

ORDER COUNCIL

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August 1, 1972

SPIRIT POWER

The spirit movement in our time has called forth a happening that I think we have to call something like spirit power. This is direct result of the work on the other world. For instance, if you gestalted all of the practical manifestations of the various states of being that you have found from the visit conversations, you would have a montage of indicatives that were practical and yet were the very basis for your style, the basis for every action. I experienced this kind of happening as several people have expressed it, as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and therefore we might title this report "Spirit Power"

For I believe we have received blessings in this arena that men in the past spent twenty years as disciplined monks in the desert to discover. It is as though you and I have been given that possibility, given that gift, given the wisdom of the ages in this arena, almost before we are ready for it--but certainly not before we are in need of it. We have been given the gift of the desert discipline, with an ability to articulate it secularly. With the corporate exercises this summer of the fast, the watch and the ball, and with our trek lectures, we made our entry into the other world. It was the combination of the lectures and the exercises, that gave the people in Summer '72 the best picture that we had of what the other world is like. They went away knowing that they had broken through, that they had taken the first step into the other world.

Another way of talking about the exercises and the lectures is that they were a rehearsal of "spirit muscle." They were an exercise in the other world. It was like getting inside of the gymnasium all by yourself and trying out every exercise device possible, but it was a spiritual happening. There was a kind of renovation of our spiritual body that manifested itself as a new kind of prowess, a new kind of stamina. By virtue of having as a group participated in the fast and by having participated in the corporate effort to build the other world lectures, something has happened to us that is experienced internally as spiritual stamina, as simply the ability to remain steadfast in the land of mystery; to remain steadfast in the river of creativity; to remain steadfast on the mountain of caring for the world; to remain steadfast in the sea of tranquility.

In the land of mystery, wonder is spiritual power. That is to say, when you grasp that everything is now a delicate object which is about to reveal the presence of the mystery, your posture in life is altered. Once you have seen that, it is as if now you are standing on tip toes at every moment--it is as if you are ready to spring into action at any time. Wonder is spiritual power, the ability to see the mystery in every situation is a motivational happening. It is a drive that is not superimposed upon life, wonder is just the way life is.

Externally it looks like a calling. In the New Testament, as the movie, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," pictures it, Jesus just walks along and he says, "Follow me". And the guy gets up right there where he is and takes off after Jesus. People in a conversation afterwards said that it was unrealistic, "People just don't make decisions like that--at least not decisions about their whole lives." No, I think that is the only way decisions are authentically ever made--they are made just like that--you get up and move all of a sudden. That is what I mean when I say wonder is motivation, wonder is the power that drives you. In the New Testament, you see a man who has decided to live his whole life before the Father, to live his whole life before the mystery, to take the experience of wonder and embody it. Therefore he is portrayed as being able to elicit wonder, to elicit responses of wonder from the

people he comes in contact with such that there are statements like, just out of the blue Peter says, "This indeed is the Christ," or Thomas says, "My Lord, my God." There is almost a spontaneous response.

Now this does not just happen to a few people. The power of wonder comes to all of us. It is the power to respond to the mystery when it happens. Let me come at it something like this: within the land and within the river and upon the mountain and upon the sea, you and I receive outpourings of blessing like this that simply come as showers, simply come as overwhelming floods. But, those never come except in the other world, or to use our other language, never come except at the center of being which is always experienced as intense suffering. The kind of decision I was talking about is not a snap decision--it is born out of intense suffering. It comes from suffering in the sense that in the midst of the land of mystery, you are always under the pervading cloud of doubt. In the midst of that response to wonder, you are always in a cloud of what seems like blindness in response to the mystery; you are always carrying within yourself the rage of rebellion against the mystery. Now therefore what I am talking about is experienced paradoxically; it is experienced within doubt; it is experienced within seeming vagueness; it is experienced within a rage against that which you are responding to which is also fascinating, which is also wonder-filled, which is also alluring.

Let me put it one other way. In the land of mystery, internally, the land of mystery comes to you as bewilderment. This is not surprising. It is as though you do not know what is coming around the next curve. You just do not know where the next wellspring of being is going to burst loose, you just do not know where mystery is going to pop its head up next. That creates a kind of dizziness. It is like the experience of the young samurai trainee in The Ronin who just does not know where to look next for the strike, and that is bewildering. I suppose that samurai trainee got slapped enough times that deep down he began to feel hatred--you know what I mean --hatred for the mystery. I mean it is just painful to have to go around expecting something to slap you in the shoulderblade every other minute.

