

## THE LIFE OF DESTINY

I have been assigned to talk for a few minutes to you on the topic that is called, "The Life of Destiny." When that assignment was made it struck me as a reasonably appropriate topic because it is certain that what we have been about is something that has been destinal. It has to do with history. It does not belong to us, it belongs to history and is not to be swayed by personal contingency. It is the inevitable course of destiny itself. So, it struck me as a reasonably appropriate topic, and I went to work on it.

Then yesterday, as I was trying to pull the final notes together, it struck me that something like panic was beginning to take place. That is not altogether typical, because I am usually ready to talk at some length about almost anything. But, there was a suspicion that it was panic. Now, you can't trust yourself in analyzing your own states of being, and sometimes you are the last one to know, but other people notice, and you begin to pick up clues. I began to notice that people were being extraordinarily nice to me yesterday. They were going out of their way to walk the other way and let me alone and take their problems to somebody else. Several times people would come bursting in the door while I was sitting there alone working on this thing, and they would look at me and get this horrified expression on their faces and turn around and walk out. Normally, those are events you devoutly long for, but when they happen, you begin to suspect that something is desperately wrong. The real clue was late yesterday afternoon when Don Moffett and I were sitting alone in Lumumba Room. I was working away and he asked me, "What are you going to say?" I told him, and then he proceeded to lay out the speech he would give if he were assigned to do it. It was a jewel. I mean, it was super and you ought to talk to him about that. I plan to steal a good bit of it. But anyway, that was a clue and so I consulted my gizzard, and sure enough, there was a sign flashing, "PANIC! PANIC! PANIC!"

When your state of being is flashing something like that, you know that it is a clue to something objective going on -- that is, unless you believe in problems. If you happen to be somebody who believes in problems, and you find yourself in a state of panic, then you've got a problem. If you don't believe in problems, and I take it that none of us in this room do, when you have got something like that happening, you have got a situation that requires objectively dealing with. And, as I began to try to pinpoint the situation to be objectively dealt with in a state of being of panic, it occurred to me that I didn't have anything left to say. It was all already said.

My first point was going to be that the life of destiny is moving one step beyond paravocation. Jack Gilles and Glenda Adkinson both made that point in their spins. They demonstrated it and they said it. You remember paravocation came clear when we discovered some years ago that you and I, for whatever reason, are afflicted with being Those Who Care. We are caught up in care, and very often our occupations do not provide an adequate channel of releasing that care, and so we find ourselves with a paravocation -- a vocation of being Those Who Care alongside the job in which we have skills and expertise and financial support. And, what we really find is that we are Those Who Care assigned to be; assigned to be the lawyer's division of Those Who Care, or the doctor's division or the farmer's division or whatever. Now, I believe that we have moved a step beyond that. We have gotten to the point, and this is momentous, where our care and occupations are beginning to merge into one. That is the situation that Jack and Glenda witnessed to, and you and I are finding that our skills, our training, our expertise is precisely what history is calling for at this moment. We find ourselves in the enviable position of being the right people at the right place with the right expertise, with exactly what is needed. That was going to be my point. Of course, it can't be now since it has been made by Jack and Glenda and they stood here and witnessed to it. They've got their lives behind.

My second point was going to be the life of destiny is the exhilaration of historical engagement. After Georgianna's talk, what is left to say? I mean, she fairly swept us away in the blood-curdling excitement of actually, practically turning on and turning around a continent, one of nine divisions of the planet Earth, and waking its people up to actually, practically create local community which is what history is desperately crying for. She just exuded the excitement that is part of being engaged in a momentous task like that. Now everybody knows the excitement of being engaged in a momentous task, or getting something done and working hard and expending

energy corporately in something that is worthwhile. Of course, we also know the pull in the other direction. That is, if you and I had our choice of how to spend a weekend over against doing what we prefer to do and doing something momentarily, historically demanding, expending and exciting, we would pick doing what we would rather do. That is just who people are. But, I expect that you and I are onto the great secret of history (and I do believe that it's a secret because people who haven't experienced it don't believe it when you tell them). You and I over and over again have found ourselves caught up in the reality that radical significant engagement is where there is profound human life. Well, Georgianna made that speech and there wasn't anything left to be said.

