

THE RELIGIOUS EMERGE

Last quarter, the first of the special Guardian Commissions, the Finance Commission, went into operation. Fifteen men met in Chicago four different times and spent four days working out ways of setting aside funds for the education of children, health, and so on.. It is nearly impossible for me to express the importance of that work. If you men charged consulting fees, we would go broke. When we think of the extension of leadership you represent to the Order, it is simply overwhelming. This quarter, we would like to get on the telephone to men in insurance, call together a meeting or two, and work out a way to insure fifteen hundred people. Also this quarter, if it is possible, I would like to have both lawyers and others who understand the workings of international corporations come together and figure out how to legalize this monster that is coming into being.

I consider these meetings far more than people using their skills as doctors or lawyers or businessmen. These meeting would use people as human beings, and I think this is how it ought to be. Of course, this is not to dismiss the being you have invested in the particular skills you possess.

Then I want to talk about something which should be very obvious to you after our meeting last April. We have begun to get clearer than ever before, on how to take the wisdom poured into Base in a day and a half and actually sort it out and put it into operation. I am extremely pleased with what you produced last April. Much of it has already been given flesh.

You will notice that you took a turn this time. Before, you were dealing primarily with enablement problems. This time, you moved into programming, or forging the Movement's missional thrust. When we come together again, we will move further in that direction. To be sure, we will always be dealing with enablement. But from our extended leadership, we also need help in our mission in history.

The other day, when I went to see the head of American Telephone and Telegraph Co., I introduced myself as The Ecumenical Institute, not the Institute of Cultural Affairs. We must not get that mixed up. The ICA is a front. We are the Ecumenical Institute and we are the Church. And certainly, there are calls you will make where you would not announce that in the beginning. Now with the visit at AT&T it was clear what the approach would be. The release that man experienced was a practical release. He was going to do something about it with his company. It is not likely he could move under the rubric of The Ecumenical Institute, but he could operate with a secular name, like ICA. We are The Ecumenical Institute and we always intend to be The Ecumenical Institute. For us, the ICA is just another instrument which we can employ in appropriate places. I thought that needed to be said in case it had not been said clearly enough before.

When you look at the people we are sending out to teach LENS, I don't know whether the course is going to come off or not. But my sensitivities tell me there will be no twilight zone. Either LENS will come off, or it will not. The performance of the course last spring was unbelievable, but we cannot win with something merely good; it has to be excellent. It cannot be another fad. I am sure you are not interested in some fad any more than I. If it comes off, instead of eight Guardians going out to teach, a year from now there would be twenty four just for going overseas. And, if we have the same number of courses in this country, we will need a great many teachers. I do not suppose anyone needs to further persuade you that the hard-headed, secular layman out there in the practical arena of creating history, as you are, needs you teaching that course. What I am trying to say is this: I hope you start this quarter on the steps whereby you become a teacher --as soon, and as many of you as possible.

I have also been thinking about what I would do if I were one of you about marketing. The winter quarter has no fixed scheduling yet; it is wide open and so is spring. I think if I were you, I would try to sell blocks of LENS to every institution I encountered. Once things get started in that fashion, I think LENS will snowball by itself.

This quarter, however, there will have to be some broad, immediate work. If you are fooling around this quarter rather than being rationally inclusive, winter quarter will not matter. It is not important to think about having ten courses in New York. It is important - far more important to have ten courses spread systematically

across continent. That is what does a revolution. If we begin that kind of marketing this quarter, we will be way down the road by next quarter.

Now, when I intend to be serious - profoundly serious - then I say this: Grace and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to talk about the deeps of consciousness, about being the Religious. The way I myself handle these wonderful complexities is with the image of two faces: One face toward God, or the Mystery of life. That is the Hunter-Warrior after he severed all temporal attachments because his ultimate loyalty was to the Mystery in everything. I handle my overwhelming complexity with the face which is turned toward God. In that relationship, that posture, I am a Religious. My second face is the face toward temporality. In that relationship, I am a guildsman.

I like that image, even though it does not exactly hold up: for the two faces are actually together. There is no Mystery outside the temporal, and every temporality is impregnated with Mystery. So actually, it is one face looking in the same direction at two realities which are never separate. To talk about two faces, then, has to do with how you handle the complexities with yourself - not with external reality in any way.

