

### TRANSPARENT UNITY

I've been reading a book called "Transitions" that I'm very fascinated with and I think that is because the author talks about transition not as something particular relative to someone's age but as an ontological reality, as something that has a structure that's unavoidable. He talks about the fact that there are endings and then there is what he calls a neutral time and there are beginnings. He talks about how the Aborigines symbolize this by sending young men before they become adults into the desert beyond any kind of recognizable place or space. They enter a time of almost delirium, a time between two worlds and that is followed by a time of beginnings, a time of suffocating, of terrifying birth, and because the structure or transition is objective it doesn't do anyone any good to deny it.

Transition is a time between old and new. A time in which you experience jetlag. You're very tired. You haven't landed yet. Sometimes you feel tired and you don't know why you're awake. Coming back to North America was, for me, a long period of jetlag or transition. A place like North America is like this riddle inside an enigma wrapped in about 40 mysteries of some kind. The time of this transition is unrecognizable at the time--and then I noticed it was unrecognizable for everybody else. Acknowledging that allowed me to move. To say to myself that the new which emerges in a time of transition is always unrecognizable or it wouldn't be the new.

It's in the context of transition that I want to talk about transparent unity. In a time of transition you are forced to look for the transparency. You have no choice but to do that. I'm talking here about indicative unity.

We're talking about something sociological but also about something transparent, not particular to the substance of this group. The globe has put us into a situation where our future demands we find new ways to talk about unity. It's like the situation in the Early Church when it had everybody learn Latin. The old way that we've understood unity has ended. It is dead and all the king's horses and all the king's men are not going to put those pieces back together. That's had to happen. My story is that we gave it away. We gave our being, our unity, our presence away. We went to various places all across the globe in villages, that we'd never been in before and experienced things we never experienced before and we gave our unity away--that was a decision. Nobody did anything wrong, there was no mistake, we decided to give it away and we gave it away. Someone helpfully reminded me that unity is on behalf of others, not for the sake of itself. It's on behalf of the future of the Order when you try and talk about it. Though when you say something's "on behalf of" you don't mean "similar to." Your mission being on behalf of all the villages of the world doesn't mean you go native. I don't ever expect IBM executives to undergo our assignments process. They're in IBM so they don't have to put up with that kind of thing. There's always a radical discontinuity between the Order and the way it shapes the world. We don't run around trying to find trends we then mimic so other people can look at us and say we've got an answer. There's a discontinuity.

In order to get myself started thinking on this I wrote down 21 sentences on what unity is and is not and people have helped me with this. 1. Unity is not a

possession, it's an event. 2. Unity is not mutuality, it's an intrusion of otherness. 3. Unity is not content, it is a process of relationships. It's not substance, it is contentless. 4. Unity is not seclusion or elimination, it is participation. 5. Unity is not a religious creed, it is an act of reunion. 6. Unity is not a common programme, it is a contentless tool. 7. Unity is not an answer, it is a question. 8. Unity does not hide in its individuality, it stands accountable. 9. Unity does not float, it shapes consensus. 10. Unity does not live out of its druthers, it lives out of consensus. 11. Unity is not plateau, it is perpetual revolution. 12. Unity is not a common denominator, it is authentic tension; it's the yin-yang. 13. Unity is not common experience, it is the revelation of grounded contradiction. 14. Unity is not distant interchange of data, it is face to face authentic dialogue. It is council, it is team. 15. Unity is not statement, it is life method. 16. Unity is not found in a search for symbols or a gestalt of visions; symbols or gestalts are found in the event of unity. 17. Unity does not simplify, it complexifies. It does not homogenize. It honors diversity. 18. Unity is not relief, it bids us come and die. 19. It is not something you go looking for, it finds you. You have to fight for it, but you're fighting for something you will not find in searching for it. 20. Unity is not judgmental, it absolves. 21. Unity is not a peripheral question, it's finally the only question there is. It's the question of whether or not I or anyone else participate in endlessness, that I go to heaven.