Third, I was going to mention that destinal living is having a comprehensive picture of the future - a hope-filled comprehensive picture of the future. That one got done Friday night. Then, when we heard the two reports on India this morning, the comprehensiveness of the future that we are looking forward to was laid out before us. And, at every meal when we read Chardin, that was done. I mean, those reports have not been about the past, they have been about what we have on our hands. We have got on our hands the actual, practical future of doing the sub-continent. The place that has stood as the symbol of innocent suffering for generations has a chance now of practically turning that image around. And you can go on to Latin America and SEAPAC and even to the US. Did you realize that in the US if we do those 12 additional projects next year, there will be not one person in this country who lives more than a four-hour drive away from a concrete visible sign of hope for history? We have got a future vision that you won't believe, but other people have made that speech.

My fourth point was going to be a toss-up between two choices. One was that the life of destiny is an assignment to practical, concrete work. That thing on the wall wiped out anything I would have had to say there. We have had assignment charts before. They have always been based on a volunteeristic thing like, "Look at all these great places to go and good things to do. Y'all come and sign up whenever you can." We have made a switch this year that is going to make it work. That is, you did not ask yourselves to volunteer for stuff, you located the concrete visible points of human need, and assigned yourselves to go deal with it. I think that is tremendous and I think it is going to work. The assignments crew made that part of the speech on destiny.

The other candidate for point number four was going to be the life of destiny is the fellowship of corporate work. The teams made that point rather well yesterday. Somebody mentioned that their team, which was going like crazy, was in a "no bullshit" mood. And, there was a tremendous fellowship coming out in the midst of it. You and I have known and witnessed to our sort of unique capacity to take a team of people, a small group of virtually anybody, and get a job done. I think what we are moving toward now is something even beyond that. We are beginning to experience the profound fellowship of people who are joined in a common mission. That would be kind of nice. For a long time we have been beginning that. There cannot and must not be any sentiment or the mission goes down the drain, for it is the mission that allows the possibility of fellowship to happen. And yet, we are about at the point where it is good to be together, even with some of the people we get thrown together with. Anyway, that point has been made.

If all else failed, I was going to turn to the religious and make some points about how the church has never been about propagating narrow dogma, but about releasing human life for all mankind, not just of a certain small sector of humanity. That her word was indeed very missionally relevant, and the Achilles' heel of the piosity that masks itself as "true religion" in either a secular or a religious guise, is forgetting that the Other World exists no place but in the midst of this practical world. Bishop Mathews demonstrated that and took that point away.

If that had failed, I was going to demythologize a little bit of Scripture just for the fun of it. That was handled with the Fig Tree story that was used as a description of how multi-national corporations are currently experiencing the judgment of history.

As a last resort, I was ready to do some dazzling logical gymnastics on Profound Humanness and discovered that the Nadia Cominici of the philosophical world performed for us last night. Do you know that the "folksy Philosopher" that was talked about up here, and I had to be told this, was Martin Heidegger?

Those are hardly the two adjectives most people use to describe Martin Heidegger. He wrote everything in German and was very obscure and intricate. I have never found his English translations to be very translatable. In any case, you can see that panic was well-deserved.

What do you do when you get up to talk to a group of people who have demonstrated and said that "We are the people of destiny, and we know what that means;" that is, that we are engaged-in the task that history requires right now, and we understand that? What do you say? What do you need to hear? Especially when at a moment like this we are poised, tickets in hand, ready to go out to the uttermost parts of the earth and transform it. What do you say?

Well, after that long apology, which, you all recognized, has nothing to do with apologizing for anything, I thought I might read you something.

Thirty spokes converge in the hub of a wheel  
 But the use of the cart depends on the part of the hub  
 That is void.  
 With a wall all around the clay bowl is molded  
 But the use of the bowl will depend on the part of the  
 Bowl that is void.  
 Cut out windows and doors in the house as you build  
 But the use of the house will depend on the space in the walls  
 That is void.  
 So, advantage is had from whatever is there  
 But usefulness rises from whatever is not.

The third campaign, the third campaign. Destiny lies there. The top circle that is the middle of those two big wheels. The "Those Who Care." I don't know much about the Third Campaign, and you don't know much about the Third campaign, I suspect. It may be that this summer we will get ourselves together and pull together what is needed. But, it is very clear to me at this moment that the issue is not whether you and I have had the rare, unique privilege of being persons of destiny. The hell with that, though it is a rare gift. The issue is how we get that gift given to every local man on the face of the earth. Something like that is the Third Campaign. And, that is where we are headed. Frankly, I do not know any other body on the face of the earth that is even remotely capable of engaging in that campaign. We are doing what Teilhard de Chardin suggested with his comment that there needs to be a solid core around which the scattered particles of humanity can coagulate into the profound unity that history requires for there to be a human future. I do not know any other body on the face of the earth than that which is sitting in this room and is represented by those sitting in this room, that is even remotely capable of being that core. That is the Third Campaign.

