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J. W. Mathews  
7/4/71

Grace be unto you and peace, from God, our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

I'm going to read a Psalm. I'm reading it for myself. It's one of my gems.

O Lord, I call to thee, come quickly to my aid;  
listen to my cry when I call to thee.  
Let my prayer be like incense duly set before thee  
and my raised hands like the evening sacrifice.  
Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth;  
keep watch at the door of my lips.  
Turn not my heart to sinful thoughts  
nor to any pursuit of evil courses.  
The evildoers appal me;  
not for me the delights of their table.  
I would rather be buffeted by the righteous  
and reproved by good men  
My head shall not be anointed with the oil of wicked men,  
for that would make me a party to their crimes.  
They shall founder on the rock of justice  
and shall learn how acceptable my words are.  
Their bones shall be scattered at the mouth of Sheol,  
like splinters of wood or stone on the ground.  
But my eyes are fixed on thee, O Lord God;  
thou art my refuge; leave me not unprotected.  
Keep me from the trap which they have set for me,  
from the snares of evildoers.  
Let the wicked fall into their own nets,  
whilst I pass in safety, all alone.

We've been on a long, long, long journey. Some of you are aware that tonight I've seen people that have been colleagues of mine, and with whom I'm extremely proud tonight to have been their colleagues, for 20 years. Doesn't seem possible, does it. It's a long journey we've been on. Those of you who are younger must know that in some fashion or other, this summer is like a dim, dim star that suddenly has become bright. For however poorly we may have been able to articulate the vision two decades ago, it was clear that we were marching toward a new earth, that we lived on the hope that one day there had to be a way in which we could seriously and with the passion of the bottom of our being, engage ourselves directly in attempting to do something about the structures that relate men to one another. Even if this assembly turns out to be a colossal failure, it's almost as if in the light of what I'm speaking about it would make no difference. This summer is a concretion of the latent-explicit hope that shone on the way.

I have spoken of the older ones in this collegial fellowship. But what I say is true of those who have joined hands with one another more recently. For, who knows how many decades your heart has reached out for some kind of practical, demanding engagement in the renewal of the Church and therefore, of the social structures of this globe? When I think about this journey as it relates to this summer, I sort of get all mixed up inside. It's as if that journey that I've been on hasn't turned out to be that journey at all. It's as if it had nothing to do with the NSV whatsoever. I'm telling you

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what I feel, down inside. That this journey has not been a social journey, or rather, that the social journey has turned into a deeply spiritual journey, first. Secondly, into a radically theological journey, and only thirdly, into a social journey, if I may say that.

Those of you who have studied theology in this time, and those of you who have been affected by theology in our time - I mean the revolution within the theological arena of life - have pushed and been pushed toward the dimension of existence we call history. The revolution within Protestant thought got off the ground by its fresh grasp of history. The Catholic Church made its move toward recovery in this dimension through the impact of Protestant thinking, which placed the firm beat in life upon history. They were making use of a breakthrough in the secular world in thought that you call existential philosophy, which was emphasizing history. The Catholic theologian, Novak, suggests that influence came out of Northern Europe and was a rejection of the mindset of Southern Europe. I think he's right.

When you ask the question, as others did, by the millions a few years ago, "Who am I?", that was the question of history. When you raise the question of being free-  
dom, not having freedom, but being freedom, that's the question of history. But it hasn't been only the existentialistic thinkers. The whole trend of science has placed the focus of man upon history, that is, the future, that is, of building the tomorrow. And this has promoted the thinking within the Church. And it had to be. I do not ask you to agree or disagree, but I suspect that every revolution is born on the conscious level out of a new grasp of history. Not in the reduced sense in the West we use the word history. But out of a new sense of possibility, doing something about the future. But there's an irony in this. That in moving, the revolutionary discovers not the future but the past. And in moving toward the future he doesn't discover the deep foundation of being, but only the externalities, and therefore discovers that his revolution is rooted someplace other than where his vision imagines.

Every revolution, because it is historical, is global. No revolution ever started that wasn't going beyond the limits in which it was created. That's what revolution means: in this sense it always moves toward the global. But every revolutionary discovers in the midst of the thrust toward a kind of globality that what he thought it meant by globality was in some sense exactly the opposite from what he discovered.

This journey of ours is a theological journey. Save you have the emphasis upon the Protestant principle, you could have gotten nothing going in terms of Church renewal. But embodying the Protestant principle disclosed that the foundation of the spirit dimension of your life rested quite someplace else other than in the Protestant principle. To use Western civilization, anyone in the room who grew up a Protestant and has taken theological recovery seriously within Protestantism is discovering that the ground of his total being is what Tillich called the Catholic substance. I say to you who are Protestants, either you've never heard what Protestantism has articulated in our time, or you're recovering the substantiality that has been grounded and protected by Roman Catholicism.

