, out of which you forge your images. Yet you have to remember that the mystery itself occasions the meditative process that mediates the mystery. For only when life puts you up against sheer mystery is the state of meditation even possible. It's a polar dynamic as I grasp it.

Now as an aspect of prayer and this is most exciting to me-sometimes I call this glob an interior montage that is in all of us. Anyway, that glob is the stuff out of which prayers are made. To put that in a more secular way: no artist ever created the miracle of an art piece-that's prayer if you please without first engaging in the state of being of meditation. What I'm trying to point out is that you're dealing with humanness right up to your armpits. You're dealing with what you've been engaged in all your life, whether you were selfconscious or not. This is the stuff that creates the act before the act. which is that which alters the course of history. And history was never altered in any way except through prayer. That's what you mean by the deed before the deed, if you please.

But then what is the relationship of meditation to prayer? It has to do with this fine spun glob of preimages. An image is always practical. The difference between an image and a concept or a construct is that the image is always practical. It has to do with defining myself in the concretions of life. And it's only the pull of action, or the demand for creative expression, that even triggers meditation or allows it to happen. This is to say: nobody ever knew of the state of meditation who was divorcing himself from the practical demands of life.

Now don't get this mixed up with the Religious in history. For although there are many phonies, just like there are nonReligious who are phonies, the Religious are most highly practical individuals. This is to say, monasticism itself was only for the sake of the mission of changing the world, and I mean secular society. I wish that some of the Catholic orders could recover that in our time.

Now I have to relate meditation fundamentally to poverty. Poverty is detachment-I don't want to talk about that-but poverty is a state of being. It has nothing to do with how much money you have or don't have, or what you spend or do not spend-nothing whatsoever to do with how little you eat, or how nice your clothes are or whether you live in a hole in the wall infested with rats. That's not poverty. Poverty is the detachment from the things in life that wish to reduce you to your relationship with them. As long as you have to have children, as long as you have to have your wife, as long as you have to have your country, as long as you have to have your splitlevel house, you don't know what detachment is, and you have not experienced poverty.

I like to put it something like this. If a person cannot come here to Chicago and live in this place, then he has to come. If he can, then it's not necessary. Unless one is detached in that fashion, this process cannot happen. The last thing you want to do or can do is to brood on the mystery. The last thing that can happen to you is an address of the mystery that desires to become selfconscious. And it is fundamentally out of this stuff that transparent knowing takes place. Maybe that's enough for the broad context, though you can see perhaps two or three lectures just in that area.

I want to deal with meditation under four basic rubrics. I wept to talk about meditation as first of all inherent community, second as pristine dialogue, then as ultimate covenant - fanatical discipline - and lastly as incessant warfare. Now, I don't think that that's very good poetry, but it has to be poetry because that's the only way you can talk about it.

Now let's start. We're trying to look at this state of being first this way, and then that way, and then another way, and then still another way, trying to say out loud what we think we see. First of all, meditation is inherent community. Before you ever become aware that there is such a thing as community, you already have a community inside yourself. And ah, what a community it is for those of us who walk in the way of the Lord. There is Jeremiah, Amos, Mark, Paul and Augustine and Anselm and Thomas, Luther, Calvin, Rauschenbusch, and my great grandmother, and your great grandmother, and then all of those hosts who walked along the way with these giants whose names shall never be remembered on earth. We'll know them only when we all get to heaven. And what a day of rejoicing that'll be when you meet my great grandmother. I meet yours. Now that's assuming a lot.

This is the community that is inside me. The ones that are inside me such as Amos, for instance, are far more real to me than most of the flesh and blood people I come across. I used to make fun of that sentimental image, "He walks with me and He talks with me," but I don't make so much fun of it any more, because Amos and I belong to the same tribe. So, like they do in Africa, we link pinkies and we go down the road walking together and talking together. Sometimes he is mean as anything talking to me, and sometimes he, is fantastically encouraging to me. And both of us have a little secret. He knows that I could not be who I am today if he were not with me. And perhaps a more important secret is that he knows that he could not be what he is without me today. Do you grasp that? The things we have done to and for one another are wonders to behold. I tell you that Luther is a part of me night and day-that's one thing about this community: they never go home: they are with you night and day.

