

14th Guardian's Meeting
Chicago

April, 1978
T-494

"Serving in the Real World"

I tell you it's tough trying to get ready for a talk around here. Especially if it's the last one on the program. You work on it awhile and then opening night somebody uses it up. So, you rewrite it. And the next morning somebody uses it up. So you skip lunch, but then somebody tells you that afternoon that they used up what you worked on that morning. So, last night I started running PSU's everywhere I could to put together something that hadn't been said yet, and all kinds of people had things they wanted said. There were people who did not feel like their points had really gotten made in their workshops. I've got that list of things they want to make sure everybody's clear about. And then there were folks who had certain reservations about trying to do a talk at this time of day on Sunday, especially after six area reports and a bottle of wine. They said things like, "Now, whatever you do, don't talk about Fifth City, Area Chicago, or any of your other favorite subjects." Then I got Don and Mary Warren Moffet to sit down with me for awhile and they were the most helpful of anyone. They have a long history of deciding what needs to happen at Guardian's meetings, so I knew that I had a lot of wisdom when I got those two to help me. Mary Warren says, "I think it should be thoroughly practical." And Don says, "No, I think it ought to be spiritual," and then Mary Warren says, "Well, I think you ought to talk to some folks and find out what other people think needs to happen today." And Don says, "No, you ought to speak from your gut and be your own man." It's been interesting to watch those two operate this weekend, hasn't it. Some day we are going to get back to male-female ontology. They've set a very fine example over the last 14 Guardian's Meetings to reflect on.

Well, I think all of that points to the fact that we genuinely experience ourselves these days as really strange people. It's sort of like we have entered into strangeness. It's not like we're some sort of oddballs who've always been oddballs and somehow or other we got this many oddballs together. That's absurd and probably impossible. It's like we've become oddballs. I don't mean oddballs, but it is like a strangeness has entered us. I don't know how many of you like to watch Star Trek, but that's one of my favorite programs. Anytime I can sneak away to see it, I do. It's that kind of strangeness, and I've noticed one of the recurring themes in that show is the constant encounter with strange worlds--unreal worlds. And, they are simultaneously experiencing themselves as being about a mission. I tried to remember what the statement is about the mission of the Starship Enterprise, and I can't remember, but the image of it is like allowing all the possibilities within the galaxies, the universe, to fulfill themselves without, in the midst of that, destroying each other. That's a phenomenal kind of image for mission and Captain Kirk is always trying to do that in every situation. And, they keep running into these unreal worlds along the way in which the mission is something else like survival or conquest, while the Enterprise is trying to maintain this real world. The last time I watched, Kirk's crew landed on a planet where an ugly rock kept turning into a being and talking. Then the rock fabricated Abraham Lincoln, Genghis Khan and 2 or 3 other guys who hadn't come into being yet, all of whom were noted for their evil. And, these guys from the Enterprise knew that these beings couldn't be real, but there they were. And so, Abraham Lincoln somehow or other gets himself beamed onto the ship and he and Kirk link up the past

and future to go out and find a way to deal with these evil beings and get rid of their physical presence. This is what I mean by strangeness. I experience life like that these days. That TV show is not a fantasy, it's what is going on. I would say it is like living in two worlds. We are perpetually experiencing ourselves as living in two worlds. I'll call one of those worlds the "real world" and the other one the "unreal world". In the unreal world, there always seem to be something materializing, which doesn't really exist, but it seems to exist just like it seemed Abraham Lincoln was there. It's either our own imagination or fears or hopes or whatever, or something projected towards us by others. The unreal world is the world of national and state boundaries, for instance. One of the perceptions of the guys who made the first visit to the moon came when they looked back at planet earth and saw there were no boundary lines there. Africa was not 14 different colors. It was just one. This was the same world in which people experience themselves being cut off from each other by cultural and religious divisions. Or, the unreal world is the world in which we are given to excuses and failures, or in which we are confronted by enemies and oppressors or we experience ourselves as subject to requirements of status and power position.

Then, there's the real world. This is the real world only for those who have decided to be mission, like the Enterprise. The real world is a world in which human beings finally feel usefully expended. It is a world in which everything seems to be transparent and the transparency is the only thing that's real. Instead of boundaries, it's the world of grids with areas and regions. It is a world where rather than separations, there are ways to grab ahold of centers of human consciousness in relationship to care for the whole earth. People are united in their creativity and their gifts rather than cut off by cultural and religious positions. Or, "mission folks" experience life as characterized by problemlessness and winning. Like that mobilization room over there is a symbol of problemlessness and winning. That's the real world. There is not the threat of problems, but the challenges of contradictions and the experience of freedom for service and humility before the experience of life rather than being overwhelmed by it.