Catholicism has an irony too. It didn't even know what in the god-damned hell its substance was that it was guarding. It began to listen to the Protestant principle. They had to become Protestants to become Catholics. And the Protestants had to become Catholics to become Protestant. Something like this.

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When you take the globe at large, this emphasis on history has come out of the West. And only a blind reductionist doesn't understand that the thrust in our present time has come out of the West. But when you take seriously the thrust in history of the West, you discover that that thrusting is not your foundation. It's the spirituality, the substantial spirituality, if I may say so, of the East. The person in the East has no chance, for he too no longer grasps his own substance, he has no chance of being an Easterner, until he embraces the thrust of the West.

And those of you who are romantics, I intend to come back to you; you listen well to that statement. I mean romantic about beating the West over the head. We need to be beat over the head, but only on the other side of understanding what has happened in the total dynamics of the globe today. And the man in the West is discovering, in his thrust, that he's resting upon a spirituality that the East has been guarding for centuries.

Now let me see if I can't get this into the NSV a bit. Sometime since, I had a vision. It was as if Christ, or the Word, were sitting upon a throne. And as I stood before that throne, there was only one imperative: "Prostrate yourself." Just one. It wasn't do this, do that, think the other, it wasn't be this way, or be that way, it was "Prostrate yourself." What I mean by that: no if's, and's or but's. KNEEL! Nothing pious in this. For when you stand before that reality, there isn't any other reality. It's what it means to be a human being. But then, in the vision, I grasped myself starting to prostrate myself, and by the time I got stretched out, Christ had disappeared, and sitting on the throne was GOD. Shall I go over that again? There was the Word, and when you're in the midst of prostrating yourself, it disappears, and there's the Father.

Your New Testament is extremely clear at this point. Mark you, without that Word, there is never any Father on there. Only the Word, and it'll stay there until prostration takes place. And when it takes place, you can grasp the transparency of the Son, and you see only the Father. This is what's happening theologically in our time. For the thrust in history, or the hearing of the Word, has disclosed the dimension of the natural, and the Father. "In the beginning, COD CREATED..."

Now, a strange thing has happened to me in the last ten years, maybe. That perhaps only even now is becoming clear. And that is that what I've described happens in a flash. There is a gap of time between that and the actualization of it, the embodiment of it. How long, I ask myself, has it taken me to just begin to actually appropriate my living before God. I don't mean some idea about God, I mean GOD. I'm able to point to three journeys in this overall journey that deals with that happening, and the happening within the happening through which the happening became or is becoming. You know these.

Last summer, however poorly, I tried to articulate what I called the dash to the center of being. You see, as a man of history I have been deeply brainwashed that reality was what we called the externals. I don't think I put that strongly enough. I've been brainwashed to the bottom of my being that when you talk about reality you're talking about that outside. I've discovered that reality was not that outside at all, that it was the direct, conscious relation to my relation with the Mystery that always remains the Mystery. That's why, when you ask me the question about who I am, I have no answer that you can get your teeth in. For my answer is that I am a relation to utter Mystery, which makes me Mystery itself. Yes, when one dares to

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make the trek through the desert of unrelenting meaninglessness, unchanging darkness, yes, through the fires of the hell of apostasy itself, and behold the awe that rocks us in dread and fascination, only then before the radical Mystery, do you begin to sense where reality is located.

And when you see that, then you grasp the fact that the only objective thing in the world is this reality. This is why I read these days the Psalmist, for he deals with reality. What do I mean when I say that I'm beginning to grasp, nothing pious about this-- I'm the most secular man you ever met. What does it mean to live before God? It means you grasp not with your mind, but with every fibre of your being, that reality in this envelopment with awe before the deeps of Mystery itself.

I told some of you the story that I went around for years knowing things down deep inside myself that I thought you just shouldn't go around sharing with other people. Then one day, one of my colleagues came with a problem. One of the things he said, "I've got a problem. But it doesn't seem to me like a problem I have when I say I have problems." And as he began to spell it out, something clicked within me, and I said to myself, "He's gone through the veil." To use my jargon. So I said, "Come on." We got out of that damn office. We went to the back stairs. And I began to tell him the little I knew about that dimension of life that is locked before mankind at our moment in history. Slowly, I had to raise the question all over again about the South Pacific islander who didn't care to store up a large quantity of goods, but perhaps had a sense of what it meant to be human that I had never dreamed of. Perhaps. And then I saw that if in doing something about the social vehicle you are not ripping loose the deeps of humanness, in which all men can participate, you don't have any new social vehicle. You don't have any new social vehicle. For the function of a social vehicle is to enable men to grasp the very bottom of what it means to be a man. Now, if you wish to make this a little more objective, nobody even built a social vehicle save they had a hidden or overt anthropology and mythology. Are you clear? And what that meant was, to define what this social vehicle was for. That's the first journey into understanding what it means now to live and think in the rubric of God. To live before God and to think in that rubric.

