

## INTRODUCTION TO THE OTHER WORLD

My sense of self-depreciation is so strong that I always look for a way to begin on a negative note, and this time I did not have to search very far, because what I want to do this afternoon, I feel, needs a blackboard and maybe ten people at a time. I am finding it necessary to exert strong self-control to keep from talking about the movie you just saw, "The Gospel According to St. Mathew." The redeeming aspect of the negative situation is that the movie says rather clearly what I am going to try to say unclearly.

I indicated last night that in my opinion the most astonishing thing that has resulted from that body of awakened people more than half a century ago who made the great resolve to renew the Church in this century was the fact that they stumbled upon The Other World that is right in the midst of this world. I never dreamed even ten years ago that such a thing could happen in my lifetime. I suspect to the day I die there will always be a vapor of awe surrounding my existence just because of this happening in history.

I want to try, child as I am, to talk a bit about The Other World in the midst of this world. I suggested that it has been a hidden world for centuries, a lost world. I am reminded of that motion picture about the dinosaurs I saw years ago called The Lost World. The lostness of The Other World in the midst of this world seems to me to be a much greater lostness. And to have it disclose itself afresh forces one, regardless of his years, to experience himself all over again as a stumbling child first learning to walk.

This Other World was not discovered by church people or religious people; it was discovered by people in the twentieth century. It was discovered a long time before it was discovered; that is, before it was recognized as the Other World in the midst of this, and before it was acknowledged as the Other World. There is nothing "super" about this Other World. It is as ordinary, once one has beheld it, as any mundane activity that you and I engage in. It has to do with the explosion of consciousness that has taken place in our day in and through which the radicality of humanness became clear as never before in history. Therefore, I would anticipate that what happens from the disclosure of this Other World to man in our century may be more colossal than those other great moments in history, when this same Other World made its presence powerfully known to man. But you must be clear when you talk about the Other World, that you are dealing with just this secular world and this secular consciousness of man.

One way to get your mind around the broad picture is to grasp that it is an understanding of the ontological dimension of life beyond the moral. Only when I say "understanding", that is not quite right. It is the experiencing of the being that the Other World is which is the understanding of that Other World. That is the way that world is. It may help those of you who know Nietzsche to think of his "beyond good and evil". This is the realm of the Other World. You might say it is the realm of wild self-consciousness beyond the superimposition of man's rational capacities upon it. Now that is a rather difficult statement to make, because to even talk about the Other World is to get your rational facilities engaged in it. But one of the remarkable things about reason is that reason points beyond itself, and the Other World is the world beyond reason that reason itself points to. And as reason attempts to understand and talk about that world, what is being said is not that Other World itself, but is only indicative of that Other World, for the Other World is radical being or raw self-consciousness. And to make any interpretation of it is to take one step backwards into this world which is the world of reason that reason invents.

Another way in which you could talk about this philosophically is to say that in our time we have succeeded in a rather admirable way in destroying the two-story

universe which really produced this one-story universe that we live in. We understand that we live and die in one world, and when we are dead, I mean we are really dead. That means the Other World image has been smashed. A more direct way of saying this is that we have gotten rid of metaphysics. Now that needs qualification, because man never lives without metaphysics. The trouble is that the term "metaphysics" was related to this second-story universe, or the understanding that finally reason was the king of the universe.

Now in our day we are recovering, or rather building, a new metaphysics. To put it simply, it seems to me that man grasps himself as living on one plane, but he has experienced the transparency of that plane itself. I like to think of it as holding a match underneath a paper, and first seeing little streaks come out. Then it turns brown, and then it breaks through and pops into flame. That goes through my mind when I think of transparency. Or perhaps it is more like sticking your fist through life itself.

Maybe I can illustrate it this way: you and I have lived in a time in which the uniqueness of the person was emphasized, and this had to be so. This is what happens, I suspect, whenever a culture that tells man as an entity what it is to be man collapses. Then you have a new birth of existentialistic reflection. (I am not talking about abstract philosophy, but something has even happened to that in recent years.) An illustration of this principle is that the Black man in our day, in order to be a human being, had to embrace his blackness to the hilt. It so happens that in doing so, he enabled some white folk, for the first time in their lives, to embrace their whiteness. But when they did, Black or White, embrace their uniqueness to the hilt, they experienced transparency. It is as though their fist went through their uniqueness and right now we are discovering all over again what it means to be ~~man~~ beyond our uniqueness -- not by going around our uniqueness but through our uniqueness.

