

NEW MORALITY

(Rough Draft)

1. I thought I would talk a little about the other world and on an outline of a lecture that you have where I attempted to work through the historical, philosophical, theological justification of grounding of the work we have done on the Other World, the last section of that lecture outline attempts to delineate the basic significance of our work on the other world or the usefulness of it and maybe some of you remember that the first point of that part of the lecture was labeled human fulfillment. I think it has been a long time in history since there was any authentic sense of fulfillment among men. It has to do with the fact that we live in a day when the only world we know anything about is passing out of existence. But that tide has turned and once again as the Other World indicates you can talk significantly and genuinely about what it means to be a fulfilled person. My heart has particularly in recent months gone out to the men of the world, if you women do not mind me saying that, with the awareness that no man, in principle, has had any other sense that being a failure for a long time, even if he reaches the top position of the organization of which he is part. He had a sense that his life was a failure. And yet it was not a matter of failing within the organization. His sense of failure was far deeper than he was able to articulate. And I mean to use that simply to indicate what I am pointing to that now however else but through our work on the Other World potentially we and all men have once again experience and articulate and those two things cannot be separated what it means to be a fulfilled human being. I would like to talk on that but I am not interested in doing it right now. The second point was in terms of its usefulness or significance is the key to the New Mythology of our time. The next four points of the lecture are really saying the same thing from four different positions I suppose, anyway I believe that our work is not only a remote key to the formulation to the mythology of our time, I believe no matter how imperfectly it is an actual capturing of the futuristic mythology, the mythology that points to the future, that is already within our time, says what all of us below our conscious line already know. I would like to talk about this too, but I will not. Now the third point is what I want to talk about so I will skip to the fourth one. The fourth significance or function is that ours is a tool, and I would want to say THE TOOL, for the evangelism of our time that reaches out to man not simply man in the church but reaches to man in our time.

2. I have said before that is has been a long, long time since we could talk with any degree of sincerity, we could talk about a Christian man. Does that communicate to you, I mean there is a Christian Man, and even that is so empty that I am even revolted even to think about saying "there is a Christian Man." It is just gone and then we almost trampled it beneath our feet so that never again in history would anybody think about talking about a CHRISTIAN MAN. Well, stomped as we have, that thing is rising again and to make sure the term Christian has been expanded. You can use many other terms, what is it "there is a human man", "there is a moral man", and be able to say 1, 2, 3, and back it up and say it looking others straight in the eyes, and, indeed, looking mankind of our time squarely in the eyes without any embarrassment and even more feeling our contingency and the relativity law of our awareness is deeply looking God squarely in the eyes. This is what a moral man is. We have been waiting for that hour, I think the key is up there. An English Ethicist in the last century, G. E. More, rocked me years ago (with Richard Neibuhr's help he pointed it out to me) when he said that there were many systems of Ethics that man had not yet invented. Well, in those days I did not even know man invented ethics, let alone there being any other systems than the traditional ones out of the West, the Teleological Systems where you dealt basically with the category of the good, the Deontological Systems where you dealt basically with the category of the right. I just thought that was what morality was all about. Richard Neibuhr

had nerve enough to invent a whole new system. When you invent one you, of course, rewrite the history of ethics from the point of view of your system. And you see that yours was always there and if it was always there then you knew something was wrong. He invented one he called it in those early days the diological system ethics. It was a system not fundamentally of the good, of the right, but of the fitting or of the befitting as Paul liked to say. Or the Must that you begin with your necessary situation and save you begin there you can't even raise the question of morality. That has influenced me a great deal. But I never got over more his insight that there were many potential systems or ways of rationally organizing, understanding, the moral life has not yet been invented. I think that may be, I am not sure. I think that maybe this group in the last twenty years, in the last ten years, in the last four years, in the last two years, amaybe in the last few months has invented a new scheme system of morality and I want to talk about that. What I want to do is walk around this about four different times. And don't take too seriously anything I say, but be one that looks for the way we can get said in our time what it means to be a moral person.