What I mean by the guildsman does not exist save he is a Religious. I am certainly aware of religious people who are not guildsmen and socially minded people who are not religious. But I am talking about the profound relationship to humanness. I assume that everyone in this room, in one way or another, grasps himself as a religious. I am not talking about any hangover of the two-story universe, in which there is life, and you superimpose the religious on that. I am not talking about going from the top down but of going from the bottom up. That is to say, the experience of the religious is in the deeps of humanness itself. Being the religious is to say, as Michael Novak, the Catholic lay theologian says, "I am more concerned with being a human being than I am with being a Christian." That is what I mean by the Religious. The man who grasps himself as a human being is a witness. That is what the word martyr originally meant: a witness. He is not trying to defend anything, or persuade anybody, but to witness to the way it is.

In the unbelievable human community we call the Christian Church, those who grasp what is meant by the Christ-Happening are the religious. I mean the Jesus Christ happening which enables us to be human --not having anything to do with joining a church (that comes later). When I talk about the religious, I am talking about something deeply, foundationally, radically human.

When we began our experiments in marketing LENS, we selected one hundred key people to visit. Norman Cousins of the SATURDAY REVIEW was one of these. In 1961, he had written an article called SIR, SOCIETY FOR INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY, which impacted our whole order. This article finally jarred loose for us the concept of the Guild. Early one morning in New York, we saw him at his club for breakfast. I was prepared to be as secular as I could in talking with him, to drop all religious and theological terminology. I was overwhelmed to hear him use the very theological language I was trying to avoid! I resolved to be as secular as possible when I went to see Governor Romney and I encountered religious language from him as well.

This business of being a Religious is not just for the few sentinel ones of our day. The world is different than it was even ten years ago. The possibility of being religious is eating away at the interior of anyone who is remotely intentional about living his life in our time. In this sense, we are not the odd ones, the set apart. If we are set apart at all it is a result of our bringing radical intentionality to bear upon the intentionality that being a Religious already is. We have brought radical intentionality upon intentionally being human.

Whenever the image of the Religious emerges into history through the unveiling of the deeps of consciousness, we must consider three things. The first is the Context or deep understanding of the whole event. Such an occurrence is always beyond understanding, but without the effort to understand, to build a context over, under, and all about this even, we cannot become intentional about intentionality.

The second thing is the Structure. A religious, all by himself, shrivels up and withers away. (I will return to the extreme danger of daring to be intentional about being a Religious.) The early experiment of the solitary

monastic movement of the Church could not exist. It had to come together. There must be structures to hold the Religious in being.

The third thing which I suggest is necessary such an event is a Climate. By a climate, I mean what our fathers pointed to in theological language with the term "a-means of grace". Speaking not as a theologian, I would say there have to be instruments and tools whereby the individual, in his necessary, immediate isolation, can nurture his own interior being. Otherwise he is eaten away as if he had been dropped into acid.

Let me deal first with the Context for the emergence of the Religious in our time. The Religious is one who has appropriated Universal Benevolence, Profound Integrity and Endless Fulfillment, though I am not going to talk about that. I want to illustrate, however, that those are not ideas; they are indicatives, happenings in your life. They are so intimately concrete you cannot separate them from your identity.

I want to illustrate one way in which Universal Benevolence became a realistic part of my existence. One Christmas my three boys and my wife and I were having a family meeting, and my boys were pushing at me a bit about who I am and about their relationship to me. My wife, out of her eternal sympathy for her sons, got on their side, too. Finally I said, "Now boys, I want you to hear this because I am going to tell you the truth. I just do not care what you do with your life or what your attitude is toward me. I do not care. Because I CARE about this world!" My hands were shaking. That was a happening! A man who cares first for his wife, for his three sons, does not care about this world.

A colleague knocked on my door one night and said he wanted to talk a minute. He said he was just feeling deeply humiliated. I knew he was passing over the barrier of experiencing ontological humiliation which you become aware of through temporal humiliation. Though it took me some weeks to grasp deeply enough what was going on, I knew this was the dark night of the soul. Whatever else the dark night of the soul is it is that experience in which you are burnt out inside and become aware that life is Humiliation, that you are going to be humiliated the rest of your life. Secondly, you become aware that life is your Weakness and you are going to be threatened by your own interior weakness for the rest of your life; this is what it means to be you. Thirdly, that you are Hostility, not just hostile about this or that but pure hostility which is going to be you the rest of your life. Lastly, that you are Suffering, suffering the rest of your life - suffering without a name on it.

But in the midst of engaging in it and daring to take it into yourself as who you are in life, there comes an unbelievable sense of sorrow. I walked out of a restaurant with a couple of colleagues the other day and I suddenly realized I was just skimming along. It had dawned on me that the universe was glad to have me, and I threw my shoulders back and floated in dignity to the car. That sort of experience only comes on the other side of grasping that for the rest of your life you are going to be humiliated. The New Testament says that at that moment the heavens open and a voice says "Thou art my son". The source of the poetry does not matter, just the picture.

