

I observed an interesting phenomenon at a bar recently. Three or four guys at the bar were tossing the drinks down pretty freely. The volume was getting liquified to the point where you could hear them across the place without eavesdropping. The conversation went something like this: One fellow told how he had come out of the sticks, had gone to school and gotten a Ph. D and had become the youngest vice-president in his organization. It was a "Can You Top This" kind of story. ~~A~~

Another fellow from further back in the sticks told how he had received his Ph.D. in advanced work, had been hired by the government, sent around the world and now he was president of his own company. All these fellows went on rehearsing their story that they were successful people. There was no doubt about it. All you had to do was look at the way they were dressed.

In the midst of this conversation unfolding, one of the fellows said, "You know, it is really strange, but I have made it. I have really made it. There is not anything I want for and there is no way this recession can touch me. But I sense that I am a failure." He went on to say that he had been looking at the world he

had been living in all this time that he had been experiencing his success. It suddenly dawned on him that this world was in about as bad a shape now as it was when he started, and that when he looked at his life a bit, he found he hadn't contributed much. It was an interesting unfolding of the cards there, because in sequence, each of these guys confessed that this subject had been preying on his mind. Suddenly the conversation turned out to be about the experience of just failing in life.

That was kind of jarring. You heard through that that these guys were top crust. They cared deeply about the world they lived in. At the same time, they sensed their lives as just failure. I supposed we would use the word "humiliation," because they were experiencing their lives as just raw humiliation.

I told this story to a group of businessmen, social workers and bankers. Before I could finish the story, they were talking about themselves. The fellow on my left, who was just voted the most successful businessmen in the state, was number one. He was a millionaire. And he started saying, "I am a failure." He told the story that he had decided to lose over half a million dollars a year in

Holcombe, p. 3

order to travel and talk to people about the fact that something had to happen, not just for his place, but for the world. As a matter of fact, I just talked to somebody who had seen him in Singapore. He is just kind of a crazy man, flying around the world, telling people that something has to change. Some of the social workers beat the hell out of him, saying that he was just losing money telling these stories, while milking people on the other end. But if you look at that man, you would understand. He is black. He had come out of the cotton patches of Mississippi and he had worked. He had not forgotten those marks, those burns, on his life.

There was failure, or humiliation, and impotence at the fact that here he had it made, but it was not adding up to anything.

I met some of the old ancients in Majuro. It is interesting that while we get old, the aboriginals and people from the Marshall Islands simply get ancient. It is really different, and these guys kind of scare me. They are like Castenada's characters . . . Don Juan. They look at you and you know that they know something about you that you do not know. They were telling stories about their lives. They had been through the Second World War, really torn around, and come through all that

Now they were trying to revive the people of the Marshall Islands. Any dramatist would love to get those stories into a play. It would just rock the audience to hear how they slipped between the Japanese lines and became interpreters. They had to learn English to do it. They are really fascinating adventure stories. As these old men began to talk about their lives, they said the same thing these businessmen did.

I

I have a friend who is an interesting character because he is a genius. He has found a way to make a living without working. He has some sort of deal with the government. He is paid lots of money to sit in his apartment, and he has lots of money to spend. You would think a guy like that would be really well off. But he said the other day he sensed his life was a failure and humiliating. He sensed himself as impotent. In hearing all of these stories

In hearing all these stories, you know that is no different from the story I have to report on my own life. Round this place, we call that the DARK NIGHT experience, of humiliation before life. Some of us thought that this experience belonged exclusively to but this is the state of the world today. There isn't anyplace to escape. That is simply the way it is. The world is experiencing what it means to

in the Dark Night. That gets a little scary. I suppose that is what you mean by resurgence. When resurgence happens, the level of consciousness intensifies.

Whenever consciousness intensifies, you wake up to the deeps of life not as a psychological interior state, but as the objective exterior that is life itself.

The Dark Night has come through the resurgence that has struck the world.

A friend of mine who likes to preach has one sermon that I think is very good because it is simple. He says if you really want to describe our times, it goes like this: (From) He quotes the first chapter of the book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." Then he elaborates a bit. He puts his finger in somebody's face and says, "That means YOU didn't create the heavens and the earth. -That means the Chinese didn't create the heavens and the earth. That means I didn't create the heavens and the earth. That means GOD created the heavens and the earth." If you translate that anthropologically, that says, "All the earth belongs to all the people."

An alien image has emerged in our time. We have perceived the Dark Night through this alien image. ~~not~~ It has burned through every one of our lives.

the fabrics of our social system. In the fifties and sixties, it was a great imaginal phrase to play with, and we tossed it around. We talked about the global village, how the earth had shrunk and how we were all next door neighbors. Well now, all of a sudden, that alien image has taken practical shape. It is like a curtain being dropped around us. In the fifties and sixties, new frontiers were being forged. One revolution after another occurred. It was like walking on thin ice. The practicalization of all those new relationships that were achieved, is now taking place. A brand new kind of world is coming into being. That alien image has begun to burn thru us like X-rays. We are thrown into the Dark Night. We are thrown over against our humiliation.

You have to understand that the Dark Night is not simply out of our particular historical, sociological situation. Our sociological situation is what occasions that self-consciousness to hit us. When you begin to see that life is the Dark Night, you see that my life up to this point has been that. As I look back at my life, I remember those high school days as humiliation and failure. Those early years when you got married and had yourself a kid were humiliation and failure. That is exactly the way your life has been. Then you dare to look ahead to the time that you go out of being. You

realize that despite all the efforts you have been pouring into things, there will be just as much injustice in the world as when~~x~~ you started.

One lady in this outfit was questioned by her parents when she was home.