Yet, if you can imagine it, there is hatred to the point that you want to get over that hatred so bad that you just wish the slap would hurry up and get there. That is transformation. That is to say, you long for the mystery. You want it to happen. It is as Jean Paul Sartre says, when that pin sticks you, at least you know you are alive. That is the great thing about pain. That is, the negativity, the hatred of the mystery, is precisely the motivation; it is exactly the motivating force for the love of the mystery. That happens only in the grace of God; that happens only in an occurrence whereby he gives us his power to receive it, but it happens. It happens in the midst of that kind of intensity. As if in the land of mystery you have to have that hurricane or you have to have the tornado going and then you realize that that tornado is not only external, but it is also within you. And that tornado is a dance. It is the driving force, the gnawing, the prodding on; that is the drive in the land of mystery. There is nothing psychologically propping you up at all, it is simply the way life is.

In the river of consciousness, freedom is spiritual power. Freedom is motivation. When you grasp that your life is wild creativity, that your life is wild freedom, you begin to grasp that that creativity becomes personified, that freedom becomes something other than yourself which drives you on. It does not mean that you do not have illusions anymore; it does not mean that you are not neurotic anymore; but freedom is experienced as new spiritual power. What is revealed to you is not simply the Word (although the Word has brought you to this point), it is not just the story of the Christ (although that has taken you all the way); what is revealed to you is your own life--not your subjectivity but the content of your life. And the content of your life is the way it is. That is not a neurotic illusion; that is the way it is.

It is like you do not feel guilt in the other world because you have never been there to do anything wrong; how could you feel guilt in the other world?

No, the experience of the other world is, as somebody put it, as if all of these years you have been living life unfree and now you are just disgusted because you have missed all that freedom up to this point. It is not that you have done anything wrong it's just that you realize that you have missed the fascination and the fear of creating the new. All these years you have been simply reduplicating what has gone on before. You have never risked yourself. In the freedom lecture we point out that an ethical act is an artform; there are no two moral acts that are exactly the same. Every ethical act is a response, in which you create that which has never been before. And it is like in the other world of freedom you realize you have been following guidelines and looking for praise for following guidelines. You have been following a moral code.

But freedom is experienced beyond the moral, it is experienced beyond the code. It is creating the new code. This is motivational power. It does not mean psyching yourself up, no, no. This happens to you, you realize it in a happening. It happens to me when something goes wrong and somebody says you are responsible for what happened; you have to account for what happened. Standing before your colleagues and before the accountability the only response of a spirit man is, "I DID IT!" if you do not hear anger in that, then you do not have a sense of freedom. But it is not anger of bitterness; it is not defensive anger that I'm talking about. There is no backing off when you say I did it; you are saying, "I did it before God." The saying "I did it before God" transforms what you did or reveals to you what you did that you did not know was there. Accountability is in that sense a revelation. You grasp that you are totally alone, that you stand totally accountable before God for what you have done, and that what you have done is what you are. For it is only in the affirmation of, "I did it," that there is release to create a new act, release to create that which has never been created before.

Externally this looks like creating something out of nothing. If somebody saw this going on they could say, "Well, isn't he a creative person?" They would be thinking of a great artist in the sense of painting a picture, in the sense of enabling a situation or enabling an accomplishment that has never been done before. The rack of pain in creativity is in bringing to be that which has never been before. It is always done in light of the past, but it is not copying the past, it is the bringing to be of something totally different. You know you have given the RS-I Christ lecture many times--and we all give basically the same Christ lecture, you know--but every time you give the Christ lecture it is a different lecture. This is the experience of creativity. There is no pattern that stereotypes you into giving a certain kind of Christ lecture. You follow the construct, but there is a new creation every time. You have to realize therefore that every time you get up to speak, you speak that which has never been spoken before. When you get ready to act, you do that which has never been done before, and therefore everything you do, everything you say is a new invention. I want to say that that is not an imperative; that is just the way life is. That is motivational power.

What I mean by motivation is something like this: If you decide to get upset, if you decide to be angry, if you decide that one of your colleagues is a s.o.b., in the other world, that is a great happening. It is not a problem for you. He may experience it initially as a problem, but it is not a problem for him either, because, when you decided he was a s.o.b., that was a spirit happening. You realize that if you get upset in that situation, you have decided to get upset. You created that situation, and you create every situation you come up against. You grasp yourself as the one who creates the world that you have, and therefore there is no reason to be victimized. There is no reason to buckle under in that situation--YOU CREATED IT!

You are in charge of it. And you can turn right around and be delighted with that s.o.b. the next instant if you decide. The experience is not as if there is a rational process of grasping yourself as the creator of the world, when you grasp yourself as the creator of the universe that you live in. It is a happening in which you see that you were not sent into this world simply to be your gifts, not simply to be your family, not simply to be your immediate community; you were sent to be the universe; that is to say, you were sent to be all of mankind to mankind. That action is free action. And when you realize you have that kind of an open slate, nobody ever gets frustrated again. What I am trying to say is that in the river of consciousness, there is the experience, not of an imperative, but simply of the indicative, to be your freedom. That is experienced as motivation; it is experienced as drive; it is experienced as the happening in your life in which you are grasped by freedom and you sit down and create out of nothing.