Standing in our common memory of CS-1 these triangles could be called Post-Substantive Unity. I'm not sure if this is right. We have moved from a substantial world to a world of relationships. There are no blueprints in the world we live in--there's global economic chaos, there's inflation, and no gold standard. Men and women's roles changed overnight. People no longer drop atom bombs, they bomb one another's nuclear reactors. Banks transfer billions of dollars instantly by computer while at the same time millions of people starve. The world no longer makes sense, it no longer works. Did you ever hear of Chinese baseball? It has the same rules as American baseball, except for one difference: when the ball is hit and it's in the air, anybody can pick up one of the bases and move it anywhere. It's a world where we use the image about the man who read that everything was made of atoms and became so frightened that he put on big snowshoes so that he wouldn't fall between the spaces. That's the context of transparent unity in a post-substantial universe.

### The Triangle

These need a lot of work. I'm calling this transparent unity for now, for want of a better term. Transparent unity consists of three dynamics. I'm going to walk through these--the disclosing event first, then the profound process and then the dynamic structure.

The universal event is the most important part of the disclosing event and unity is something that comes as an intrusion, it comes from the outside. It happens any time. It's an intrusion. I can remember being in Nam Wai, we were doing various programs that came out of the consult like some agriculture and a

preschool that wasn't really needed because there were lots of other ones all around but what was very obvious was that you had to do something about the reality of this real estate and I didn't want to because I didn't know anything about real estate, particularly Chinese real estate. It was tricky. I knew we were in with a bunch of crooks and furthermore, I didn't want to know or do anything about it. One day the old man I worked with quite a bit said to me--and you can always tell when somebody says something that comes from the depths--we were looking at the pond in front of the village and he said, "Do you have the courage to do this thing?" And my universe came apart because I realized all that I was doing in the village was a way of protecting myself from embracing what life was demanding. The intrusion of unity is the Christ event. Or, again, we use this image that everyman lives by protecting himself with illusions and the only way that life comes to him finally is that it invades into his universe from the outside. We all protect ourselves from the way life is. Let me give you another example. I was, by having to work with all those businessmen, in Hong Kong, needing some clothes. I'm not someone who ever really pays a lot of attention to the clothes I wear. It's hard work for me to do that, I don't like going and buying clothes; it makes me very nervous to be inside tailor shops particularly when you're standing in there and somebody will stand behind you in the mirror as you're looking and you see him behind there. I was going to get a suit and Clare was with me and I thought I was doing really well, I'd been very relaxed and I hadn't got irritated or unpleasant with the people there. We bought the **suit** (I thought it was pretty good you know), we got out on the street and Clare turned to me and said, "Somehow no matter what I do with you, you always manage to look somewhat disheveled." And my self-image of being professional fell apart. Maybe that is a way of talking about it from a justification point of view so you could talk about it as an experience of running into the preschool and seeing all this chaos and realizing that your whole life could disappear right there and then. You think how many preschools and children there are and you are overwhelmed and the world drops upon your shoulders because you realize that suffering is inexhaustible, it will never be filled with your campaigns and the narrow illusions that you had about your self as a caring person are broken.

Then again, take for example, an employee whose one big concern is getting the bathroom painted pink. The intrusion of the possibility of inflation shatters his universe and he is grabbed--something comes in and grabs him from the outside and catapults him toward possibility, toward the comprehensive, towards the future, on the other side of himself and consequently he is reconciled to the way life is. That is why this is the foundation of unity, it's all about reunion, that's the basis of unity--the event, not possession.

Unity is not a story. In "The Event and the Story" John Knox says you have to delineate between the event and the story you tell about it. He was talking about the Christ event and he said there was Jesus Christ, the man, his birth, his death, the resurrection, the coming of the spirit and the creation of the community. Or there is someone that's age 34, etc., the shattering intrusion in his life of possibility and then the possibility of reunion. That's not the story; the story is how you try to find ways to say that that is the universal event. To say that--it's the way life is. You use things like lambs and rocket

ships and virgin births and all kinds of stuff but that's not the event. Nobody had to be a Jew to grasp the Christ event. I'm not talking about story here. In the Chinese mid autumn festival they build paper balloons, light small fire at the bottom and these things go sailing way up in the air. They look like a star. A Chinese man told me, "Oh yeah see? Just like Jesus." I said, "Why?" And he said, "Don't you know where this comes from? The reason we did this is because--"there was a famous general and in order to terrify the troops of another army he had his men erect one of these things and it went up there in a big star and lighted above his camp so they all thought he was some kind of God, just like Jesus Christ." So I'm talking about the event not a story. Joe Mathews used to say the gospel is not Christianity and Christianity is not the gospel. This is not about the Other World.