3. The clue to a fresh approach is, as you well know what I am going to say, is in the word indicative. Whatever else the morality that is being stated, this is close to the befitting but it is not it, it is something different and up to this moment I cannot quite put my finger on Philosophers who have really self-consciously started here. When you see this you see they all started there and then you would have to begin to point to one place in history although it has taken me a long time to see this, it is what your New Testament is all about and I am ashamed that I am as old as I am and never really say that the morality of the New Testament begins with the great indicative, life itself (and it is extremely hard for me to get my mind around that some way or another when you are talking about morality you are not dealing with imperatives, but as I see what is emerging here you don't begin there at all, you begin with the indicative). Now, I have several problems: when you say that every philosopher ends there. You are saying what I am saying to myself is he has his basic presuppositions which is his indicative.

4. But when I take that word indicative and shove it, I am beyond the ideological set of presuppositions to the grasp of raw humanness which, as I understand it, is rooted in my self-consciousness about my self-conscious relationship to the mystery and that is the indicative. That all is grounded on and related to that is the indicative to my freedom and the indicative of universal care what I tried to say this summer in one of my talks was do not you ever think of area "C" as some way or another as coming to be an imperative against "B" and "A", NO!! That Mountain of Care is precisely that same kind of indicative as the Land of Mystery is. That is, in this epic you don't start out "I ought to be responsible to this son of a bitch", no, you begin by being aware that you are responsible. It is the same as the relationship to the mystery and so with the arena certitude and peace and joy and endlessness, these are indicatives and the new ethics is founded on that. If I do not hurry I will never get through.

5. The second is that I want to go back and say this necessarily makes morality second point, diologically or the world we use is contextual. Because you are dealing with the indicative and because the indicatives on that chart only exist with the concrete given situation. Somebody says to me they have an experience of awe that doesn't have to do with being overagainst that S.O.B. Then they lie, or more kindly put, they do not know what awe is. Awe only exists as you are before sticks and stones and happenings and other people. It only exists in this world. You show me some oaf that talks about awe unrelated to the concretions of his life and he is not talking awe. That is what you mean contextual indicative only exists in a particular concrete situation. That is to say, I am not a land of myster, I

am not a mountain of care, not a river of consciousness except in the midst of a fight I am having with my wife. Does that communicate the indicative? That means you operate contextually, that means there can never be some superimposed awe upon the situation. The indicative is always within a given context.

6. I want to say that the imperative dimension of ethics and mark me it is always there, is but the flip of the indicative which means that all imperatives are self-imposed, in this concept of morality. It is out of the great indicative resolve I do not find imperatives on my life, is what I am trying to say in this understanding of ethics. All the claims on my life are wholly indicative and when one makes the great resolve there is always a great resolve on an indicative, he then himself feels the imperative on his life relative to his having resolved about the indicative. Whether you agree with that, do understand what I said. You could not place an imperative on me. My wife could not possibly place an imperative on me, my goddammed kids could not place an imperative on my life. My colleagues could not place an imperative on my life, it is impossible from this view of ethics. I and I alone place imperatives on my life. I do not know how that sound to you. It is far more frightening a view of ethics. And, of course, it is nothing now to us when you deal with the whole idea of covenant, you're dealing with this fundamental insight.

7. The last thing in the broad in the new kind of ethics, you can see I am having fun but my early training went into theological and philosophical ethics. I had not thought much about that until right now. I would like to spend several years going back but we got something but I am not sure whether I am getting it said well, but we got something. The world is not waiting for resurgence, it is waiting for this particular ethic which is human resurgence. This is the incarnational aspect of the discovery of the Other World relative to the ongoingness of history. The last, of course, is that this morality is an authenticating morality. This is not anything new especially if you taught RS-1 when you talk about authenticity what you are doing is among other things overcoming the dicotomy that again and again and sometimes in despair say it from the beginning of the world, but the dicotomy is between self-fulfillment and concern for the neighbor. You can put it in different language, you are saying in this language, there is no self-fulfillment save in the creative relationship to the neighbor. In a moment I'm going to do some other things here. You've overcome the 17th and 18th century dicotomy between egoism and altruism, that you are down underneath those. To use the charts, save you are engaged in those states of being that the poetry Mountain of Care points to, there is no self-fulfillment or no sea of tranquility. This is the kind of dicotomy that is being overcome. My poetry that I like these days is when you get to heaven they're only going to ask you one question and that's about your authenticity, as to whether or not you took this unbelievable chance of living one life and dying one death, and did, with your freedom and your creativity. What I'm trying to say is that in one sense with authenticity like he doesn't like this which I do, and he doesn't like this which I do, and don't like that which I do, and everybody comes up there and there's only one final judgment--one final judgment, and that final judgment is now, it has to do with what your sense of criteria, not even my own. It's only the self, what I like to call the . . . It's distinguished between telling somebody if you don't like to do, then you don't have the slightest sense what authenticity is, and never telling a lie!