Now you have to expand this a little bit, because I just named one group and really there are all kinds of people in your head. During a lecture the other day I was sitting on the floor and was worried a little bit. I heard a voice inside me say, "Hi," and I recognized the voice immediately. It belonged to a little neighborhood lad who is

wandering around here these days, I said, "Hi," to him when he addressed me, and I said it as nicely as I could because I am scared to death of that little boy and I go out of my way never to touch him. But as we went on in our conversation, I said, "I think that the time has come to call the police on you." And he came back immediately, "Kids beat up, windows broken, step up the momentum of stealing typewriters, and whatever else." And you know, he's friendly as anything. He just said that's just the way that just the way it is.

Have you ever noticed that in this community inside there's never anyone who is really angry? They don't have to be. They just say it the way it is. Then they leave you with it. (This kind of talk in your mind, you are probably aware, is usually with nouns. The verbs are left out. It is high shorthand, and sometimes the words are scarcely there. It's almost like a flash of an image back and forth. You are aware of that.)

And have you ever noticed that even the most demonic people are there? Hitler is in my head, and I can't get rid of him. But he is never demonic. Everything he tells me is like a statement from angels. He just tells me that if you do what he did, what happens is what happened. And he's not mean at that. What he says, I think, is angelic wisdom.

And so with the neighborhood lad. That was angelic wisdom: "Call the police, and that and that and that will happen." And I said back to him, "I think I'll postpone the police a little bit." I became a new human being, and I started listening to the lecture all over again.

Outside that communion of saints I do not know who I am, Mark you, they're all saints. Jesus gave it all and Hitler is as much loved of God as I am; and don't you ever forget that. And the black neighborhood lad, I think, is a little more loved of God than I am at this moment in history. But I do not know who I am outside of that great communion of saints. Isn't it funny how that phrase "communion of saints" became nonsense because it was not rooted in humanness itself? Everybody and his brother is out looking for koinonia, looking for community, wanting to be accepted. When you dare to meditate, and I mean that as a state of being and not as an exercise, when you dare to be present to this host within yourself, you never have to seek the affection of one other soul in the world. I tell you, I'd like to take most of the psychologists who have brainwashed you and me about rearing children and about joy juice being stored up inside you, and just scream this at them.

It's been a long time since there have been giants of individuals. Some fellow we took out to dinner not long ago was intrigued as anything with what we are doing, but he felt he had to say a few words against corporateness. And so we let him talk. What he said was, "Corporateness takes away your individuality." And there I was, sitting across the table. I am an individual, and I am the most corporate character that you could ever find. The individual giant is a corporate man, and he begins his corporateness with community before community. He walks and talks with those within.

The Roman Catholics have forgotten much of their wisdom on saints. The concept of your saint as one who watches over you, your guardian angel, is an example. I wouldn't want to exist in this precarious world without one. And I haven't got just one. I have thousands upon thousands of guardian angels. You'd be amazed at how quickly Luther will move when I get my foot off the beaten path. When he calls me into question, it's really something. I am caught. These colleagues that sometimes stand up like banty roosters and call me into question aren't anything in comparison. I am called into question by Amos and by Gautama the Buddha. They are my defense. I sometimes think that most of my awakened life I have been under attack. Some people thought I was just standing there nude. But no! I have an army that's on my side. Now don't you think that they agree with me. I hey are the first ones to call me into question. Luther has been beaten to a bloody pulp by me, not simply once, but many times. That's all right. He and the others get up again and we grab fingers and go on again. This is community. And when a person no longer has to go out and find some twobit character like himself to be pleased with him, then he can spend his time trying to create community wherever he goes. But as long as you have to have community, you can never enable community for someone else. That's what I mean by inherent community.

I'll add just this closing word which I would have said a bit later in more detail. In meditation, this fellowship is not finally with Paul or with Amos. It's with God. Yet there's no fellowship with God outside of the communion

of saints. It's meditation as a state of being that enables you to be concretely related to the Mystery that never goes away.

