

REFLECTIONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

If I had to make a talk on the spirit edge these days, without hesitation it would be on the Kingdom of God. I wouldn't call it that, and I don't know what to call it. But, that is what it would be on, because the reality behind that poetic phrase, "The Kingdom of God," is a reality we are up to our ears in these days. Now, play with that image for a moment, "The Kingdom of God."

The Kingdom of God is something like the dimension of experienced reality in which ultimate being takes over. We need to clear out the underbrush around the image "The Kingdom of God". It has gone into disrepute in the last generation, for very good reasons, it was cut off from its roots in reality and taken to mean something disrelated to life. When you look back at the way it was used by our fathers, the "Kingdom of God" does not mean something wholly future, wholly personal, wholly supernatural and especially did not mean private pie-in-the-sky. It never has been used that way except in a time of perversion. Instead, it has to do with a reality that is present as well as future, that is very social, historical and is based on profound empiricism far beyond superficial appearances.

Why in the world would we even consider that image? We've been working on Profound Humanness and Primal Community about two years. And, the most amazing thing about those images is not what we say about them, it is that we can talk about them at all and know what we are talking about. You have people giving spins on Primal Community and Profound Humanness, and even if we don't understand them all, we know what we are talking about. Now, when you get Profound Humanness and Primal Community going on at the same time, the reality that comes out is the reality being pointed to by the phrase, "The Kingdom of God". When you say that those two things are in our midst, "The Kingdom of God" is the theological category.

But also, we are veterans of the Dark Night and the Long March. But when you hear somebody do spins on them directly, there is something just a little off target. Not that it isn't true, but now our edge is in the social. We are now as veterans, experiencing that those things have been internalized, both the positive and negative aspects, and something new is emerging, something we have called fulfillment or hope. Another way to talk about that emerging reality is "The Kingdom of God."

We have been talking for the last year about "What Hath God Wrought?" Well, theologically, what God always "wroughts" is the Kingdom of God. That's just another hint, but all of these are clues. You cannot ever come up with a spirit image that is on target through systematic, logical rationality alone.

We are talking about being the Corporate Jesus and identifying with the Jesus figure. The strange thing is that Jesus didn't talk about Jesus, Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God. That was the content of his preaching. It wasn't about theology. It wasn't about being the Church. It wasn't about the meaning of resurrection, Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God. That's just a clue.

Now, this thing on the board is perhaps another clue, and don't take it too seriously. As you recall, we have done work with the NRM and the NSV saying that they always went on at the same time. We did a comprehensive analysis and we got ahold of the sociological dynamic and the historical forms and the occasioning events. What that tells you, though, is that when both of those things are done, it begins to come together in the center. What we've done here is the Other World Charts as the comprehensive analysis. That means in the whole realm that has to do with the sociological dynamics, with historical forms, occasioning events, we have work to do. I think there is no hurry to get ahold of this stuff. It took how many years to do the Social Process Triangles? But, maybe that is the arena in which we are working.

Now, look at the four by four you have (see attached). It seems to me column A would be an objective proclamation that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Now, I still think we have to find another word for "Kingdom of God", but there is something added in that phrase which describes the objective situation. What you are doing in that column is Profound Sociology, and you would be out to get said that the Kingdom doesn't have anything to do with Nirvana or blissfulness, but it's the real situation. Now, in box #1, I think that would be picking up on the trends of the times, and I put in some categories there like moving from possession to experience or maybe there are some better categories to fill out those boxes.

The last great social invention was the nation. We are now in a time of another social invention, the local community. And, when you hear images like that about our times, you say "Yeah! Ahah!" And, what you would be out to do in that box would be to give the "Ahas" that are obviously there to be seen if you look at them.

That thing down there about Mystery. There are times in history when the Mystery is just absent. Life generates rigid, ossified, bureaucratic structures. And then there are times of wild breaklooses in history where the Mystery is everywhere you turn. We are in one of those. So what? In a time when the Mystery is absent, that is a time of knowing, a time of remembering, a time of doing old liturgical forms. The time when the Mystery is present is a time of doing, a time of wild breakloose, a time in which liturgical forms are being invented.

Your second box would have to be something like "The Times of Resurgence," and that would be a fine occasion to tell some of the stories about what we've found in Primal Community and Profound Humanness, and the way that local man responds to Awakening and Engagement. You could tell a story like the development team that was sitting toward the back of the plane. They pulled out their flip-books, and pretty soon everybody who came back to use the john was standing there looking. For three hours they flipped through those books.

Then, I think that third box is on sociological implications. We have talked about the seven revolutions. I think this would be a fine time for somebody to put together a talk on the seven revolutions that would say more than "There are seven revolutions." It would really push those as to what's the edge and what's happening in our time. It is obvious that the old order

is passing away and something new is occurring in those arenas. Then you could point to attempts to understand the transition that are inadequate. That would give you a chance also to beat up on the perversions of the Kingdom of God as an image. Finally, you could make the point that whatever is coming, it is beyond the expectation or control of anyone.