One would like to talk about the youth in our age exactly the same way; and one would like to talk about the women in our age in precisely the same way. But what is the experience of transparency. As a matter of fact, the last time that I went to other cultures, I experienced something I never had before, and talked to a great many people in the non-western world about it. After WW II, when the intensification of the collapse of our society was experienced across the globe, there was an emphasis upon the particular and the unique, especially regarding parts of the world and nations. The outburst of nationalism, in my opinion, was precisely that. But I discovered in the East that some of your human colleagues had stuck their fist through their uniqueness and were discovering again humanness itself.

In this transparency, in which you are dealing with one world, or one plane, the transparency of that plane is your new metaphysics. But what I suspect history is going to call this, in one way or another, is phenomenology, or phenomenological thinking, in which you are bracketing the metaphysical question a la "the real" in terms of abstraction from my consciousness. You bracket that, and then concentrate on states of consciousness. And the state of consciousness is the Other World, or rather it is your experience of the Other World. And I think that before the month is out, you will discover (and this is hard for us to get our minds around) that a state of being - a state of awareness, or a state of consciousness - is the most objective reality that you have ever experienced. I want to warn you not to let the epistemology you were trained in - that divided subjectivity and objectivity - get in your way. You watch and see if that is true.

Now let me back up one more time, and come at this through theology. Tillich is a pretty good example of this. Those of you who know his systematic theology know that he begins with the ontological situation and then he moves to the interpretation of Christ (which is the existential in Tillich's case). And Tillich himself made the case (which I think is exactly right although years ago when I studied with him, I was not sure I agreed with him on this) that when you talk about the essence of man being the kind of essence that creates its own essence, the first use of the word "essence"

in that sentence is dealing with the ontological. Now there is more to that than it sounds, for man could not even make the decision that determines his selfhood if he did not already have a montage in his being through which he looked at reality. (That is the ontological for Tillich.) And therefore, those of us who have come down hard on the existential pole - that is, on freedom and decision - were always taking for granted an understanding of humanness in the midst of which that decision was made. The discovery of the Other World in terms of this transparency is the forging of a new montage, and in this case, because the revolution is global, it is going to be a global montage that finally defines man. That is the Other World. The picture you just saw was a picture of a man who lived his existence from beginning to end in the Other World, and in the midst of that made decisions that defined the concretions of his life.

Now by a state of being, I then mean something like this: concretely (and it's rather hard for me to say), a state of being is made up of something like an image, and something like an accompanying affection, and something like a pre-decisional resolve. I do not know how many of you have read Golding's Inheritors, but you know it was about primitive man breaking into consciousness, and one of the figures that he used over and over again was the primitive man coming into a new situation. At least it was new from the outside, because the way he experienced it was as though chaos had suddenly taken over, which is to say that the images in his mind were not capable of giving meaning to the overagainst-ed-ness that was impinging upon him. So he would have to seek for a new image, to invent a new image that would give this external situation meaning. The way he's pictured in the book he's pushing on his head to produce a new image. I like that. I've seen people who weren't so primitive sometimes go like that to get that new image. Now what I call what was going on in him was a Big Think - that's not a capital S - grasping the Other World involves a Think - I don't want to say an image, I don't want to say an idea, I don't want to say a construct, I don't want to say a concept, it's almost down underneath that. It's the Think that when you're dealing with a state of being that you're after. And the second thing I call a great Feel. I have a colleague that calls the Think impressionistic and the Feel expressionistic, and that's not too bad, for me, for the impressionist painters were starting here and pushing what could be seen until it bent into the Other World, and the expressionists went through it. Do you grasp that? Now the Great Feel - if you call that Think a primordial Think, then you've got to call your Feel a primordial Feel, and that Think and that Feel cannot be separated, and when you boil them down, to the bottom, what the Great Think fundamentally is composed of is mystery, not the kind of mystery that tomorrow is solved but the mystery that never goes away. This is what they mean when they talk about No-thing-ed-ness, when they talk about Nothingness -- The Big Think of nothingness, I mean absolute nothingness. That's the mystery, which in that Big Think, becomes the Final overagainstness of your total existence, not because you say it is, but because you have the Big Think in which it is for you. Now that's the Primordial Big Think. And it has many faces and many forms. And the Big Feel, that always accompanies that Big Think is awe. Awe. I mean awe. And awe too has many faces, but it's awe. And awe, as Otto pointed out so clearly is always and at the same time dread and fascination. Now when you deal with that Big Think, you are splitting reason, you are breaking through reason, just always that which is beyond reason. And in the awareness of your overagainstness to that mystery, you are shattered with terror. I like to think and this is done of consciousness - I like to think that mankind came into existence through awe. And that many stabs toward consciousness of consciousness that could have produced the human race failed because that unman was rocked by the terror he experienced in terms of the sheer maytery which consciousness about consciousness is. And pulled out - but, along with that terror - maybe I'd better illustrate that here - you're talking about (You're going to use the word 'God' here; you don't need to use the word 'God') but when you talk about God, the God who is God, you're not talking about your moral delineation of some metaphysical principles. You're talking about One who sends cyclones and the