II

What I am trying to do, however poorly, is to analyze human sociality in its deeps by using the phenomenological method. I'm trying, as a twentieth century man who has a very particular way of using language to indicate the notness, the justthereness that I mean to point to with the verbal sign *meditation*. And if anybody intends to stand where I am standing, looking in the direction that I'm looking at the object that, I have my sights on, he will say, yeah. Now he might add that he has called that "wiggly worm" rather than "meditation." But you see that doesn't bother me a bit, for I'm not interested in words for the sake of words but in signs and symbols that indicate the there ness that I am engaged in as a human being.

Meditation is **inherent community**. Secondly, meditation is **pristine dialogue**. Thirdly, it is **ultimate covenant**. Lastly, meditation is **relentless warfare**. Or-and I really prefer this it's a bloody battlefield.

I say meditation is **pristine dialogue**, that is, primeval dialogue, primordial dialogue. It's the dialogue down under all the dialogues that go on in our head. And if you remember, I'm insisting that unless a person meditates, he is not a human being. First of all, a person meditates whether he knows it or not. Dialogues go on every moment within our consciousness. But when I use the word "meditate", I mean self-conscious intentionality has been brought into our being relative to those dialogues. That's what I mean when I say that the word "meditation" points to a state of being. It's intentionality relative to the dialogues that finally defines it. Meditation as a spiritual exercise, is something different. I'm not talking about that right now.

Every man has the dialogue going on. It's very interesting to me that meditation, as it was brought to its fruition in the Middle Ages, fundamentally meant musing, reflecting. That's the way you and I are conditioned to use it. But in the twentieth century, we have become aware of the fact that musing is impossible unless there is an "other." You only muse in relationship to persons who are unsynonymous with yourself. As a matter of fact, the whole reflective process is grounded in that.

Secondly, when you think of musing, you think of an issue about which you muse. Recently, I read a paper that I'd read a long time ago, Gealy's article called "Encounter and Dialogue." The process of the dialogue he describes is something like this: life reaches up and hits you in the face. That's the encounter. Dialogue is that which takes place in relationship to that, so that the encounter gives you the issue about which you reflect. I want to come back to this and say that you go through the issue, but that dialogue always takes place with an "other". In the twentieth century we are clear about that. In the twentieth century, the fact that there is an "other" is more important than the issue about which you are reflecting. I think it is important to say that.

Now, where do these persons within our being come from? You remember that Adam Smith, who wrote *The Wealth of Nations* was also one of the ten or twelve greatest ethicists that the Western world has produced. Some of you remember the category he used - that of the, *generalized other*. Now think in terms of the twentieth century definition of conscience. By the conscience, we mean an interior dialogue between ourselves and the generalized other before whom we seek approbation and avoid, if we can, disapprobation. Do you follow that in terms of the philosophy that you're familiar with?

The *generalized other* that is inside you and that you talk with is a montage of the society that you are a part of represented through concrete individuals. That's what Adam Smith meant by the generalized other. In principle, we have a representational figure within ourselves who represents the whole cultural milieu that we talk with. In that sense, all of us who grew up in Ada, Ohio or in the United States of America, for instance, are pretty much alike. If you grew up in India, it's quite different.

In addition to that, you have your own covey of persons who have directly impacted you, whose names you can spot. Freud got hold of one of these in the super ego which represented your father. Now I'm not reducing Freud here. That father was the whole generalized other. But my own particular father is within there, also, talking to

me constantly. And your father is, too, in you but I don't have your father in me and some of you can be thankful that you don't have my father in you. So you have innumerable people within you.

This also includes objects. I grew up and discovered that when St. Augustine said that he went all over the land asking little flowers if the meaning of life was in them and they all answered back, "No." That was an experience. Trees talk to me! Buber is saying that the tree becomes a Thou which mediates the abstract Thou in the universe, which for me is the Mystery. You know dogs that talk to you, and as much as I despise kittens, I find that some of them have talked to me. That's embarrassing. Lots of these things are embarrassing, because you have people you wouldn't be caught dead with living within you. And I mean they are yacking in there. You can't shut them up. I think that the more you dislike them the more they insist on being heard.

Most people go through life unselfconscious of these people that are always talking to them inside. Don't you run across somebody once in a while that strikes you as particularly stupid? Some people come across this way to me when they are saying things that were said to them. and they don't have the slightest idea who the person was that said it. These are the ones who are utterly unselfconscious and therefore utterly irresponsible in life until they are conscious of who those voices are.