The second journey within this journey relative to the social vehicle had to do with discovering that when you are thrust into the future, when you dare to risk your being with bringing about the future, that throws you into the past, into the radicality of the past, and you discover, in the past, the future. See if I can put some flesh on that. I was travelling with the Hilliards in Cambodia, and Aimee Hilliard got me to Siem Reap, where Angkor Wat was. You remember, that was that lost civilization that for hundreds of years was grown over by the jungle and nobody even knew it existed, till about a hundred years ago, when they tore it out of the jungle. Unbelievable architecture. And it was in the midst of my confrontation with this that I began to experience what I call the archaic.

Now, the word archaic means beginning. It means becoming, it means getting started. And when you begin to push back to the getting started, you discover the future. Now, if you piddle back here, in terms of some little aspect of the past, what I'm talking about is not true, and you'll never experience it. When you begin to push the bottom out, you discover you have the future. The archaic becomes transparent. Now, this is a way of saying that once again we're ready to talk about human nature, which, when you emphasize history, you have to force out of sight, for man creates his own essence. What I'm trying to say is that when you begin to push

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at the bottom of humanness you discover that man's essence is that he creates his own essence. That's his relation to the Mystery, or to God. So that, in creating my own essence, or in deciding to be, I'm being what I was created to be. Where this rocked me was in the new social vehicle. I started out like a naive child, almost simply by intuition.

If you did not know the processes that delineate the sociological form of human sociality, you cannot even locate the underlying contradictions. All you can do is locate that which goes against either your own sentimentality or your sense of guilt. And that would never create a new social vehicle. It might give you a nice feeling down inside. But if you're the Movement to somehow or other handle the salvation of your soul, you're in the wrong place. A new construct of society has to be built.

When we began to work on the processes that divide manifest human sociality, more and more and more, we were pressed back to look at primitive societies, and the more we pressed back there, we discovered that however uncomplex or relatively covert, the processes were there that are here in our present world.

Until finally, one day, the bottom blew out, and you began to sense that it isn't so much the problems in our day were created uniquely in our time by inadequate people, out of nothing so to speak, as they were a malaise within the manifestation of sociality that had always been there. But that malaise blinds man to what the sociality of humanness is. And that when you tear the bottom out of the processes of society, you're able to pierce through, somehow, the blindness, to see the processes without which no human being can be a human being, and when that begins in its sociological manifestation to become clear to you, one day you say, "My God! There is the new social vehicle!" Did you follow that? There is the new social vehicle. You begin peeling till you get to the heart of the artichoke, and you discover, my God! That's what society was, is, and must always be. Now, you can't get romantic here, that some way or other because you see that you're going to initiate some kind of a Utopia. That's not the point. The point is that you begin to understand exactly where you have to fire when you draw your six-gun to do something about society. What I'm trying to say is that in our day, philosophically and theologically, we once again are recovering the meaning of essence, or of being. So that our job isn't to pull down out of heaven some kind of a Utopian society and superimpose it upon this situation. Our job is to get a pick-axe and hack away the jungle that has blinded man to what it means to be authentically men in our web of relationships. That's what it means for me to live before, not the Son, but the Father.

The third journey that I've gone on seems so funny to me. Every time I think of one of these journeys... I one time ran away from home. Two miles south of Ada, Ohio, the cemetery. I got that far. I suppose running away from home is never running away from home; it's acting in a play. You know what I did? I got a red bandana, and I tied it on a stick, and I went like this, because I thought that was the appropriate way to run away from home.

These journeys always feel like when I start on them I'm a little tiny boy, about like that, starting out with his stick and bandana. And then all of a sudden I discover I'm a very, very old man. When I look back to when, with fanatical seriousness I took the claim upon myself that every man, if he's to be a man in our time, had to become global, I was like a little boy. I sometimes thought of it that somehow, if you got in somebody else's country (I'm not depreciating that), that you've got to feel the