I would like to talk for a moment about this strangeness as having to do with being anointed. We are in the midst of waging what I would call a "holy war" upon the unreal world. It is the unreal world that tends to control, to try to control, the human spirit and the destiny of community across this globe. And we, in this room, have decided to wage a war upon that unreal world. It's not the regular kind of boom-boom war in which we would intend to destroy anyone who is blinded by unreality or to raise up these so-called oppressed so that they can get their chance to be the oppressor. It's not that kind of war. It is an utterly different kind of war. It is a war that recognizes that every human being falls, as it were, every day of his life. That every human being, and every community, is finally trapped by the unreal world. In the war that we are out to wage, we intend to rip off the scales of the unreal world from the eyes of 100% of humanity. No good guys, no bad guys, just 100% of humanity. It is sort of like these movies you see sometimes on TV where somebody wants to get in this room where there is a surveillance camera, so, they hang a picture of the room in front of the camera and the camera keeps taking a picture of the picture of the room, and they can go around behind the picture and do something. Well, we wage war sort of that way when we have to. What we're out to do for humanity is to jerk off that picture, in order that mankind has the possibility of seeing the real and participating in the real. We are concerned that every human being have the opportunity to live one profound human life and that every community of human beings have the possibility to enjoy what is primal and authentic. We've talked about that as being out to occasion something that we call awakenment and engagement. I don't know how to talk about these, but one of the things I sense is that they are not

sequential. We are not setting up the new master domino theory of the universe: awaken and then engage. We do not do Town Meeting so that we can then do Social Demonstration or vice versa. What awakening and engagement point to is something that has been profoundly human since the beginning of time. And we are people who, as anointed ones, have taken that task in our moment of history and forged a way to do it. Is it not literally true that every day when some occasion happens that you might call awakening you find yourself saying to yourself something like, "Why didn't I see that before?" How many times a day do you say that? Or something like, "I knew that once, but I forgot it and it's good to remember." This points to awakening as a happening. What awakening is about is something like levels of sleep. It is the way in which the unreal world sneaks up on you. Have you ever been asleep and known that you were dreaming? And laid there and you're having this dream and you start reflecting. In the midst of your dream you're feeling guilty about what you're dreaming about. You say to yourself, "This is only a dream, I CAN go ahead, there won't be any consequences." And so you just sort of go on with it. If you haven't done that you're in for a treat. It's going to happen. All humans do it. Then you sort of decide somewhere along the way that you're either bored with it or you've done all you can with it and you wake up. Also, you've had those occasions in which you dreamed that you were awake. There are a dozen people in my house who swear that happens to them every morning. You go back to wake them up the third time and the jump up and say, "Oh, I thought I was already awake. I just dreamed I was fixing breakfast." Well, when the awakening I'm talking about happens, you know it. It is like a bucket of cold water in your face. It has to do with consciousness. It has to do with profoundly saying, "My God, why is it I never saw that before?" Or, "I knew that. I knew that. I knew that and I forgot it." Awakening is painful. It is like a fire burning through your consciousness when it happens. You may try to escape into something and you may even succeed by getting into some sort of lucid, cynicism or intellectualism but, embracing awakening when it happens has to do with a kind of burning humility. And with that humility one begins to taste the bittersweet oils of anointment.

Engagement, likewise, is a happening. It is a profound happening. Do you not literally find yourself these days saying things like, "Well, why haven't we done that before?" Or, "We used to do that. Why didn't we do that this Guardian's meeting?" Now, this is a bit different from waking up. This has to do with decision. This has to do with resolve. Engagement is something that is a perpetual redeciding. If there is a way to talk about it you might say it is something like a series of scars of expenditure. They tell me that if you have a scar from a wound, and it opens up again, that it takes twice as long to heal the second time. And if it opens up again, it takes three times as long to heal. Finally, if you open that wound up one time too many, you die. Now, I don't know if that's true or not. I wouldn't even want some doctor to tell me whether or not it is. The image is something like perpetual scarring of one's being. Maybe I'm talking about different levels of engagement. And each level of scar tissue is an entirely new level of scar tissue. Each time around, engagement is not a decision to do that same old thing again. It is an entirely new decision. I've been on a lot of development circuits and one of the things I've discovered about the development circuits is that when I go on one of them I always think that it's going to be like the last one. But it never is. And after a series of those experiences I begin to understand the decision about this circuit is not the same decision I made about the last circuit. It is a new scar; it is a new expenditure. I'm not talking about doing new things, I'm talking about the newness of any thing.

We might try to escape the decisions that engagement calls for with some form of detachment from them. I guess the most popular forms in society today are charity or do-goodism. I talked with a man at a corporation here in the Loop in Chicago who said to me, "I'm the chairman of the foundation of this corporation. This corporation has set up the foundation as an entirely separate entity from the corporation executives. They give me "x amount of dollars" to spend each year and they channel every request for funds to me. No corporation executive ever hears a pitch or presentation for funding of a program. They select some lower eschelon guy in the company and some people outside the company to be my board. My board never meets with the board of the corporation or has any conversation with them. Then the man went on to say, "I think that what this corporation has done is representative of what a lot of corporations have done. They have found a way to separate themselves from what they are doing in the world and from the demands of the world in which they operate. And they do not want to be conscious of the tragedies that walk through my office every day, because they couldn't stand it. We have a reputation for being a very fine, charitable foundation at this corporation, but charity is not enough." And then he told me, "I've been elected vice president of this corporation and next year I intend to destroy this foundation, fire the board and have every proposal and request heard by one or more executives of the corporation itself, and to have them go see and visit the projects and situations where funding is being called for. "Well, that man somehow or other had grasped the essence of engagement in relationship to awakenment. He knew that they were two sides of the same coin and that there was no way that a human being could be a human being and separate himself off from the real world. Servanthood is what's called for in the happening of engagement.

Our world has a strange way of dealing with awakenment and engagement in the everyday patterns of society that we are all aware of. And it's something like this, a new young executive brightens up a little bit, he gets a little smarter and gets a promotion. He brightens up a little bit more and is given another promotion. And finally, one day he gets bright enough that he ends up at the top of the heap. Well, awakenment and engagement are something like when a guy brightens up a little bit and is given a peice of service to do. He brightens up a little bit more and is given a little more service. Finally, one day he is nothing but a servant.