At the moment you dare to embrace that weakness which never goes away, you discover in a strange and miraculous way that that very weakness is power. The heavens open, "Thou art my son."

In the midst of that hostility if you dare to embrace it, you find it turning into the strangest kind of love, for everything, everybody - no sentiment, but concern requiring action. The heavens open, "Thou art my son."

And the suffering? You ought to read St. Teresa and let her talk about spiritual suffering. Suffering that is not anything but everything, when one dares to embrace it. It is like the crucifixion itself. It is strange that the crucifixion of some fellow named Jesus turned out to minister unto the world like no one else.

I remember Rev. Bishop Sheen in a radio address at a Holiness Church in Los Angeles said, We must always use our suffering for humanity. "We must", he said, "never waste our suffering". That is what I am trying to talk about. The heavens open, "Thou art my son".

Do you get some feeling after what I mean by Profound Integrity? That is where you move far beneath the moralistic understandings and penetrate the ontological depths of what it means to be a person of integrity. But I must not be caught dead in finding pride in my humiliation. (I do not mean pride-filled pride). Instead, integrity is finding strength in my weakness, finding love in my hostility, finding healing for mankind in my own suffering.

I have just described to you what going to heaven means - not bringing any moral criteria around for measuring, but bringing the criteria of the deeps. That is what It means to go to heaven. The greatest failure in life is the failure to go to heaven, to miss being a person of ontological integrity.

Now, third thing in being Religious is Human Fulfillment. I have been thinking deeply of the state called Peace, which I speak of in secular language as Problemlessness. It dawned on me some time ago that problems do not exist. I mean that very literally. They are human inventions. As a matter of fact, in our lifetime we have taken that rather remarkable work "problem", which means there is an obstacle outside you that you deal with, and we have turned it inward. We have psychologized the whole thing. As a matter of fact, I suppose the whole profession of psychiatry was built on the basis of having turned a problem into a personal problem. But I insist that personal problems literally do not exist. You say, "They do exist - I have them!" That is right, but they are illusions, which means a problem (in the sense we use it today) is a man-invented entity. It is an illusion. Illusions exist, but they are not reality - they are illusions. There are not any problems.

Again, I do not know how I would have learned as much as I have learned without my wife. I usually began my Christ lecture, "My wife is the wrath of God on me." And people would die, but she did not die; she knew good and well she was the wrath of God on me. Now she is the white-hot blast furnace which has to do with interior deeps of consciousness. For instance, every night she comes in and dumps a universe of problems on me. I look upon my great nights as the times when Lyn does not come in and dump the universe on me. Now the things that irritates me is the gleam in her eye, and that quality in her voice which is saying down inside, "I am going to get that old man tonight with these problems." When I succeed in not having a problem she gets mad and we have a fight. When something like that happens to me, I do not have any problems.

You break the illusion that you have problems bothering you. To use Christian jargon, all you have is Satan, who is luring you into problems, into attachments to this world, attachments to temporality, attachments to your immediate relationships. Therefore you have but one enemy when you move into the dimension of the spirit and that is Satan. Satan is the activity that tempts you to reinstate final loyalties to the realm of temporality, where relationships are problems.

Do you get some idea what I mean by Human Fulfillment? Human Fulfillment is having no personal problems. I wish I had the time to talk about Certitude; I wish I had the time to talk about Joy; I wish I had the time to talk about Endlessness; in the creative sense of the word. You experience yourself as utterly whole. Previously, you used to experience yourself as pretty good here, not so good there, and something else over there. There was always a sense of fragmentation inside yourself. Now every fiber of your being appears interrelated, because you have a foundational core. All our lives we have been outsiders. I do not mean this term in the "hippie" sense, but rather in the sense Colin Wilson uses it in his book, The Outsider. Now, you suddenly grasp yourself as an insider. You are "together", integral. This is frightening are "together", integral. This is frightening.

The Bible says that anyone who sees the face of God dies. Almost every religion has that same insight. They are all pointing to an empirical reality, not some daydream. What I have been talking about can destroy you. For this reason, you have to take care of yourselves.

The first thing the deep spirit man learns is that he has to take care of himself. This insight is in our reflections on the style of the Hunter Warrior in Castaneda's book, JOURNEY TO IXTLAN: the Lessons of Don Juan. Once the spirit man cares, he is not open to every person or thing that comes by. He begins to take care of himself, but there is a twist to his care. When he takes care of himself he is taking care of his care for the other, for the world.

