

101374

Why is everything in bold when other articles, incl. original, are not?

NEW RELIGIOUS MODE SPIN
Jim Campbell

John 8:12-19. New Testament in Modern English, Philips.

1. That's one way you can begin to talk about transparency: "If you had known me, you would have known him."
2. One of the images that has captured our imagination and has created the decisions that have brought us together in this Research Assembly is that of the People of God. We have begun to understand ourselves as radical churchmen, as those who have dared to decide to be the People of God, on behalf of all of history. But we are not unique in history. God has always had his people. Stretching out behind us as the people are those thousands and thousands on whose shoulders we stand. You have to go clear back to that first whatever -it-was that rose up out of that primordial ooze and decided to stay. At that moment of the birth of consciousness, the People of God BE. We stand on the shoulders of those people who have brought us to this moment. And you and I need not fear. As the Old Testament puts it, "If necessary, the Lord will raise up the very stones." The Lord always has his people.
3. As the People of God, we live in a strange age. How do you talk about the spiritual impoverishment, the lostness, of our age? Often we refer to the last 100 years in this sense. I want to submit to you that ~~It~~ ^{it} has been three or four hundred years since anybody really grasped what the religious mode was all about, or had a clue to the incredible universe that the new religious mode charts are pointing to. We live in an age that is frozen in the heritage of moralism, where we never move beyond the moral level, and where the moral level is cut off from any authenticity that moves down into the depths of life. It is cut off from any grounding in the ontological, in the internal being of man itself. We have lost the capacity to talk about or use the symbols that pointed to the depths of the reality to which the new religious mode charts are pointing. What you and I would point to in our society as "religion" is not what we want to talk about during the Research Assembly. Rather, we want to talk about that which creates, sustains, and brings into being life.
4. Despite the impoverishment and lostness of our age, this is a great moment. For we have been given an age in which the spirit is moving. The spirit is loose. Sometimes it comes as a gentle wind blowing across the face of the earth. Sometimes it comes as a hurricane, ^{wreaking} ~~wrecking~~ havoc and destruction. The spirit is loose in our time, moving across the globe. All men are touched, and all men are searching. Man is struggling to move into the depths of life, to move into the interior dimension of existence itself. The awakening is here. That awakening, that gentle wind, that hurricane, always demands a response. The response is either "yes" or "no." To say "yes" is to decide that you are going to live the life that you have been given before the only reality that is reality, before the reality which is beyond any temporal form or manifestation, which is the utterly objective, the utterly universal, the utterly unknown. Make no mistake, I ^{joy} ~~am not~~ talking about mysticism. It has nothing to do with ~~you~~ ^{your} juices, self-fulfillment, or sensitivity to others. This has to do with the interior deeps of life. It has to do with the dance at the center of life. It has to do with the source of being itself.

5. That is what the new religious mode charts are about. What you have in those charts is a way to begin to deal with authentic selfhood, with what it means to be totally human, to be Man. They have to do with consciousness of consciousness of consciousness. They have to do with the raw creative act of being human in history.
6. The three top categories of the charts, which we have called the corporates - poverty, chastity, and obedience - are ways of talking about external signs of an interior posture. The corporates have to do primarily with the fact that human beings are social. No man ever showed up human without the awareness that he is utterly bound in sociality. The arena of the solitaries - meditation, contemplation, and prayer - has to do with the interior state of existence of man, with the interior being of man himself. There you are dealing in the arena of man's relationship to the mystery itself, how it is that you and I stand before the mystery. Then, through the center of the charts are the journeys - knowing, being, and doing.
7. Now, you have to remember that these charts do not represent nine things. They are one whole, a unity. You might image them as spinning together, as one whirling reality. Or you might use the image of a light board. You look at it and through it, and you see lights going on and off. You see lights that are weak, and some that are bright. You see lights that flicker, and lights that always stay on. You notice lights that never seem to come on. But that lightboard is one reality, all of it dealing with what it means to be man. Our fathers knew a secret about that lightboard. Their secret was that one time in history, just one time in history, all the lights got turned on and all the boxes got lit up. That is what it means to be fully human.
8. Let us talk first of all about the arenas of the solitaries as a way of sensing after the dimension of the interior state of man and the relationship which he takes to the final mystery. We will begin with meditation, with the intensification of man's sociality. Man does not exist as man unless he is a social human being. We understand ourselves to be deeply embedded in a whole web of relationships. We say "I am a father," "I am husband," "I am this," "I am that" and we name our thousands of relationships. And that's what defines us. It is only at the nexus of that web of relationships that humanness exists. Now, meditation has to do with an interior community, an interior council. It has to do with those people who gather around the table deep down inside of you, whom you sometimes call together, and who sometimes simply show up and call you. It deals with the deep relationships that go on within our interior. Most of us never even think that that is going on.
9. I remember a story about Jesus. Jesus and a couple of disciples were going up a mountain, and a great light appeared. The two disciples saw Moses and Elijah there talking with Jesus. The story goes that Peter wanted to build a house for each of them, but by the time he got that out they had both disappeared. What a meditative council! Who are those people you meditate with? Who are those people you call to your council? All men have a council. Meditation isn't talking about something you invent. It is talking about what goes on in life, and all men have a council. There is no question about that fact. The question is, how do we dare to self-consciously engage ourselves in the activity of the meditative council? How do we dare, in the midst of any situation, to call our council into being and go around the table and say, "What's Tillich saying? What's Bonhoeffer saying? What's Frederick the Great saying? What's Patton saying?" (And maybe you're adding Jack Crabb to your council these days.) What are they

saying? Meditation has to do with daring to self-consciously engage ourselves in our interior sociality, daring to call the council forth into consciousness in our lives.