We have tried to list our saints for two years I mean those voices in us - and it is like pulling teeth. I'll not go into the psychological reasons, but when you have been asleep for fifty - eight years and you wake up that is a long time to be asleep! This is why those of you below age twenty ought to break out right now in the *Hallelujah Chorus*, if you are even remotely awake. Because when you get to be my age, oh what a human being you could be, simply because you knew the voices that were speaking to you and you knew the ones you had to say "No" to, and the ones to whom you can say "Yes".

The man of spirit, the man who (to use my jargon here) meditates, that is, brings self-consciousness to this community that dwells within him, becomes a person in that very act. To be a spiritual human being is fundamentally to decide what community you are going to live your life in dialogue with. This means that you begin to recover the names of those voices within you, understanding that every man lives out of some community. You silly individualists who get ashamed when you repeat an idea that somebody else gave to you! Why how stupid! All you are saying is that you haven't even begun to be intentional about your community because you've never had an idea that did not come out of a dialogue with others.

If anybody in the room ever knew Richard Niebuhr. I want you to hear carefully: I am Richard Niebuhr. I am so proud that he is my friend and that he dwells within me and about ninety-ninths of everything I know he taught me. I would want to stand on the rooftop and with pride. And, oh, shall I talk about Luther? Shall I talk about Paul? Do you think I'm ashamed to take Paul's great ideas? They're mine, for Paul is within me. And I am proud to be his friend. And I think he is proud to be my friend once in a while. This is intentionality.

Now for the Church. To be within the Church is to decide that the saints of the Church are your saints! To decide to be within the Church - I'm wondering if this isn't the most crucial decision. When we wake up in the Church, the question that we are going to ask somebody that joins the Church is. "Do you, with your whole being intend to embrace the saints of this community and that dialogue as the one that you fundamentally live out of?"

But then I have to spread this, for the Church of Jesus Christ is nothing. It is a symbol of all humanity. It stands for every human being that ever lived and every human being that ever will live. Do you understand that many of the hosts within my being have not yet been born? You say they don't talk? I wish you could get inside of me. It seems to me that these days they are raising a ruckus more than the ones from the past.

Then you always have a cultic hero. In the case of the Church, that is not a strong enough term. Everybody has a cultic hero who represents the host of the intentional community within him that he intends to define himself in dialogue with. This is why the eschatological hero is the representative of all mankind. Nikos Kazantzakis almost got to this in his book *Saviors of God* when he spoke of the cry of the ape. That cry of the ape is within my being. Jesus Christ is the representational figure that represents every bit of humanness from the beginning and every bit to the end. That is why we call him *The Man*. This means that all of life is dialogical.

The selection of the intentional community is that which gives content to my being. I am deeply persuaded that my freedom is my being but the content within that is defined by the dialogue which takes place between myself and the selected community in relationship to all the other voices within me. It is this dialogue which finally gives form to God. Do you understand that God is the great Unconditioned. He will not submit himself to anybody's image of Him. Yet, He is only present in the images in which you or I, out of the rudimentary dialogue, see Him. The dialogue is that, if you please, which creates God, which brings God near, which makes God a lively threeness in one's life.

This is **pristine dialogue**. It is meditation that finally bends history, for meditation is the stuff out of which prayers are formed, and prayers are the deeds before the deed which make history go this way rather than that way.

Now I want to go over this again under the poetry of covenant. Obviously, life is **covenant**. When you talk about meditation you are talking about the covenant in the depths.

Israel is probably the greatest thing that ever happened in history, relative to understanding that life is covenantal. I suppose you might sum up all of Israel's wisdom on this with these terms, which I got from Richard Niebuhr. There are three important things: One is that a man has to have an object of devotion to glorify, and without that, he is not a man at all. This is another way of saying that all men live by faith, and if it is not by faith in, relationship to that God then it is this god or it is another god. This defines humanness. Secondly, a man has to have a cause to serve. No man can be a man without a cause to serve. And thirdly, he has to have a community, to be loyal to. That is the covenantal basis that existed in Israel. I'm talking about that community to which one is loyal

This is a dynamic covenant. It is always on the move and never stands still. But it is a covenant. I think that it is best seen in marriage. I do not think that Christian marriage is based on love in any form whatsoever. If you don't believe that go read the marriage service in which the wisdom of the Church has been stated. You are not asked whether or not you love each other. You are asked whether you will promise each other. That is a normal covenant.