How do you care for your care for the other? This is done through prayer, through contemplation, and through medication. As post-modern men, we know prayer is not something added to life; it goes on constantly. The only question is, to what reality do you pray? You can pray in relationship to the unfathomable mystery; but every man prays.

Prayer to any other reality than the final one is perversion, and destroys. On the other hand, when a man relates to that final mystery, the mystery itself will destroy him, unless he brings self-conscious intentionality into his praying, and turns it loose.

Prayer is the interior act before the act. Do you remember the "snake eyes" routine in the movie, "Little Big Man"? The gunslinger uses snake-eyes, and just before he pulls his gun, he has already killed the man. That is prayer. That is why the man of prayer cannot fail. Prayer is the deep resolve behind the act. You can tell a man of prayer, because he is always effective. The deed is done.

I used to get angry with one of our colleagues who was constantly making models. He would never put his being into them; therefore, they never were done. He did not really make a model; he did not pray, for a model is a prayer.

If you have some remote understanding of what it means to enter into the deeps of consciousness about consciousness, or if you have been through the deep night, you will have discovered something about prayer. You will probably have discovered the meaning of Paul's little phrase, "praying without ceasing". You are going to find this prayer without ceasing is flowing constantly in you. My word to you is, "Get out of its way, let it flow." That is the beginning of the solitary office. Let it flow.

The second way one cares for oneself is through Contemplation. Almost everyone knows a bit about the awe in life: a beautiful mountain, a sunset, a picture, a wonderful or tragic happening, or some view of deep suffering. Inside our being are montages built of our relationship to these happenings of awe of which we were not conscious. When any external event hits that montage, awe is created for the man who enters intentionally into the spirit deeps of the meaning of being human.

Now it seems as if that interior montage has been sensitized in such a fashion that nothing can touch it without creating awe. That is what I mean by the empirical presence of God. My word to you is, "Let it flow." If you want, you can turn it off. Let it flow instead, so all day long, in principle, you are dwelling in the awe itself. There will not be any moment, there will not be any happening, there will not be any person which does not deliver its own interior meaning to you. Let it flow. That decision is the beginning of the religious exercises which enable one to stand as universally concerned in profound integrity, embracing the fulfillment of this one life-time and death-time we have.

You have probably discovered that your "meditative council" has become intensely active, for the third way one cares for oneself is through one's council, that array of people within the imaginal facilities of your being, with whom you carry on quiet, secret dialogues about the concrete issues of your life. I suspect the reason why the Hunter-Warrior has spoken to us is the fact that this facet of our consciousness has become more intense and vivid.

When the deeps of life are laid bottomlessly bare, then you not only operate with cultural heroes, but it is that moment when the eschatological hero becomes a necessity and an indicative reality in your life. This kind of figure has been there since the dawn of consciousness itself. Because I am a man, it has to be a man: if I were a dog, it would be a dog. This figure becomes the exemplar, the epitome of humanness. In the tradition from which I came, yea verily his name is Jesus. This figure has nothing to do with the realm of the intellectual or the moral. It has to do with the ontological deeps of life and the necessity of consciousness itself. This figure moves, therefore, not intellectually, but in a realistic sense, to the center of the imaginal facilities of your being.

Part of our humiliation is revealed in this statement in the book of Luke: "He set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem and went on before." They could never keep up with him. That man is your figure. That figure has nothing to do with Christianity in the sense of something to defend. It has to do with our own interior being. Luther is on my council, and Amos, but when I look at Luther and Amos I see the face of Jesus.

There is nothing pious in this, simply hardheaded empirical reality in relationship to consciousness. If we lived in another culture, it would be something else. Guess who the Hunter-Warrior is? I imagine there will be times when you wish you had not met the Hunter-Warrior. He is going to walk on before you as one more manifestation of the humiliation contingency itself is.

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My word to you is, "Do not fight it; let it go." If you do let it flow in terms of prayer, contemplation and meditation, you will be taking care of yourself. Then, when somebody comes back in one hundred years to look you up, you will be standing there as people who care about the world. You will be standing as those who are resolved to profound integrity. And you will be standing there as those who are an invisible, but powerful symbol of the fulfilled human being.

Do not forget that an old man told you, "Take care of yourselves." For those who told you that being a spirit man was simple and easy, lied. Take care of yourself.

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and we always intend to be The
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THE RELIGIOUS EMERGE, Joseph W. Mathews, 10/14/73
Fifth Guardian Consult