On the mountain of care, spiritual stamina, that is, the internal experience of spiritual stamina, comes as the ability to see through a situation, it comes as the ability to penetrate through what is actually going on in the world that you have created, in the world that you have been given, in the world and the situation that you show up in. Externally, on the mountain of care, people see this going on and it looks like working miracles.

But let me go back to the internal. You always have the cloud of doubt; you always have the doom, the darkness, and the rebellion. Now, in the midst of the cloud of doom over this world which, as Gogarten says, is the suffering of this world, you grasp in the other world the intensification. Then the world and the cloud of doom that is over this world become your world, and in becoming your world, this becomes your personal destiny. That is to say, you become responsible for it. That is not something you ought to do; that happens to you. It happens to you in the most intense sadness, the most intense remorse and the most intense sympathy for this world. You are driven to the bottom of remorse simply by the fact of seeing anyone transgress the mystery. The deepest compassion comes when you grasp that the problem of this world is that the fat lady, whoever that is for you, has missed the experience of wonder, has missed the experience at the river of consciousness or freedom. That drives you then to responsibility for the world, which is responsibility for their seeming inability to participate; their seeming inability to grasp their freedom and to grasp the mystery. That is what you are responsible for.

When you look from the outside at somebody who has decided to take responsibility for the world, then you see somebody who is working miracles. You see him who takes every situation he comes up against and wonders it, releases it, explodes it beyond time and space. Then it looks like a miracle. It is as if somebody has taken all of time and all of space and put it right in your own backyard--and to which you have to respond with either yes or no. The man who shows up thinking just two days ahead looks lazy beside the one who thinks forty years ahead. That is what I mean by motivation. If a man has a vision, a practical vision, of the next twenty years, I mean, he just keeps going. And compared to him someone who has a one-year goal looks lazy. There is no moralism implied here, I am talking about the motivation that comes on the mountain of care.

Another example is charisma, charisma is not something that a few people have and it is not something a few people can have. Rather, charisma is the way life is when it is participated in at its depth. Charisma, or the ability to lead, the ability to draw others out, the ability to make disciples--not for your sake, but for the mystery's sake, the ability to respond freely in a situation, comes via a vision beyond time.

History books talk about the great monastic movement that occurred in the third century when a relatively stable affluent society in Rome and the Middle East flocked into the desert to become monks. And we still do not know why that happened. Motivation is a very subtle thing, because there are no social goals, no personal goals, no personality that is going to motivate anybody for very long. A new public image may get you some votes in an election, but it is not going to motivate a people; there is not any president that is going to motivate a country. The only thing that is going to motivate a people, and the only thing that is going to allow a people to participate in the movement, is the call of the other world, which is beyond time and beyond space. What happened then in that third century is what happened in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The history of the orders in the early Middle Ages say that everybody dropped what they were doing and went on the crusades. Everybody dropped what they were doing and went into the monasteries. Something like 355 religious houses were established in the lifetime of St. Bernard alone, but they can not explain what motivated people to do that.

In any event, you had better get ready now because something like that is about to happen again. You are going to have to be gurus. No, no, in the other world, everyone is a guru; that is, you do not call attention to any teaching or any personality or anything about yourself, you call attention to the other world, which motivates people beyond anything else. What we have meant by guru, I think, is simply what we would call teaching. But in the other world in which everyone is a guru, what you say and what you do does not point to your own personality or your own gift or the content of your teaching. All of your gifts, your personality, and your teaching points to the other world-which is what people can respond to and that is what calls people out. I think you saw it in Summer '72.

Then immediately you experience greatness. What you I mean by "greatness"? Well now, you just stop and think. We would not want to be president of the United States, but here in this room are many great men who will never get to be president of anything. That is to say, they will never get to be the top man. That is no problem. You are seized by agape. And this is not magic, a special gift, not religious training, not good education, this is the way life is. It is life for the one who detaches himself, for the one who engages himself, for the one who wills one thing. But agape is a seizure; it is not detachment, it is not engagement, it is not chastity--those are gifts that come in the Holy Spirit. In agape is spirit stamina, steadfastness in creativity, steadfastness in wonder, steadfastness in care. Care for the whole world comes to the one who detaches himself, to the one who engages himself, to the one who wills one thing.

In the sea of tranquility, internally the spirit stamina comes as something like blessed assurance. But that blessed assurance is a paradox; it always comes at the moment of the most intense, the most frightening objectless doubt; it comes at the moment of the most intense, objectless blindness; it comes at the point of the most intense objectless rage at life itself. And this rage is the drive, is the motivation for turning matter into spirit.