The story can shape the event. That's what Belfast is all about. But then the event shatters the story. Justin Morrill told me about a television program on Galileo, Galileo brought his telescope to the council of popes or whatever it is and they were off in one part of the room doing the story about the medieval Christian Universals and he would say "oh but come over here and look in the telescope, we have an event here for you" and they wouldn't do it. The event shatters the story. But the story also is a screen for you. The women's revolution shattered the story of how you would talk about father and son. I had an experience with my father recently. I never really talked to him too much about the Order. I was trying to get him to go to the Toronto Regional Consult and he was sitting there and I was trying to explain this thing and then in the midst of talking to him I had this sudden experience that he was a stranger. You always imagine in your life that in your extended family there's still something familiar, there's home, but he just became a complete stranger that I was trying to get to do something. It was as if I was standing on a balcony watching this little old man and trying to get him to do something. He was a stranger, an absolute stranger. And I was a stranger and I suddenly grasped what was being talked about when they came and found Jesus when he was twelve and said "how come you're not with your parents?" and he said I'm doing my Father's business. I am intimate with my strangeness that is all I'm intimate with finally. I grasped the fact that I'm derived of the mystery, the mystery is my father and I am the mystery's son. I would not expect any woman in here to say this the same way. There will be many stories but the key is to get clear on the dynamics of the event.

Unity is not a state of being, this is not about the Other World. This is consciousness here--there isn't any other--you're going to get--you might rehearse it but doing a liturgy or examining states of being but doesn't give you any new consciousness. But if you sever that, if you forget that the event is the basis of consciousness and unity, then you go off into various forms of self salvation. It's inevitable. It's not a state of being, and there's no more consciousness. The consciousness is that the mystery is in charge and gives you the possibility of unity and as we used to say, the judgment is the mercy.

This is decisional love. It is not mutuality. I've become very aware of the burden of myself on other people and the burden of other people on myself. It's like your relationship to your colleagues is that of Muhammad Ali in the last round with Joe Frazier in Manila thinking "Why in God's name am I doing this? This

is so goddam painful!" It's "Why am I living with these people that I can't stand." .....There's no unity without separation. It is not mutuality. If it was mutuality I could possess it. I could absorb it. I can think of 1001 ways as well as you can of how to absorb somebody else's possible intrusion or to defend myself. We're very gifted at that. It is a decision, it is not something that I like. Sartre talks about how another's saliva is absolutely repugnant to you and horrible, your own saliva or excretions are just fine, you might like them and play around with them, but somebody else's, yuk! There is otherness and that's the way it is.

And finally, it is talking about endlessness. We have to have new ways to talk about that. We did a family course here and we use the imagery of eternity relative to time and covenant. I'm trying to talk about the basis of covenant here. I'm in covenant and there's this time thing, It starts here and it ends with my death. But the trick is to get that stated as to what it meant. You can find marriage where somebody got married here and kind of stumbled along together for 40 years and then they fell over. And because they stayed married they thought that somehow they were morally very good. Whereas really that was no marriage at all, there was no being put into it and so we try to talk about images of space relative to endlessness. You try to use images of space and expenditure in covenant. Covenant is about expending yourself, but time and space, are just two metaphors of how you're participating in endlessness. When I have to make a decision to love the other I have the possibility of participating in otherness with my being, with that other being that I don't have the possibility of otherwise. "I don't get to heaven without my neighbor" is the way we used to talk about it. I have no choice but to participate with the other, to love the other. Even though I cannot stand a lot of people. I have no choice but to do that. This is the profound basis of covenant. I want to come back and talk about that a bit more later. The poetry is inadequate. This is the basis of covenant in marriage or any other covenant--participation in endlessness, participating with this other reality.

Unity is about the disclosing event. It's about reconciling actions. It's not a creed, we're talking about actions. There's a phenomena in Hong Kong called "Rice Christians" where all the Chinese came over and they were hungry after the revolution and they would join any Catholic church, any church to get rice. The churches used to depreciate this, because the only thing they could see was you had to stand up and say "oh yes I believe in this creed here" and the fact of the matter was they were doing reconciling action even if they didn't know it. There was more given to the stability of the future of Hong Kong through their actions than they ever realized but not for the reasons they intended. Unity is about undeserved forgiveness. Somebody told me this story once about a man who was in the French Resistance during the second world war and he was caught leaving his friend who was the leader still at large. The Gestapo said to him, "If you tell us where your friend is we'll let you free." and the guy didn't know so he said, "He's in the cemetery." just to say something and the next morning they came at dawn and opened the door and said "okay you're free," Why? "We found your friend in the cemetery." Forgiveness is absolutely undeserved. It is given to me and it is something that consequently I must operate out of. I can operate out of revenge

or forgiveness but only those two possibilities. An order is an institution to demonstrate the latter. It is reconciling actions, it is not psychological. Peter do you love me? Feed my sheep.