This means that in relationship to these saints within my being, I have made a covenant with them. I suppose the quality of covenant is best seen in that old gospel hymn. "Trust and obey, for there's no other way." This is a rigorous matter of obeying. It is almost as if when I disobey Luther, he leaves. It is almost as if when I disobey Amos, he packs up and goes. That is not exactly true. I am going to come back and take that hack in a little bit. But the one thing they require is obedience.

But you and I are not going to obey one we do not trust. And trust is not something that is finally born by activities unsynonymous with our own in any case. You see, I just don't show up trusting you one day. That is utterly impossible, because I know things about everybody in this room that they wouldn't dare tell their mothers. (That is another way of talking about original sin.) That is, every time you stumble on your colleague, he is crummy, and every time he stumbles on you, he finds crumminess. There is no trust that is immediate, unless you are naive. For one thing, we know about ourselves and, therefore, about our neighbor is that we are untrustworthy absolutely. The trust is in the decision.

Within trust is obedience and that is the guts of it. This is why in the Christian marriage ceremony when we took the word *obey*, we didn't know what we were doing. We were trying to overcome the antifeminine attitude of the Middle Ages but then we destroyed the whole service in the way we came about it. Now only should they have asked the woman, "Will you love, honor, and obey your husband?" but they also should have asked the man, "Will you have, honor, and obey your wife?" In case you have marriage problems, if you do not obey your wife, you haven't got any marriage. And if she does not obey you, then you haven't got any marriage. That is the guts of trust. And in my house, when my wife says hop. I hop - you had better hop, if you want any reasonable facsimile of a marriage. That is not moralism, that is ontology. That is the way life is.

Now, when you talk about the Church, you have a fantastic picture. When somebody asks where the Church is, do you know where I point? I point to my head and show them. There is Luther and there is Thomas-it's sort of a

council. And there Rauschenbusch sits. I have Amos shoved up front in the council in my mind. I don't know where you have him seated but Gautama is there. And there is a host of others. Of course, there are head priors out of my own life. I happen to know more about Luther than I do about Origen. I don't like John Wesley as well as I like some others, so I put John back a way.

This council sits there, and this is the Church. That is to say, the body - that is a sociological term for me - the body of Christ is within. Or, the Kingdom of God - which is a sociological category - is within. And when some of you cynics say that the Church is finished. I wish they would invent a machine that would just show you this. It is the only live thing in the universe as far as I am concerned. And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

This Church, which is the invisible Church, is always set in the visible Church. These are the old cigar boxes with steeples on them. But this Church inside cannot exist without the crummy cigar boxes with steeples on them. Calvin long since said in substance (when you act to know my friends EIS well as I know them, they let you paraphrase them very liberally) that though the Church is never synonymous with any operating image, it is always within some operating image. And the reason why those structures have to be there is that this kind of council cannot happen unless they're there.

It doesn't make any difference how crummy it is. You should have had my Sunday School teacher. I've often called her with selection, "Mrs. Bigbottom." She was one of the warpedest characters you ever saw, as I look back on it, but she communicated to an eightyyearold boy that God loved him. I didn't have the foggiest idea of what that meant at the time, but some twenty, thirty years later, when I was trying to get out of a foxhole on a beach in Saipan, suddenly what that stupid old fat lady put in my head started to burn, and I was afire with the awareness that no matter how crummy I was or this world was, God loved me and he loved the world he put me in.

The only Church you have to love is the one that is. To bring that into your being means that you accept responsibility personally for all its sins, for all its crimes, for all its decadence, as well as for all its wonders and all its glory. This is another way of saying, "I am the Church."