It happens like this. In the great ball at Summer '72, the ball of the Great Turn, I died. Now not exactly, I am still here; but the thought occurred to us that if you had participated fully in the ball and had immediately died, I mean had actually physically expired, you could not have found a better occasion than the great ball. I mean, if you expired at the great ball, they would never have forgotten you. What I am trying to say is that after the ball, the next morning, as soon as I woke up, I was filled with a terrifying anxiety that I had missed some part of the ball. I mean I was afraid that I had not participated fully, that I had not danced every dance, that I had not tasted all the food that was there. It was not guilt or des-

pair, I was just dumbfounded that I could have let one moment of that ball go by without intensified meaning being there and being conscious of it at every moment.

Now when I realized my dismay, it was not because the ball had not come off. It was because what had happened the night before was as St. Teresa puts it, total self-forgetfulness. No moralism here. What had happened was that I had participated with such complete abandonment that whatever had been going on that I was directly related to had disappeared and complete problemlessness happened--or the ball was self-induced bliss. It was an exercise in bliss. Now you can say I had too much champagne or you can say I was so busy doing things that I really did not know what happened, but neither of those was the case.

This points to the paradoxical nature of fulfillment. You have always in fulfillment, in the sea of tranquility both the Mary principle and the Martha principle. That is, to receive the delights of the Lord, you must both sit at his feet in reposeful relaxation and, at the same time, must be in frantic concern for everything that is going on--to the degree that you are utterly involved in all the many things which enable other souls to have every possibility to praise God at that moment. Do you see the paradox? You never have fulfillment in either the Mary or the Martha principle; it is only in both of those. This is analogous to the hurricane in which you have tumult and distress and worry and anxiety and consuming concern all around while within the center the sea is quiet and tranquil. Only on the other side of the mountain of care is the sea of tranquility possible.

I want to share with you the experience that we had in Room E preparing the ball. It was as though for once in your life we had been given the possibility to be great movie directors like Stanley Kramer or Cecil B. DeMille, and we literally had a cast of a thousand. We were the directors, we were the actors, we were the producers; we were in charge of the food, we were in charge of the pageant; we were in charge of the decor, we were in charge of the orchestra; and we all worked behind the scenes.

And it was like we made Antie Mame's banquet look shameful; we made Nicholas and Alexandra look like paupers; we made Wellington's ball a paragraph in a history book. Ours was the Great Turn of the People of God Ball, which was loaded with more meaning in one event than in your whole lifetime before it. It was as if there was more intensification of corporate power on this floor Thursday night than there had been in the twenty centuries preceeding it. It was as if everything that had to be done was done in order to fulfill your existence. Your existence was completed in the ball. This is realized in secret. I actually had been seized by bliss two days before. It happened in seeing the relationship between the watch and the fast and the ball. Or it had happened in preparing for the ball. I am trying to say that it happens behind the scenes. It happens in the midst of the frantic and the hurry and the relaxation. It is the juxtaposition of the tension of history and the having the ball that brings the bliss.

For me, going back seeing what the watch was, I think I was able to grasp what bliss is. It is always appropriated alone and in secret, but corporately. You remember in the watch about 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. when you were reading your book or painting your painting? I was reading and writing exciting things and I felt, "Oh this is the best thing that ever happened to me." Then right in the middle of this exciting book, I burned out. You know how the sockets of your eyes do not close, they just burn all the way through on the inside. That is, I went blank.

At the watch, I did not lay my burdens down, they got laid down for me. For to lay your burdens down is not an imperative; to lay your burdens down is the way life is. My burdens were laid down for me during the watch whether I like it or not and that was the signal of the return of God for this life and for this body. Relaxation just occurred.

And it occurred whether I accomplished anything; it occurred whether I came off; it occurred whether the watch came off; relaxation just occurred. Relaxation is a deep word here. It is as if you were mowed down by the spirit right before your fellow men. You were leveled--you were made equal with everyone else on the watch. It was as if our whole body died on the watch. Then, after we were all dead, we got up and marched to worship. We did the worship, we had breakfast and we went back to the research work. And in spite of the corporate collapse, we worked on.

I call this experience our corporate right-wising--our corporate righteousness. No moralism here, no piety. If we have a life of integrity as a corporate body, our integrity comes from our spiritual intentionality. That is, the corporate body acknowledges its death and then rises up and goes ahead. In this event you saw the happening, the resurrection, you saw the kind of happening that creates corporate-ness. This is the glue that holds an order together. In the watch we became the religious--what I mean by that is that we became the radically human people right in the midst of the social process. We are to be the ones on whose back the social reconstruction of the planet takes place. But this is always parallel with the resurgence of the human spirit which is the great revival.

Rick Loudermilk