10. To talk about prayer would be to talk about freedom. The experience of prayer is the experience of the raw reality of freedom. In prayer, you and I are daring to be the freedom that we are, to create out of nothing. We are daring to be the free ones that we have been created to be before the mystery. Prayer always comes as a demand, and always comes as a resolve. You hear people praying that the war is going to end in Vietnam, and you would think that they were reading their grocery list. Or they pray that something will happen to the social structures of the United States so that they will deal with the crisis in the inner city, and it is as if they were talking on the telephone to grandmother about whether or not it's raining back in Kansas. That's not prayer. In prayer you are putting your life on the line and saying that what is going to happen is what I've just said is going to happen. You risk your whole self. And that's only possible before the mystery.
11. Prayer is daring to claim our participation. Prayer is the act before the act. Prayer is the act that creates the act, you might say. One of my colleagues talks about model-building as prayer. Daring to forget out models and pour our existence into them is engaging in the activity of prayer. In one sense, that is all you and I are going to do during the Research Assembly. We are just here for a month-long prayer meeting. That is, we are pouring our lives into that new creation, the new social vehicle.
12. In terms of the solitaries, contemplation is the discontinuous category. What is why it is arranged differently on the charts. It is closer to the center. When the bottom blows out of meditation and prayer, when things are just wide open, and you go sailing through, then contemplation is going on. Contemplation happens when meditation is intensified to the point where you aren't sitting there talking to Tillich, or Bonhoeffer, or Jack Crabb, or whoever makes up your meditative council these days. You are not talking to them, you are talking to the mystery. Your council becomes transparent; it mediates the mystery. When that happens, contemplation is going on. Or, whenever the bottom goes out of prayer, and you find yourself standing before that reality beyond which there is no reality, which demands the totality of your being, and which in that demand give radical freedom, then contemplation is going on. When you and I are thrown to the center and stand in awe, when we find ourselves enveloped in the cloud of mystery, there contemplation is going on. In contemplation, you see all that you have refused to see. All the things that you have hidden away and buried, all the things that you have chosen not to live before, are there. You see it all, at the center, and that experience is the experience of the cleansing fire. It is only then that life is made new. At the very source, life is made new.
13. Now, to talk about the corporates, you have to shift a bit. In the solitaries, we were talking in terms of the interior state, but in the corporates we want to focus more in terms of the signs of the interior state. To grasp the category of poverty, we have used the word 'disengagement.' I like the word 'detachment.' What you are pointing to in the arena of poverty is that no relationship can finally define man. No relationship can finally wrap up who you are, or put you into some box. No relationship can finally secure you from the ambiguity of existence. As man, you are in fact detached, and what we are talking about in poverty is a return to that detachment. When you drive into the center of your own being, what you find there is a

bottomless hole. You spiral down the bottomless hole, down, down, down, and there's no bottom. Poverty has to do with one's self-conscious stance, with the decision to be the detached one that you are. It has to do with the decision to dare to embody and symbolize that detachment in life itself. In the middle ages, the monastic orders forged out a deep understanding of poverty and stood as a sign of detachment in the midst of the world. What it is that you and I need to do in order to make that kind of sign manifest? We have experimented in this area, but we find ourselves still groping. What is it that our time is demanding as a radical sign of poverty? What will be a radical sign of the fact that no relationship can wrap up or secure life?