8. Well I'm taking too much time on that. I was my first point--I have three to hers. I'm just going to throw out some words, and these aren't too well thought out, any more than these others. In a slight, now you walk around and take another look, another look, and the first point, I meant to blow the bottom out. These are more of a detached looking at this new child that I think is emerging in the midst of civilization.

9. This morality is going to be comprehensive in a new way. Any morality had to be, from the point of view of it, comprehensive, or it was not morality. You and I understand that--it has to do with our historic--I said I wasn't going to talk about these--it has to do with our particular moment in time. This kind of morality is sacrificial. Not sacrificial in the sense of old morality where it's fine to be sacrificial. Sacrificiality is built into the midst of it. It is a reflection of raw humanness itself. It is neither more nor less than the expending of the one being you have in which expenditure you create your being. It is rooted in that kind of thing. It is fulfilling, which is what I have mentioned. Also, I don't know quite how to put this, it is liberating. Now this has also to do with fulfillment, but there is a spiritual, psychological something here that I am quite got my mind around. And maybe at any moment in history when morality broke loose with a new vital force, this was the experience of people. I don't know how to say this to you, but even as I talk to you up here now, I feel clean, I don't mean I'm a fine guy, I don't mean that. I feel like unseen forces are cutting the chains that have hiddenly shackled.

10. This kind of thing I have to say is what I meant by that. And then I meant the overcoming of the dicotomy between the ego and the altruistic, overcoming of the dicotomy between the ought and the is, you see. The overcoming of the dicotomy between reward and punishment, and that isn't good but it is reward and punishment. It's overcoming that there is such a thing as a reward for doing X and punishment for doing Y. It's a recovery at a new depth of the stoic, ancient insight that virtue is its own reward. And then it is an overcoming of this world and some other world, which was not simply the theologians, it was in Kantian ethics as some of you know.

11. Lastly, if I were going to talk on, I would want to deal, and this has to do with particular, maybe all these last 3 have to do with the particular agonies in our time, about morality. The new morality is going to be non-judgmental in a new way, and not in a sentimental, liberalist's way of being non-judgmental. I mean in any kind of morality there is a built-in kind of dogmatism that is beyond any kind of dogmatism that would have to do with the appropriation of any kind of rational system, but the dogmatism that has your feelings in it. Only it's not dogmatism relative to the way he should live his life. By God, he needs to live his life. And then it's non-judgmental in that sense. And quite obviously the new morality is going to be transprovincial. Obviously this is going to have to do with our times also. Any morality today that did not just say the same things to the yellow man, the brown man, the balck man, the white man, whatever, cannot be morality. When are you going to overcome that nonsense that there is a black this and an eastern this. The new morality is going to have to be because of the times demand, and not because of this man or another man.

12. Then it seems to me that this kind of morality, how shall I put it, it's remedial. Of course any kind of vital morality is remedial. It's like remedial punishment. This kind of morality has to do with the keeps of one's being. I've been trying to think recently this kind of morality has to be put into law. That means if you're going to have a new morality that is global, you've got to have complete retooling of the legal constructs, and if you don't have law, you've got to have excommunication, period. Whether it's capital punishment or put somebody in prison or whatever. That kind of final power is there. Talk about capital punishment, but I've been trying to say, this kind of morality you are excommunicated, whatever the form of excommunication will be. It's never going to be the same to where the systems of morality we've had in the past. This is what I mean when I say I feel a sense of deep liberation, and then I point afresh, I point to the last thing I want to say.

13. Unity, self-unity like there isn't a morality you have at the office, and then when you get home, you know, or when you go out to a party. I'm not saying it ought not be, I'm saying it isn't. That is to say, this morality that I think is emerging from here is a manifestation of radical monotheism. If you have a sense of being many beings, what you're saying is that you live on the basis of idolatry, and that you have many gods. What is happening here, not in the abstraction, but in the concretion, is a recovery of the depth singularity of selfhood itself. In other words, the radical solitary individual. Now we'll halt. That may not have been good to have while you are eating your chili, but maybe we have got to pay as much attention to the possible fruits of our work in the other world as we move into the future as we have to pay to an adequate philosophical and theological and historical grounding of it.

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