gentle rain to grow the wheat; who rocks the ocean with mighty storms, and simmers them like a mirror itself. You're talking about the One who pulls you from a woman's womb and stamps you, like a sow, back into the earth. You're talking about the one who makes you sixty years old, and you haven't got any choice about it. That's getting awful personal.

And yet, with this terror is fascination. Oh, that's harder to describe than terror. It's a compulsion over which you grasp you have no control whatsoever; that pulls you on in the midst of and through the terror. And these two are there one and the same time. I remember not so long ago, I thought I was caught; I thought people were on to me. Yes, that's what I mean. And before I knew it, I ended up over a john with my hands on each side, vomiting. But in the midst of that terror, I perceived a fascination. Oh, at this time you don't say this is the leading of providence. When you're finally able to get back up on your feet, you know this was the hand of the One that you have come thru the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to call your God and your Father, but he doesn't look like your God and your Father when he beats you. And I am a proud man to have lived in the 20th century, in which this has become clearer than it ever was, I believe, in all of history. But its roots are back there from the foundation and the dawn of consciousness itself. Ohhh, in our time, how this Other World has broken in upon us!

Perhaps you run your mind in the area of psychology. In one of these books, I have an article there by Joseph Campbell, in which he deals with schizophrenia, and I'm not sure he says that, but if he didn't he ought to, that the difference between a spirit man in the Other World and the schizophrenic is that the spirit man is swimming and the schizo is drowning. Yes. Yes. And I make a prophecy. Before 20 years are up, you're going to see the psychiatric profession turned up on its ear. It has to meet the times in which it is, and the times which borne it are gone. And new times have come. And they're going to have to look further.

Or, I mention to you mythology. That you have been taught to believe with some kind of a fairy story that mankind has outgrown. No. Not by any means. No. Your mythology has been the frame whereby man has held his experience of the Other World. And the mythologies of the past are gone. They no longer communicate to us, or you couldn't call them fairy stories; and therefore, probably the biggest contradiction in our time is the absence of an adequate mythology whereby a man has a roadmap over and through the terrain, the topography of the Other World. And perhaps, if you intend to seriously renew society, that one of the major jobs that's going to rest upon your shoulders is to create the mythology which feeds into this last triangle up here, and this is the top of the whole system that you built last year. Maybe this is the little capsule that will flow through the whole society.

Now, in our time it seems to me that in four areas the world has become slowly conscious of the Other World. I've mentioned one. And to use a little poetry, we've called it "The Land of Mystery." In our lifetime, man has rediscovered this mystery that I've described. As a matter of fact, the natural sciences have discovered it. The Psychological sciences have discovered it; the biological sciences have discovered it; the mathematical sciences have discovered it. And then, I need not reiterate again that the whole existentialistic thrust in the 20th century unveiled for man his over-againstness of that which is No Think or nothing. This is the first breakthrough of a fantastic arena in the Other World.

The second breakthrough has been the area of freedom. We call it the River of Consciousness. This is Jean Sartre's poetry of the en soi and the pour soi or this is Kierkegaard's understanding of the self that the self is a relationship which relates itself to itself, and when it goes about its proper business of being a relationship, which relates itself to itself, it grounds itself transparently in the power that constituted it. But this is only two of the hundreds of people who have broken through in this area. I need not mention again the area of Psychology.