You have to have the external or the visible Church. It's as if you have many, many people to feed, and if you don't feed them, they don't keep lively. You see, the external Church in all of its crumminess is symbolism, the factory where symbolism is produced. And my saints within eat only symbols. This is what you mean by the means of grace within our time. Why, why do you read the scripture? As part of spiritual exercises, to feed the saints, if you please, to keep them lively. Why do you go to Eucharist? To Feed the saints.

Some character in our midst not long ago, when we were thinking about a marriage ceremony for several couples at once, said, "No! Marriage is an individual thing." When I got to my office I hit the ceiling. Nobody ever was married in the Church singly. The first vows you make are to the Church. When you go to that altar, you have a host of witnesses in your head that you talk with about this marriage. They are there bowing the knee before radical symbols of life along with you.

The reason you have spiritual exercises and the reason you engage in the exercise of meditation, for example, is to feed the saints, to keep them lively, to keep them quick, to keep them dancing within you. Oh, those of you who are tired and weighted down by life I say unto thee. Life is a dance. But the dance of it is the liveliness of the intentional community with whom you dialogue night and day. That is the dance of life.

The fourth point is that meditation is bloody warfare. The war is between the demons and the saints. The demons slip in but the interesting thing about demons is that they never slip in as demons. I may come in disguised as angels. One of the best ways for them to get through is to come in as a part of that *generalized other*.

This is to say that the dialogue you carry on with that great communion of saints is never about morality. The saints don't know how to talk about morality. The only language they know is that of ontology. They never ask me. "Did you do this immoral thing or the other?" Can you imagine a pious Methodist growing up in Ada, Ohio, in a Church which had reduced all of the great saints into little petty bourgeois moralists? This means that the demons had become so numerous and powerful that they had destroyed the communion of saints within me and

stolen their garments. And they were sitting there as some little pious, moral Luther, some little pious big old fat Thomas Aquinas, and some little old shriveled up moral female called Paul. Oh you want to know what the sickness of the Church and the sickness of humanity is today? It is that we have mixed the gospel up with the moralism of bourgeois man out of the Victorian Age of the last century.

In the battle within, the saints make war on the demons, which are always disguised as moral angels to destroy them. Let me mention a few angles. "I cannot get up and march with the troops of Jesus Christ, because I have my widdle childwen I have to take of." That would slip a demon in just like that, wouldn't it. We are so sentimental: about our children. We use them as one the first escapes from having to stand before the Sanhedrin of saints within us. Or they come in with a little petty moral concept of being lo9yal to your nation. One of the great things of the youth culture today is that they have risen up with the saints to destroy the demons disguised as moral angels. This is what I mean by *angel*.

This is another way of saying that demons always disguise themselves as the generalized other the common opinion that morality is being able to stagger by a saloon rather than doing something about the inhuman treatment of the black people of this world. That last is ontology. For it has to do, finally, with your relationship to the mystery in life. I tell you. This is a bloody battlefield. Somebody wrote me a letter just the other day and took me to pieces because of what she called my neglect of my children. We had a battlefield, the saints and the demons within my being. For, you see, what she was after was to crush anything beyond a kind of petty bourgeois moralism. Shall I mention some more of these'? This is why St. Augustine called the virtues of the generalized other *splendid vices*. But, I mean, they were vices!

The Christian faith very early understood that its primal categories were not good and evil. The primal categories are sin and faith. Sin has to do with being inauthentic, while good and evil relative categories in all places. This is why the saints never require anything of me but authenticity. You young ones hearken to that and know who your friends really are. There is only one question you are going to be asked when you get to heaven- if you'll allow me to use that poetry there's only one failure in life and that's the failure to get to Heaven, only one. The only question they're going to ask you is, "Did you live an authentic life?" This is why even at the last moment, with the thieves on the cross, you can become an authentic person. But brother, when you close your eyes for the last time it's the judgement of God. You're frozen in an inauthentic life, as Sartre says.

This is present in the Lord's Prayer. "Lord lead me not into temptation." (That word really. I think, is trials.) "Don't lead me into the bloody battlefields within." Then he goes on to say, "But if you do fetid me into temptation, then deliver me from the inauthentic." That is what it is concerned with. "Don't let me surrender," is another way of saying it. This is meditation. Recently I pointed out that for the man of faith there is only one enemy. All of the demons who pull you this way and pull you that way, are out to see that you are in good health and get to live to be ninetytwo and that you have a lot of grandchildren and a splitlevel house plus \$20,000! Aren't these splendid vices'? You have but one foe-many enemies maybe, but one foe-and that is Satan.