We don't know much about the practice of it, but we do know a little about what is involved in giving this destiny gift to people simply because we have experienced it. You know that the gift of destiny comes as a surprise.

I thought when I first got in touch with this group, that I was going away for a weekend of study in theology. That is what we are doing to these communities and people, you know. I just have this image in the back of my mind of Joe Slicker and Vinod Parekh jeeping into this little village that nobody ever heard of before and talking to some people on the street and saying, "Guess what! You are the light of the world," and driving on. That is what they are saying, you know. "The world is going to come here and the world demands you to be a sign." And then, they just drive off. The really miraculous part of the whole business is that people are believing it. They are doing it. That is proof positive to me that this is a destinal thing we are in, and it doesn't have anything to do with us. It is the right time; it is the right word. Anyway, it comes as a surprise. You can imagine the look on the listener's face.

The second thing is that it dumps a load, the weight of the world, onto people and onto communities. I have been intrigued all weekend with this Atlas art-form that we managed to store away in a back alley somewhere for the past two or three years. You walk by it every once in awhile and get addressed by the weight of the world on your back. I have been intrigued this time with the hole in his head. It strikes me as rather appropriate. I can't tell whether that is a hole or a halo. In either case, you know a halo is just a brass zero. It is the nobodies that bear the weight of the world and the future. And, when you and I go around to these communities and town meetings and social demonstrations, let us be clear; we are laying the weight of the world on these people, however nicely we package it and tie it up and sell it. Now, when you first get that clear, you wonder why anybody would do something like that to somebody else. Except you and I have seen through to the fact that that is the only place

where there is full humanness. That is where there is life; under the weight of the world and no place else. But, let us be clear, giving people a life of destiny is dumping a load.

It is also taking the offensive. The other morning I woke up in one of those great mornings with lots of energy and severe irritation. So, I made a list and by breakfast-time it was 15 items long of particular, concrete evils that needed to be dealt with. They were really out there. And then, by some crazy quirk, a title appeared on the top of that page that said, "My Agenda," and about 14 of those items walked off the page and went away. Then I decided, "By God, that other one is going to get dealt with because it is a contradiction." And it was dealt with. That was kind of fun, you know. Being offensive in the life of destiny is not getting absorbed with the trivia. It is fighting the contradiction. And when a contradiction gets spotted, things happen. It was amazing to hear that report this morning from Maliwada about the way the villagers are just taking the project over and doing it. But in another sense, it is not amazing at all. They have got hold of a contradiction, and a contradiction is where there is life, and you had better believe there is offensiveness to be taken.

The other thing we need to know and be aware of as we give the gift of destiny to people for the sake of their profound humanness is that it means also giving up your death. In the sense it is no longer, once one is a person of destiny it is no longer an option to at least be let alone to die peacefully. Even that becomes a sign. Even that becomes a tool, a vehicle, a device that history uses for the sake of its creative movement. That is what we are doing to folks.

Now I have a few collegial, practical suggestions. One is to take care of yourself. I think again that Gilles did the best job on that one I have heard in a long time. But let me add to it, stay on death ground. That is where there is life. That is where there is vitality, and that is where there is insight and that is where there is creativity. That is where there is life. Most of the time you and I find ourselves someplace else, somewhere where it really doesn't matter. I would say it takes a miracle to stay on death ground. One other thing in taking care of yourself is that I believe we are now just about able to take care of one another. That is, we are able to push one another a little bit relative to decisions. For a long time we said that you have got to take care of yourself. Nobody else can take care of you. That is true, and we had to get that said for the sake of coming over against some kind of superimposed moralism that was destructive of any kind of corporateness or anything else. I believe now that we are just about in a time when it is possible to begin to push each other a little bit and take care of one another that way. With the selfhood we have been given, you can't moralize me into doing anything. You can get my back up and some defiance raised, but you can't make me do anything. Your only tool or lever on me is the decision that you know I have made. We are beginning to be able to hold one another over against our decisions for the sake of the task. Now, I believe we are in a time of corporateness that has expanded beyond the reach of our wildest imaginations. Some of us were talking the other day about the good old days when a few of us would get together and have a concrete Job to do and wrestle and argue and fight and cuss until the job got done, and remembering the great corporateness and fellowship that was going on in those days. We will probably never have a time like that again. But, that is because the unity and the corporateness that we are a part of now is vastly bigger. We have colleagues all over the world as guardians and as Order. It is no longer Just a few of "we-people". It is composed of people who never even realized that many people speak the English language most of the time. We have a huge body and a corporateness with people that never heard of us. It is the people, the scattered particles Teilhard talks about. The unity that is emerging that we are beginning to experience and being required to give form to is larger than any of us expected. So that is one thing: take care of yourself.