Transparent unity is about profound process. It's about profound process that has a contradictional focus. It doesn't have anything to do with goals. You can hear all the reports on the goals or objectives or accomplishments for ever and ever and ever in this council but you won't know what's going on. You can't. Practical visions by their very nature are filled in with illusions. All that data's only there so you can get to the point of having that contradiction disclosed. When it is disclosed that's where the hidden fear is, that's where the overagainstness, the intrusion is. When that is disclosed then you can offer something to your neighbor's situation. I can read the IMB contradictions in their LENS proposals, document, and I can understand what's going on. I don't need to know about all the implementaries. We don't need to know all kinds of stuff. The church made that mistake before. There are 30 miles of uncatalogued documents in the bottom of the Vatican. Wouldn't that be fun?

Unity is not about solving problems. I remember a story about the Peace Corps in South America where they had gone to do good work and came across a village where the village had winding paths around it and to the water hole and all the paths everywhere were winding. Well they thought the villagers were kind of dumb and thought they'd better make the path straight and fix this up. So they did and later on they found there was a good reason for all these winding paths because the jungle was full of bees, very big ones, and if they had a straight path they just came down like speed demons right into the village. If you operate so that you're getting rid of problems you don't have a post-substantial universe in the back of your mind, you have this perfect universe, this perfect scenario where if you just fix this problem or if you change this thing then it's going to become good again, it's going to be there and be static and perfect. Contradictions are based on a universe filled with tensions and dynamics. Problems come from an old universe.

Contradictions allow you to choose your fate. Oh wouldn't it be nice if we could get rid of the alcoholism in Cannonball? Well that's to think in terms of problems. The contradiction has to do with people being able to get hold of the resources of land and possibility and move through the veil that they're so very afraid of. It's very symbolic--the veil of the economic western white man's business urban world. Choosing the contradiction allows you to turn fate to destiny. Like the myth of Sisyphus who chose his fate and therefore it became his destiny, rolling that rock up and down the hill.

It is a life stance, it's a life method it's not simply something that happens in a board room with 3 x 5 cards and part of a LENS process. It's something that stands in the middle of life, stands before challenges and intrusions. It trusts the local. I read where the Vietcong became very afraid in the war when the Americans started staying overnight. They started to stay overnight and the Vietcong got scared, because they thought the American's would catch on. If you just go over with a helicopter, drop a few bombs and get out fast, then you

don't win any wars. If you take a contradiction from Africa and you take the contradiction from North America, you will soon find that contradiction has meaning only when it's resident in the terrain that it's found. If you remove it, slice it out, and then take a platonic excursion some place and try to create universal contradiction--it's meaningless, very meaningless. This is a mythological component of the story. It is about common tools not common programmes such as the comprehensiveness screen or the charting method tools that are contentless and not filled with substance that is particular and it is here you try and fit all the pieces together to find a common programme.

It is not about common heritage. A great deal of the discussion we have--our anxieties and insights over the form of liturgy we use can be put in the portion of the office traditionally referred to as preparation. This is an area to focus on--rather than just the words of the liturgy, because the preparation is about standing conscious to whatever liturgy you are performing and if you are not standing present to it you might as well stumble down and eat your cornflakes and forget whatever liturgy you were going to do anyway. It is in the arena of "preparation" that we must focus our attention.

Transparent unity is about depth complexity. There are practical reasons for this. Once there were two men who were driving on a hot summer day past a lake in Florida and they stopped to ask a young boy if there were any snakes that would bite them if they went swimming. He said no and when they had finished they asked him why there were no snakes in the lake as they had heard that the area was infested with them. His reply was "The aligators done ate them all." So there are practical reasons for standing before all the possibilities but we also stand before depth complexity because that is the way life is and all our tools and methods are based upon a stance of openness to the fullness of life that God presents us with in any situation.