In one way this make it easy. You know where, as a man of the spirit, you have to direct your attention. The only trouble is. Satan seems so big, and he has big old wings and a great big old tail, and he carries that threetoot pitchfork. He is a fearsome thing to have to fight. And there is just one way to do it. And I just did it for you. You name the demon. The moment you are able to name the demon, he is unmasked. And I don't know whether it is like a Martian or something but when you unmask him, he disappears. And the way you name the demon is that you call it what it is, and the best you can call it is a *splendid vice*. Now, mark you, children are simply wonderful, but if they are the meaning of your life, then a demon, disguised as an angel, will, if he hasn't already destroy you as a self. The only way you can destroy that demon is to name it what it is. I have nasty names for that, but I'll stick to Augustine's *splendid vice*.

He's unmasked, which is to say the meaning of life is in God alone and not in any created thing. But when you're out to slay the eternal foe, then this war is never won. Didn't you used to hope that maybe, perhaps, it would at least get easier? I'm sure it must act easier after fifty-eight years, but up to fifty-eight I'll swear it's gotten harder. It's never done this wrestling to be a self. Isn't it terrible the way we treat the old people, as it the battle is over? No, no, my papa was retired for thirty-five years. Can you imagine that? And we stick them aside somewhere as if they don't need any help in the great battle of Armageddon within their being.

There is a second battle and the second is worse than the first. In the second battle you become aware in the mist of fighting the demons, of God standing off to the side with his hands on his hips just looking. Extremely irritating! But when you're busy with the devil, you don't have much time to worry about God's inhumanity, the Mystery just standing aside. But the second irony is that it's his war to begin with! When you've slain the devil, then you reach out for the prize the Mystery. But it starts to flee. God starts to run. So you had better be swift of foot, and if you are, you'll get him by the nape of the neck. Now you and I know why he is fleeing. It's because we want to know his name, that is, we want to give him form, we want to give him an image, without which we cannot relate to the Mystery. And the Mystery's essence is: nobody names him!

In the wrestling match of Jacob, Moffatt translates the angel as *the nameless one*. I like that. That is what you mean by the Mystery. God is beyond man's power to comprehend. Every attempt to draw his image is inadequate. This is to say that God is freedom. God is always beyond any net we have thrown over him. But I got him by the nape of the neck. He has to wrestle, and I mean we have it out! By this time, since I have slain Satan, God is over against a protagonist, and we wrestle all night.

Granted, it is a lonely experience, as Jacob found out. It is an experience in pitch darkness, as Jacob understood. It is dreadfilled to the point of death. For one secret you know: this one, *the Mystery*, gave you life and one day he will destroy you-give you your death. Ah, what a one to be wrestling with. Finally he gets a hip lock on me, but I hang on and drag him with me.

In the story of Jacob you remember that the way God is able to capitulate is that he turns Jacob's question back on him. He says, "All right, Man, what is your name?" And Jacob didn't want to say it because his name was *The Deceiver*. You know he had raped his brother and raped his uncle. He was *The Deceiver*. Finally, the dawn was coming, and Jacob gave in and said, "All right, all right, my name is Jacob. I am this horrible creature that I am." And God said, "No more. Your name is Israel," and that means "One who was in mortal combat with God." (Wouldn't you like that name? Well, that is my name! This is why we are children of Abraham. That is my name.) Then old stupid Jacob says back to the nameless One. "Well, what is your name?" And the nameless One said, "Do you need to ask that?" God named himself when he called me Israel. And at that moment, God and I get up and we are friends.

Now God is first among equals in this situation And he has a problem on his hands from that time on. Because I am not only in his hands: he has me *on* his hands. That is what it means to be a friend of God-that there are times, I am sure, when God regretted ever making me a friend. The end of that story is that on that day, when God puts the knife in me, as the knife goes in I smile, and he winks. Being in itself winks. My victory is that I forced Being in itself to wink at my life. And I am through.