The third way in which men in our time have broken into the Other World is with the concept of engagement. And it seems to me these next areas have been broken loose more by social upheavals, manifestations, than by any intellectual schools head on, although the intellectual schools have dealt with it. I think of the youth culture in our time. And one of the things that interests me rather fantastically is that-I don't care who you are, even the youth himself, they gave the appearance of being wildly disoriented. And this was, it seems to me, a sociological manifestation of a sense after a dimension of existence that this present world was not capable of providing. And one of the crucial insights they saw and held before the world was authentic engagement in life itself. They are the ones who even however sickly began to recover the word "love" in any serious meaning whatsoever. In the midst of their lostness, and no one could blame them for it, they began to grasp what it meant to be genuinely concerned with that which was unsynonomous with yourself. And their revolt against the vocations, their revolt against money for the sake of money itself was indicative of this kind of awareness of another realm in which love, if you please, agape, was giving yourself to the journey of mankind and not giving yourself to yourself. And this we call the Mountain of Care.

In the Other World, which is the realm of the awful mystery, the Other World which is the realm of radical consciousness, it is also the world of taking upon your back the responsibility for the whole journey of man, for the whole globe.

Now, before I go to the last one, I pause a moment to remind you, that because the Other World is beyond the realm of good and evil--it's in the ontological and not in the moral--that whatever you say about the Other World, if you're talking about the Other World, is always in the indicative and never in the imperative. The Other World knows nothing whatsoever about imperatives. That is in this world, and a crucial part of this world, and without it, you wouldn't have this world. In the Other World, only the indicative. When you talk about the Mountain of Care, or picking up the burden of all mankind, you're not talking about something that says you ought to do it. That's the indicative: the man who lives in the Other World has the world on his shoulders. When you live before the mystery, the world is yours.

And the last arena we call the Sea of Tranquility. I sort of like that, since it dawned on me when those guys were walking around on the moon, that when you stood on the moon, the earth was "up there." And I always knew heaven was "up there." But when you're on the moon, it points exactly to this life, where the Other World is. I want to go there one of these days and see, just to be sure that the Other World's right here. The Sea of Tranquility is the recovery of that weird kind of peace right where there is no peace. No sentiment here, for the Other World is right in the midst of this world, and there's never been any peace in this world for a man who has the world on his shoulders. I just heard a few moments ago, on the television, a conversation in which they used the words "peace" and "tranquility." I pricked up my ears, and as they began to spin it, they were suggesting that they see signs of a new, a fresh concern. And however warped it may be, they said that they were remaking that old movie, Lost Horizon. Now wouldn't you like to go and see that! because of the kind of romanticism it had in it? It was back in thirty--, back in thirty--, back in thirty--, back in thirty-seven, maybe when it came out -- some of you weren't ever alive then. I'd like to see if you could detect in that movie why they remade it right now--as to whether it is just another escapist attempt, or whether they are sensing after some

kind of reality.

I never dreamed that this awareness would break loose in my lifetime, because we who worked for the renewal of the church had to fight with a broad sword every second any nonsense about peace or joy in this world. Do understand that? You would never have had the renewed church if you had not slain that misunderstanding of what authentic peace and joy are. It's hard even yet for me to bring my mind even to entertain the idea. But I never dreamed in my lifetime that that would be a possibility. I bore witness to you last night that I have understandings inside myself in this arena that I never dreamed could be. Yes, and it came out of our time. I've never been kindly disposed towards the Hippies, but I've known for a long time they were pointing to something. And I have hated sensitivity training like Satan itself. My, what in the world that has done to scar men and women in the spirit dimension for the rest of their lives, you couldn't even, if you had a thousand years, begin to articulate. And yet, many of the most weird warpings that you find in history are trying to point to something, and I'll give them that credit. Now, actually, if you'll look at your charts there, you only have one state of Being, not four. For where consciousness is, there's the mystery, and there's the world on your back, and there is the peace that passes reason's capacity to grasp it as peace. No sentiment. I tell you this world, in which the Other World is, is a tragic world. Unamuno is quite right when he talks about this tragic world in the sense that existence is itself tragic. Isn't that interesting? Put it in the negative: if the whole journey of man isn't your specific vocation, you would never have the slightest idea what you mean when you talk about the joy unspeakable and full of glory. They're woven together like that. You dare to live your life before the mystery, peace and joy- If you have authentic peace and joy, you can be sure you're you're living your life before the mystery. Now, those charts are the superimposition of the rational capacity of man upon that which is beyond the rational capacity of man. You've got to understand that.