Transparent unity is about dynamic structure, it is about indicative polity, it is about the council indicatively, it's about the team. Not necessarily this this council, but it is any council, any team. This is based on an understanding relative to this event we're talking about. Interchange will never happen through massive mailings of enormous quantities of data all around the world. That is not what holds us together. We're held together only in face to face interchange. That is based upon that event. It's about structural selfhood of which each of those dynamics has to have the possibility--whether you're talking about the oligarchic or demoncratic or symbolic--I'm not talking about the process through which you come to decisions or how you decide to symbolize something, but each of these dynamics has to have enough structural selfhood to lay a claim on the other and pronounce absolution. You can imagine if you had a collegium table and six people and only four of them could speak the language you wouldn't have unity you wouldn't have a council. I saw this television program--I guess when they started to really combat big crime in the states Robert Kennedy initiated an action whereby the executive department, if they were after some criminal, would find somebody in prison who knew the accused and then they would try to get him to give evidence against him. Of course, If you're in prison and the justice department comes to you and says we'd like you to give evidence against this guy

and here's lots of compensation. We'll give you a new identity when you get out, we'll shorten your sentence, and give financial compensation--he would say anything, why not, what would he have to lose. So you have an instance there of the executive department bypassing the legislative and manipulating the judicial. And the fact that it was on TV introduced the legislative dynamic again. It balanced the tension.

Transparent unity is about a corporate future at whatever level. That it is based on a foundational decision to stand accountable. Have you ever heard the story about ITT? For three months a year, all the executives do nothing but stand accountable to their profit and loss statements. It's a murderous procedure, much more murderous than anything we would ever do. Then it is a decision to shape consensus, to put your being into history, then it is the decision to operate out of that consensus after you've decided to shape it and be obedient to it. You're obedient to someone in a corporate group or by definition you're not in a corporate group.

Transparent unity is perpetually recreated--it's based on corporate trust. It's based on individual decision but no one alone finally is trustworthy. I wish to keep my own and protect my own world. That's the way life is. And your duty is to intrude upon it. It is about contentless dynamics. The Chinese operate politically out of an understanding of a historical era called the Three Kingdoms. There were three kingdoms and this allowed the Chinese forever after to see that it would be harmful to eliminate any one "Kingdom", as the remaining two would murder one another. You preserve the dynamic tension. Should we have more water projects in South America? Should everybody be more aware of the missiles in Lebanon? You're not interested in putting content and ideology in here. Should we have more fruit flavored yogurt? Should we protect polar bears? Should there be more songbirds in the suburbs? And so forth. We're not interested in the content in the first instance, but only that the tensions be balanced, that the tensions have the possibility of continuing to creatively effect one another. It is not a process of weakening anybody, it is always a process of strengthening somebody. In Canada we have this huge dilemma called the federal vs. provincial government and authority and we're trying to write it all into a "Bill of Rights" so that the ambiguity could be nailed down but a new political entity has come into being that demands strength and it is really like a council of the provincial ministers and that needs to play a part in the political process which is always a continual experiment. The reason we have a non-geographical element called the centrum is that it introduces the possibility of perpetual recreation of creative tension and if something goes wrong there, then you have to do something else to rebalance the tensions.

I guess finally the only thing I really wanted to say was you have to have a new way of talking about covenant and about what it means to be the Order. You see, if my life understanding is that I'm in the Order with these other people to get this job done, over here and that I'm in my social demonstration project and it's getting fairly specialized, then what I need are not more people coming from the Order or the area who just take up my time and get on my nerves, but what I really need is a banker and a lawyer and so forth. If you look at it from that

point of view, that you have corporateness only to get accomplished the next most immediate programmatic opportunity, then unity disappears. You're looking at it substantially. You're not looking at it transparently. A covenant that is made in heaven, someone told me, cannot be violated. And you are in the Order through service to the world to participate in possibility of endlessness. I'm trying to go to heaven and a decision to leave would be like, well you'd have to think really what the catch 22 was there. Whether or not you had internally made a decision relative to--not that you have to be in the Order to go to heaven, that's ridiculous, or that you can manipulate it by your deeds, but that you had made some decision internally relative to your decision to not participate in the only thing that is worth having and that is your participation in Heaven.

WORKING CHART.  
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