In the fourth box, what is our role in the midst of the Kingdom of God? This column is saying we are not out to bring in anything! It is here. We are in the middle of it, so, what is our role? We are not out to create a kingdom, we are after disclosing the reality that is already here. That is a comparable shift to saying we are not identifying with the disciples, we are identifying with Jesus.

Now, I think that could be a whole of a set of talks, but it needs a set of secular images, and it needs a heavy dose of indicative urgency. It has got to be profound sociology. It has got to be so grounded that anybody who heard it would say "My God, yes!"

The second column, "Living in the Kingdom of God" is a description of the interior response to that external reality. If this deals with the spirit life, we would be out to say that it is not blissful. Life these days is characterized by Ghostliness, Ceaselessness, Nothingness, and Presence-ness, and that is life in the Kingdom. Nothing is clear. Have you noticed how every time you make an objective firm pronouncement, somebody else comes up and makes the opposite objective firm pronouncement? And you know they are right. A little kid raises his hand to go to the bathroom and all of a sudden the whole globe opens up and the issues are paralyzing. Everything is unclear. We are into the intensification of humiliation and rootlessness. Where do you stand? Everytime somebody raises a practical issue it goes transparent, and where do you stand?

I put down here for the third line "Nondogmatic decisionality." That's not good, but the third line of each of these four needs to be an image of authentic living in this state of being. The fourth line . . . someone said yesterday that we're getting all kinds of people for our consults and wondered what to make of it. Well, it is like throwing out a net, and when you pull it in you have all kinds of fish. They can be sifted out later. Check out the New Testament for references if you want to. The point is, life in the Kingdom of God is like that.

Second, life is ceaselessness. You find yourself on a treadmill to nowhere. In Development, when they finish off a good month, what they get is just another month. The same thing happens in Research, in the kitchen, wherever you are. I dreamed that on June 8 as we were coloring in the last county, all the yellow paint began to shrink into 3,200 tiny dots, and we had all that white to color in. That's ceaselessness. This calls for non-stoic persistence. You understand ceaselessness has nothing whatsoever to do with failure. You don't even know what that is about until you win in those industries, in development, in Town Meeting, in the kitchen, in research. Until you win, you cannot understand ceaselessness. It calls for a non-stoic persistence; and guess what? Just a little bit of leaven is enough for the whole loaf. In other words, what you are doing with that last

line is owing up to the amazing address that he is experiencing from out of that state of ceaselessness.

Well, you can go on through the other two boxes. I think the resource for the transforming insight is the beatitudes and the parables.

Nothingness. Your relationships are there, but you experience that your selfhood isn't. It is very hard to get passionate about anything. You're sort of poor in spirit. And then you hear "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God."

Now, the third column, column C, is called the Occasioning Event. It is the existential address. How does this state come about? What you have there, as you notice, is the RS-1 lectures transparentized into sociological metaphors. You would be interested to know that we in Research had to do some research to find out what are the four categories of RS-1 lectures. If you'll look on the back of the chart, you will find out how that works. This is a transparency methodology. We have always realized that what you are out to disclose is that ultimate level of relationship which have to do with ultimate up-againstness; but to get to that you always have to go through the pen-ultimate, the finite relationship. We have always used the first column to go through to disclose the final up-againstness and taking-placedness. Well, the relationship of one's self to one's self is not the only kind of finite relationship that has gone transparent these days. So also has the individual's relationship to society and the social group's relationship to itself and all its members. But anyway, what you have got in the third column is the occasion to do some hard transparency theology. You remember when we used to do RS-1 lectures in one paragraph? You would say, "Every man is in a situation where life seems to be passing away which occasions an internal crisis of emptiness and raises the question of "who am I" from which he tries to escape by hiding." Now, maybe we try this: "Every local community finds itself radically related to the globe which occasions internally a sense of dependence raising the question 'what can we do?' from which people try to escape by being spectators. Every local community is in that situation raising that question.

I called this last column, Creating the Signs of the Kingdom of God. That was the hardest one. This is the occasion to blow out our missional vision. It is a chance to deal with our grand strategy for the future and raise some rocking balloons.

We have one awakening campaign that is trans-geographic and will not be settled until every last person on the face of the earth is awakened, and then by the time that happens, you have a new generation to awaken.

Trans-social engagement. Somebody reminded me that this thing we are doing with universities is just an icecicle on the tip of an iceberg big enough to sink the Titanic. What are we doing with the new university? What are we doing with the multi-national? What are we doing with the women, the youth, and those churches and social agencies in our impact courses?

Boy, I think we ought to float some incredible balloons this summer. Like,

for example, in North America let's say saturation looks like taking each region and finding the geographic territories in it, like the Platte River Basin. They will cut across county lines, but look like our Metro grid. Now, we get each region to do its turf in that respect and then saturate one of those every quarter. Well, we ought to float some balloons like that.

Finally, I think we have to say something about the supra-mundane assault. That is the depth of our practical mission and by far the most important aspect. Then, we have talks on the trans-temporal perspective out of which this doing is done and wind up with a description of the profound human invention that is emerging all around us.

These are some thoughts on where we might begin to push. What do you think?