There is another thing: look out for the enemy. A colleague half way around the world wrote a letter not too long ago in which he laid out the enemy as it was showing up there. It goes something like this:

#### THE ENEMY

Half invisible principalities and powers, yet incarnate in established forms and mindsets that keep people in darkness, in inertia and in despair.

##### A. Darkness

Hides what it means to win. Substitutes false winning.

##### 1. Zealot

When we cannot come to terms with the situation -- one response is to become a zealot.

Hastily vents to change the situation

Can't stand it.

Sucks everything into wanting to make that change.

Results in no patience.

Wants to turn pain of situation into major contradiction instead of taking the pain into himself and looking underneath to actual major contradiction.

## 2. Legalist

This mindset has to do everything like the "rules and regulations" (whatever that form may be) lays it out.

Uses the routine of the proven to escape radical demand

Isn't interested in historical situation or bringing future off or discovering the new in the future

## 3. Perfectionist

Wants to do something for the sake of doing it, or proving that he can bring it off.

Seeks his own fulfillment - Justification.

All the above is succumbing to wanting to be somebody. This mind-set for example does not care about shadow or the local villager learning to do the task or finally bringing things off.

This mindset hides from what it means to win and keeps others in darkness. It substitutes false winning.

## B. Inertia

Hands life over to the failure syndrome. Plays at winning.

### 1. Past Oriented.

Hangs on to previous accomplishments and past perspectives and outmoded contexts, instead of seeing that maneuvers, tactics, miracles are surprises, once for all and never again. There is no second chance.

### 2. Disengaged

Doing something only long enough to hold things until he can get away. Not historically engaged. No follow-through, therefore no action. no final impact

### 3. Drifter

Drift from one moment to another without a plan, without a purpose, doing what is needed just to get along. Undisciplined. No intention of winning.

All the above hands life over to failure syndrome. It leaves the battle. Never first physically, but by withdrawing -- refusing the struggle -refusing to struggle with being. It feigns the battle, plays at winning.

## C. Despair

This mindset is out to prove you can't win. It will do anything directly or indirectly to keep from winning.

### 1. Bitcher

Creates a situation where there are constant arguments. It picks up obvious inadequacies and escalates them into major contradictions.

### 2. Injured

Can't stand what is going on for the injustices that are carried out and the old wounds that are still sore and got rubbed.

These two fundamentally hate life. Therefore, they can never train them because the other usually is the locus of that about which to bitch or strike out against.

### 3. Disillusioned (Dark Night)

Something, somewhere is their home from which they are being cut off or slowly being eroded away, i.e. idealized relationship, cultural mores or preferred style. The person who incarnates this mindset becomes impotent, weak, a nothing, and finally disappears. Consciously or unconsciously he is out to prove you can only fail.

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We have met the enemy and conquered. The enemy is already defeated. We have seen that with our own eyes in history and in ourselves. Therefore the rest of our lives are continuously involved in the struggle to manifest that the enemy is finally defeated.

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Illustrations for each of the above:

People responses

Life styles

Established positions / forms

Institutional mores

Finally, reflect on your life. It's your gift to destiny. You have a Journal on your plate. It is a sample of one form of reflection. The intent is to read the passage and maybe you have another journal or a diary or something. Read what is down for the day and then, just write. Do some writing. That would be one way to use it. But read it. Perhaps all across the world before two weeks are out, there will be a body of people reading the same article. Those articles are taken from a number of traditions. You will recognize some of them. In any case, take that as your gift, and use it well. We have a destinal task that is required of us.

Now we are the ones that destiny has appointed. We have our marching orders. There is not much left to do but to go do it.