

## SECULAR RELIGIOUS IMAGE

Joe's comments to Ruth and Ken Gilbert

upon their decision to wear the ring of the religious

September 4, 1977

Maybe the greatest thing in our age was that the renewal movement got started by the laity. Slowly, what has happened is we've become clear. Like, we must be in but not of the world. That the Other World is in the midst of This World. We've become clear that vocation is one, in the midst of temporal calling.

There is no such thing as set aside religious activities where people are set aside. In the medieval monasteries there were doctors, lawyers, writers.

I've struggled with my vocation. A highly secular description of my vocation is plotting the Other World in the midst of This World. This will get clear to the church in time.

Another thing; we've been blind, but have not made too many mistakes in seeing that a religious order must have amazing flexibility and that lines delineate the flexibility,

There will always be a symbolic group or body. But they must not consider themselves more important than any other part of the group.

Thirdly, everything we say may seem to imply an aristocracy which I've always feared. Vocation as a calling has got to be something Wanda Lee can understand so that she can participate in undelimited engagement.

Grounding in the future our three circles in human poetry is crucial. Especially our third circle. We've experimented with classes in the order really for peoples' sakes. There should be a long, relatively unpressured time for, people to makeup their minds about whether they've been called for life to the symbolic order.

I've thought that the ring should be the symbol that that decision has been made. Giving up being somebody. For some it might take one year, for others it might take twenty years.

And I have a Walter Mitty about all religious orders welcoming those with the ring in a great fellowship.

Secular/Religious Image:

Every man and all men have always had a world view or a mindset or context or an image of reality. What is real or what is life?

Before the first century men said the world looks like this -



Secular

There is good and bad in the world. Life is made up into two parts. If you do right the Gods will be good to you and you'll get

your share of the world's good.

The church maintained that there was but one God, and the whole world God said was good. And man was created in God's image and as a creature God said he was good. Man does not have control over whether his share will be.

In the fourth century Plato came along and said reality or the world is like this:



← these come from God's sparks

(one journey)

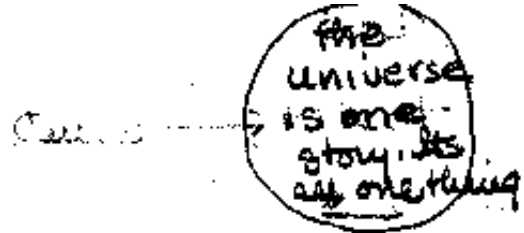
Life is divided into two parts. Augustine said that life was really ~~one~~ always a descent and ascent always going on



Religious

Aristotle came along and said it looks like this:

Secular:

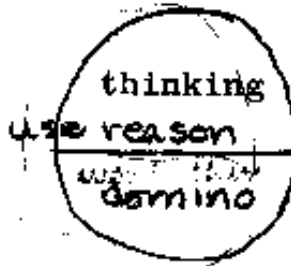


Aquinas in his time said

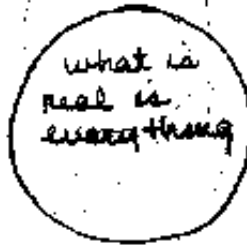


god has said an eternal yes to his creation and the life he gave to us creatures

Then along came the age of Enlightenment when men began to use their rational minds. They said the world is like this

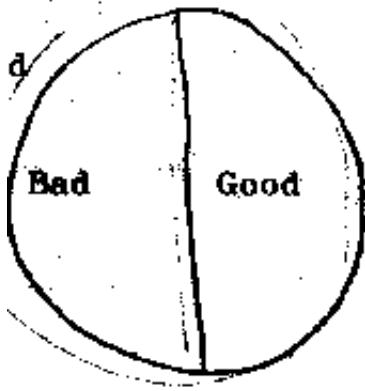


Wesley said the mind and body and are all one



whatever one says  
or does is finally  
decided by God.  
He makes the judgement  
Bad continues to create  
good out of everything

(He is in control.)



~~The romantic says life is nice~~

There still remain mindsets that say life, or my situation is

1. Epicureans says little bit of it is good. I'll get a piece of it
2. Romantic says someday it will be good. Every cloud has a silver lining.
3. The Stoic says it is bad but I can endure it and I won't let it get to me.
4. The cynic says it is bad, but I'm not going to do anything about it
5. The Norman Vincent Peales put on rose colored glasses and life can be nice.
6. The liberal says I'll make it good.

In our day the secular and religious have come together. We knew that man can create the meaning of all of life and say yes to any situation and say that is the real situation. It comes ultimately from the mystery, and my life is a part of that mystery and I am accepted in this situation and I can live in this reality.

In 20th century, we know there is more to reality than what we see and feel and touch and hear and know.