You could have drawn your road map a million different other ways with different poetry. We have four areas there that we think broke loose in our century and then we divided each one of those into what we call treks - into four treks, that gives you 16 treks. You're going to hear lectures on each one of those, and that's why I wanted to keep off of it, -- but I'm going to read you one thing in a moment. And then we've divided those treks into four states of Being - that means that on those charts there are delineated sixty-four states of Being. But remember they're all one that it seems to me you'll have a chance to identify yourself and have an opportunity before you leave to describe in your own way. Now before I come to my conclusion, I want to read you an illustration of a state of being; only what I have done here is to weave together four states of being into the one state of Being in a paragraph that represents a trek.

"One day" --you understand there's nothing new at all in what we're doing; what's actually going on, is that you are translating from one language to another. When you deal with the Other World, you're translating from the language of the intellectual dimension of life, into the language of the state of being dimension of life, and this tries in its poetry to put it in the language of state of being. And that's why I want to read it:--"One day a man is driven by whatsoever vicissitudes of life into the consciousness that he himself must die. It's like being in a state of shock. A strange force intrudes. Suddenly he's submerged in awe; he feels it hovering all about him; he feels its penetration into the deepest corners of his innermost being. In quiet terror, and with an inexplicable fascination, he knows the fragility of his total existence; he feels his contingency,

and beholds the passingness of all things. It's like unto a mortal wound from which he knows he will never recover. As the absurdity, the irrationality of it all seeps deep within, a burning, objectless anger rises and rages until futility itself turns into a heavy numbness and everything becomes disoriented; all is nothingness; there's no place any more to stand, just terrifying mystery. And hanging helplessly swirling in emptiness, engulfed in awe, it dawns at long last, like the rising of a black sun, that exactly here is the finally real before which he is fated and invited to live and die his life. This is the great encounter with the awful mystery.

Now, in conclusion, outside of the fact that in dealing with this Other World right in the midst of this world, you were dealing with what it means to be a human being. My mind goes a little like this: Thirty years ago, when our whole world was hanging on with its fingernails on a cliff as its world was going to pieces, raising the question, "What is life all about?" Now that we've come out of the trough and are moving on the crest of the wave. Once again in history, man has found the answer, his answer. This does not mean that there will not be many troughs and many crests in the future. But in our time, it's here. Someone now begins to ask you what life is all about, you've got something to bear witness to.

Now outside of the fact that that's humanness, I've said one thing, that this Other World may be the most crucial key we have to actually turning on the processes that will snowball the arrival of a new web of relationships that define society. And then I've already hinted that very likely, within the poetry of that chart, or if not that poetry, poetry that you build, is the secret to the new mythology that will enable mankind to find his way to swim if you please in the rivers of radical consciousness and become man. It's been a long time since man with any sense of genuineness could speak of what fulfillment meant, of what happiness meant. I mean Happiness! And then, you know as well as I know, the moralities rise out of new definitions, if you please, of man, of new experiences of what it is to be human. What you are building as you delineate the topography of the Other World is the basis for the new morality that every sensitive person is screaming for - not only the youth, old men and old women. It's been a long time since within the church we've known what we meant when we talked about a "Christian Man," or a "Christian Woman?" You're beginning here to define again what you mean when you talk about a man of faith, a man of spirit in the world.

And then what you're building, I suspect -- and I'm going to be very anxious to see what you come up with this month.-- What you're building is the tool for the new evangelism. And I don't mean by that anything that you've programmed to mean by the word "evangelism." I mean the means whereby you can elicit out of other people the decision that renders it possible for them to decide to live an authentic life. I remember years ago when I was teaching in seminary, one of the problems people screamed about is they didn't find a way for the new theology to really get down into the pews. It wasn't that the clergy couldn't articulate it, they could. But lives are not changed by intellectual ideas. Here, you have, if you please, the beginning of an instrument that will enable people to have self-conscious states of being about the states of being that define them.

We've talked frequently about popular preaching; and you're going to see that in the world. It's like the kind of spin you do with somebody on a commuter train or sitting next to you, and they don't know until 10 years later-- because you didn't use any language that sounded religious or something like that -- that they had new possibilities and new life flooded into their veins. And I suspect that if you had 200,000 people located according to a rational grid across the world, and you designed a popular preaching curriculum, so that on April 28, in 1984, 200,000 people would be spinning on Box #86 there. Well, if the church is going to build a new society, it's going to have to think and act tactically, and I'm finished.