"Well, you have been there 5 years. Has the world changed any?" That was their question. "No." This is humiliation. What will happen 40 years from now? You begin to wonder.

I had to check a body in the morgue once. You see the body in deep freeze, and they take it out. A few days before this character had been a jocular, happy-go-lucky guy. Now he was just like a fish in the market, his eyes just dumb glaze. When ~~xxx~~ that takes place, I become that corpse that I am watching. The humiliation that life is just breaks in on me. You wind up like that. You begin to see that life itself is the Dark Night. You see that the Dark Night is not some little initiation that you take and get your strength back on the other side of it. Life is always in the Dark Night.

I have discovered a little bit about boredom. I have found out, I think what boredom is all about. When we got into the indicative, some people believed that we were past the imperative. Because we are nonchalant in the indicative, they thought that demands didn't get laid but just happened. They thought there was no longer any

imperative to life, just indicative. The strange thing is that as life becomes more indicative, the boot that keeps kicking me in the rear gets larger and harder. I remember the scripture where Peter talks about getting old. If you join this outfit when you get old, you know that people are going to dress you and take you where you do not want to go. You find your life drive and nobody asked your permission. As a matter of fact, I have found that is the way life is.

Every now and then I play a game with my kids because they are really hounding me. You want to do something else, so you ask them "What do you want?" Usually, they just jump up and down with glee. My 15 year old doesn't do that anymore but my little one does. In about five minutes, there is a great big crash, wham, bam--destruction that you must address yourself to. It is clear to you that the kids didn't want to do what they wanted to do. They did not even know what they wanted to do. What they did do was break a window or somet-ng.

In one sense, I do not know what I want to do. I want to do everything. Yet, I do not want to do anything! In order to do everything, I would like to do nothing. Is that the way it is for you? That is my key to boredom. Boredom is people who are escaping

the indicative on their life. That is not right because you do not escape the indicative. You do not escape that boot in the rear. You refuse it when you refuse the indicative on your life. You try to do something exciting. You play bridge, monopoly, do skittles. It used to be golf. You just get into a busy kind of lifestyle doing exciting things. While doing all these things that are so exciting, you are bored to tears.

I have a friend whose made it. I like to visit him because he gives me free drinks, and feeds me good. He is always listing the 35,000 social events he must make in the next 5 minutes. He is going to the Bahamas next year and scuba diving in Hawaii for Christmas. After a few drinks, he always ^{tells me} ~~says~~ how boring Charlie is, how boring his wife is, how boring the golf club is. You know that the golf club is not boring. He is bored. He is just bored with his life, and refusing the indicative that is on his life.

I get to see some influential people every now and then. I have lots of fun because
little
I have four or five stories I can tell quick about Majuro. It hasn't failed once. Those guys just get intrigued. "Tell me more," they say. The guy might be in social science, but while you are talking about these LSD's, he remembers that he has been in the Navy, and that he is a master mechanic on diesel engines. He tells you, "Well, yeah, I remember those

**LSD's. I used to work on them. I know how to drive them." So you play a bit and say, "Well, you are a busy man and have a career and all, but do you think that...well, you..." And he says, "Try me." As a matter of fact, I have to call a guy in an hour about that. Finally, "Yeah," he says. "I could take a year off. In fact my wife even knows how to fly seaplanes. I thought she was just a softie housewife. Why, she was in the Air Force for Women--the WAFS. Master pilot.

Well, you are stunned. Dark Night. Saviour. Humiliation. And in the midst of that, just a thirst for life that you would not believe. Well, you would because you know that is not somebody else's priority. That is the priority for all of us. There is more thirst after life, probably, than what you have experienced in your life up to now.

When you see life as the Dark Night, and see someone excited about going to Majuro and helping people, you know that this fellow will find the same problems in Majuro that he had in his office. He will probably collapse unless he understand the Dark Night.

Then the question is asked. How do you stand in the midst of the Dark Night?

A lot of us have tried to get out spirit journeys. We know the danger signals that

that indicate when a colleague is collapsing. There is not any method for standing in the Dark Night. There is no way for standing in the Dark Night. I heard someone say the other day that they wanted to go away for 6 months to unwind. Do you get the picture of unwinding? U'll bet that is the most miserable part of this man's life. Have you ever tried to unwind? You keep getting tighter all the time.

There is no secret to standing in the Dark Night. You just take the pain and you stand. Some of us have been trying to find ways to get everybody to Daily Office on time. We worked up alot of steam. We tried having coffee on the floors, singing songs and having girls do the wake-up. It does not work.. You just go. You just stand. That is what it means to live in the Dark Night. When the Dark Night becomes self-consciously clear, as it is clear to our world, there is a call for people to come forth.

There was an old gal named Hannash in the little community where I was raised. I remember songs and stories about Hannash. She was an old woman by the time I knew her. Everybody had heard about her. She had been married 3 times. Each ~~time~~ fellow she married was an alcoholic.. I do not know if he became one or if she just liked alcoholics. One was hit by a truck. Another one died and the third was was about half dead when I knew her.

She had about 16 children, many with all kinds of peculiar diseases.

If you looked at Hannah, she was a whopping tragedy. But the interesting thing about Hannah was that she was always full of life. Hannah was somehow involved in every-thing crucial in that community. She was not an educated women. She was obviously neurotic and strung out. But she stood. As I reflect back on that, I recall that when anybody died, it was either the priest, the minister, the rabbi or Hannah that you called. As I look back at old Hannah, I see she just had those people on her back.

I suspect that is what it means to stand in the Dark Night. Is is that you just have people on your back. You decide that your life is about wearing the world on your back. There are no secret formulas. You just do it.