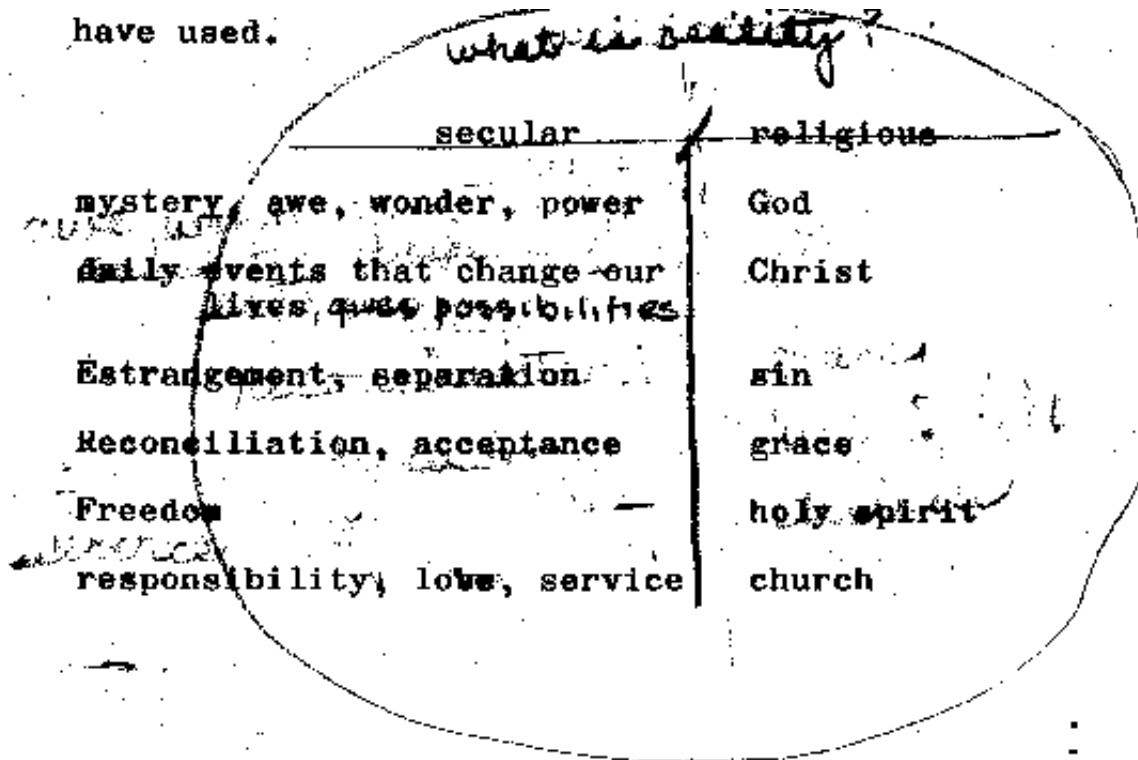
The existentialists revealed that to us. We know we operate in an interior world, what goes on inside us as well as outside us.

Our group, with the new course and with other world language, says:

1. Inside us and outside us is mystery, or awe, or wonder.
  1. There is also consciousness or the ability to stand outside ourselves and be free to create and decide.
  2. There is also love and motivation and compassion and responsibility.
4. And there is a certainty, a peace, a contentment and endlessness in our inner most being.

It is our task in our day to talk about the world or reality, using the secular, man-on-the-street terms. At the same time those with the memory of the church use the old symbols that the church for 2000 years have used.

have used.



So secular is not real and religion is not something supernatural. We are recapturing for secular man a realistic world view with verbal symbols so he can live a life that is full and exuberant and vital and full and be contented, peaceful, joyful, with no personal problems.

The secular religious man is the only one who can celebrate his whole life, for he has a secret. He does not look different from his next door neighbor because he lives out of an interior life that is happy and filled full. He accepts all of life and says it is all good.

We misunderstand when we say there is secular and there is religious. We mean these is only one authentic life, the secular/religious. The man who lives in the world but does not depend upon anyone or any thing in this world in order to enjoy life and to find life bubbling over. We have used the words secular and religious to mean either genuine or pietistic, laymen or clerics relative to our daily jobs. The clerics tend to think they are closer to God.

We mean to say that all men live before an enigmatic power that gives us our lives to live, gives us the freedom to live it and gives us the world to participate in it and gives us happiness. We are out to show what it means to live one life that can be a great one.

Reality

secular / religious

Man has come  
of age. He is aware  
of an interior  
and exterior  
world.

Man on street is aware  
of powers over which he  
has no control, of events  
that has ~~spiritual~~ new  
possibilities, of estrangement  
reconciliation, of love, etc.