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sacredness of somebody else's soil. And that's fine, but that's the insight of a child. Or that you can't see your own self until you stand alongside another man who does not see yourself the way you see yourself, in order to see yourself. Sure. But that seems like a childish insight that today any two-year old ought to know. I started out to be a global man. I wonder if I'd have started if it even dawned on me what might happen. One stage along the way for me was to create the Ur image construct, in which you tried to get at the bottom of the other inventions of humanness. And that was important in this journey, but for me it sounds like a five-year old ought to see that. And not to keep you step by step, there comes the time when the bottom blows out of the Ur images itself. One of the things that's been irritating me recently is people in our group falling into this sentimental liberalism which is manifest in the posture that the way to build a new social vehicle is to go and see what the Chinese are doing, and then what the Indians are doing, and then what the Africans are doing, and so on. How stupid can you get. That approach, it was in Huxley's Perennial Philosophy. If any of you are old enough to have read it, it's simply another patch-up job. Do you understand that? That's a patch-up job, born out of sentiment and guilt on the part of the Westerner. If you were to do what those sentimentalists and guilty ones want to do, what you've got to do is to stand where you are and knock the bottom out of the structures of society where you live. If you happen to show up in Japan, I mean you'd better start this way. And if you happen to show up in Northern America, you'd better start this way. And then if you knock the bottom out, guess what? It is no longer necessary to go around saying, "Hooray, I'm a white man!" "Hooray, I'm a black man!" "Hooray, I'm a yellow man!" "Hooray, I'm a tan man!" For you've got some way or other once again to that which transcends whiteness, and blackness, and yellowness, and tanness, in a way you couldn't even believe. And then you are ready to move back up, if you please, and build up, out of the wisdom of the white and black and yellow the new relative Kingdom of God for our time, which also shall pervert the basic relation of man to mankind. Now, out of that kind of experience for me was born this which is close to my heart. ALL THE EARTH --- I don't mean ground --- BELONGS TO ALL THE PEOPLE. To hell with these damn black men. Their wisdom belongs to me. If black is beautiful, then I am beautiful! There's going to be people rise on this earth who are going to know that.

Now I'll break it down. ALL THE GOODS BELONG TO ALL THE PEOPLE. Every human invention of ownership is an invention. Now, maybe some of you'd like to leave. Oh, this frightens me. I like to think that I have a few symbols of poverty, that means detachment. That frightens me. That kind of detachment could send you to the cross. In a hurry.

Someone told me that in Senator Harris's new book--I haven't read it--he makes the statement, "ALL THE DECISIONS OF HISTORY BELONG TO ALL THE PEOPLE." When the bottom was knocked out of my approach to globality, this became clear. And the clearest thing was that it did not have anything to do with one-man-one-vote. That's just one more patch-up, that some way the machinery has got to be created whereby my creativity, the last somebody's creativity in the world can get in the stew. The hell with the vote! One of the things it's hard for us to learn in our order is that if you really are a free man and you care about getting your freedom into history, you better be sitting at those god-awful meetings when we start a stew in a certain area going. If you come when we have a vote, which we never have, it is so far down the line...nothing. One vote could no more stop the trend of the corporate stew than fly to the moon. This is frightening, to grasp that the destinal decisions belong to all men, not to some.

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And then the last. ALL THE WISDOM OF HUMANNESS. All the consciousness of humanness. I'm not one to speak, because I never seem to be able to write anything, and I'm not against these laws--what do they call them?--copyright laws. Well, I guess I am, in a way, against them. An idea that comes out of humanness, whether it comes from you or comes from me, belongs to all men. And it works both ways. We find ways to keep from sharing and we find ways to keep from being shared with. The new heaven, the new earth, will only come in our day, and here I mean to be utterly dogmatic. When you or I or someone else have had the spiritual experience of having the bottom blown out of the trek for globality in such a way that you see with all your being, this is not, I'm trying to say, some philosophy superimposed. When you see that all the earth belongs to every human being that ever showed up in it, that at this level there are no blacks, there are no whites... Paul got this said so well so long ago. And yet we are black and we are white and we are yellow, and glory in it. But on this level, there are no divisions among men, between the Greeks and barbarians, and between the males and the females, and between the old and the young. This is what you have staring you in your face when you grasp what it means to live before GOD.

Now, I'm through. And I don't think I've got this said very well. But when you start out with the Son, you end up with the Father. That when you start out with decision, that's history, you end up with essential reality. And then I've got one little secret. You are aware that--I wonder if you will allow me this kind of mythological statement--you are aware that Jesus paid it all. I mean, without that decision before the Word, what I'm thinking about, if it is anything, it is simply intellectual abstraction. You start with Jesus, and you end up with him. You live before God.

It's been a long journey. The new social vehicle effort is a theological journey, and if you haven't already turned that corner, it's turned tonight. And it is a spiral journey into the very deeps of life. And I'd like to say, that what every serious Protestant and what every serious Catholic and what every serious man in the world has been looking for--though you get it in better poetry--is what I've been talking about tonight. And if we get some clarity on this together, I mean bowel clarity, then by golly, we'll not fail this summer. Something, something, something is going to happen.

Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.