14. When you move from poverty to the category of obedience, it is as if you had flipped a coin. The other side of detachment is engagement. The other side of sensing oneself as utterly disengaged is to sense oneself as utterly engaged, to sense that life is covenantal. You were not one-fiftieth of a second out of the womb of your mother before you were in covenant. You can just name off the covenants in which you find yourself: your family, your church, your nation, your state, the world, and on and on. All of these are real, authentic covenants. They all have their place and their role. Obedience has to do with the fact that you are utterly and totally engaged in every one of those covenants. When you reach the bottom of obedience, it has to do with being obedient to your election, to that which you are and have been called to be. You are obedient to the election that is your election, your given life, and out of that comes the radical engagement that is only possible on the other side of detachment. If you are not detached from all that is, then you can never be engaged in all that is. If you are still hanging on here and there, you have no chance to radically engage your existence for the totality of existence.
15. When you talk about the intensification of poverty and obedience, you move into the category of chastity. When disengagement and engagement are intensified to the point that the bottom is blown out of them, you discover that nothing can finally define you, and yet you are all that is. Then you stand as the one who is fanatically disciplined. You stand as the one who wills one thing, who sees the demand in the midst of history and throws his whole existence into what you have decided is necessary. Once you have decided that your whole being is going to be engaged, anything that distracts you from that is the devil. That image helps me sense after what it might mean to be the chaste man. You are the fanatical one, and you grasp yourself as performing the very will of God itself, performing the necessary deed, before the Mystery.
16. The arena of the journeys is really hard to talk about: the journeys are just transparent. Transparent knowing has to do with becoming my knowing. It has to do with the intensification of all that I know, to the point where that is who I am. I become my knowing, and dare to risk that knowing and move out into the unknown, to seek the unknown. Transparent knowing has to do with ultimate lucidity. You see all that there is to see, and you dare to embody that. You dare to be the one who takes that he knows of life and drives it to the bottom. That is a thousand miles beyond intellectualism, because you're not fiddling with ideas here. You take what you know and drive it into your very being so that it is who you are.
17. Likewise, transparent doing has to do with how it is that I become my doing, or how it is that the role that I have decided is necessary is an authentic role, because it is my selfhood. My whole being is invested in it. I am it. In transparent doing you are not doing little things somewhere with your left hand while you save the self back. You stick your whole selfhood into

every act so that in the midst of performing that act, you are that act. Around here we have workdays once in a while. You may have 300 bunk beds to move and ten people to move them. All you have to do is watch those 10 people for thirty seconds, and you know whether or not they have decided to be that workday, whether or not they have decided to give their existence to that act. When you see that going on, that is the re-creational act.

18. Finally, you come to the center, to being itself. If the whole set of the charts is nothing, and knowing and doing are an intensification of nothing, then being is the nothing of the nothing. It is the no-thing-ness of the no-thing-ness. It is just raw creativity, raw consciousness. It is the center of the abyss. It is strange, for in the very midst of being the no-thing-ness of the no-thing-ness, in the very midst of being just sheer consciousness, and raw creativity, then it becomes all there is. It becomes the totality of existence. It becomes the only point where my existence is grounded. It is selfhood. It is that point, that center, where life is experienced as being radically grounded in the mystery, radically grounded in God the Father.
19. You and I need to remember that the new religious mode charts are tools, no more and no less. Other people in history have had other kinds of tools to do the task that we are out to do with these tools. The charts are tools to enable us to bring self-consciousness to our interior reality. These charts are not 'real.' When you read some of words on them you see that there is no content there. 'Transparent existence,' 'prophetic sight,' 'representational existence,' 'persistent friend,' - no content there at all. But the religious mode charts give us a way to illuminate our consciousness. They give us a way of looking at our experience which enables us to name it and thus to experience our experience. They enable us to give form to the interior universe of our existence. And perhaps most crucially, they stand for us as a symbol of the fact that every man is on a journey. Whether he ever names that journey or not is not the question. Everyman is on a journey, and the religious mode charts stand as a symbol of every man's existence in humanness.
20. Since the religious mode charts point to one reality, you can interrelate their categories in many ways. During the Research Assembly this summer we will work with the categories around the outside of the charts in terms of a triangular formation. First, we will deal with the interrelationships that go on between poverty, transparent knowing, and meditation. You might talk about that as the arena of knowing-ness, where you grasp the intensification of knowing through the arenas of meditation and poverty. Next we will be dealing with the triangular relationship of obedience, and chastity, to begin to grasp corporateness-ing. (I've invented a word here). What is corporateness? How is it you be corporateness? How do we grasp after the relationship between that which stands as the external sign and that which stands as the radicality of the sign? Then we will look at the triangular relationship between prayer, obedience and transparent doing. How it is that prayer and obedience are an intensification of doing, and how does this intensification transform that which we have called our doing? Finally, we will talk about the triangular relationship of meditation, contemplation and prayer. What does it mean to talk about solitariness:? How is it that these three categories are in reality one arena and are thrust into the very center itself through the hole of contemplation? Last, we will look at being. We will focus on the category of being itself, and then will relate it to all the other categories and back into itself.

21. Perhaps you will recall at this point what we have come to talk about as the gap. The journey is not something that you see going on all the time. It's not like you walk around saying to yourself at every moment, "I'm ^{on} my spirit journey." The journey happens in spurts. Boom! And that's the only time you ever see it or know it. That's the only time consciousness happens. In the midst of that is what we have come to call gaps, those sparking points between poverty and chastity, for example, or between poverty and knowing. We will work this summer with some of those sparking points between the categories to see how they impact and interrelate with each other.
22. Our task has just begun. We know almost nothing about what's on the new religious mode charts. It's as if we have just discovered a whole continent, a whole new world. We have just tied our rowboat on, and stuck a stake in the sand. Our task is to hang on to that stake, and dare to move it on up into that new world. That is going to be along journey and many, many years will be consumed in it. But that's the only task there is. We cannot build the new social vehicle without this. Liberals have been doing that for a hundred years. We would be putting on some of the biggest tarpatches civilization has ever seen, if we dared to build a social vehicle that was not grounded in some way in what these charts are pointing to, *in humanness itself*

6.