

Saving Christianity from the Christians

(A free-for-all with Bernadette Roberts)

Introduction

Key Terms

Sound check “Ultimate Realization” (p. 9)

Friday afternoon “Are you serious?!” (p. 13)

Friday evening “Knock yourself out!” (p. 47)

Saturday morning “Didn’t you know? He died!” (p. 82)

Saturday morning (part two) “I expect and apology from you.” (p. 113)

Saturday afternoon “You are so stupid.” (p. 125)

Saturday afternoon (part two) “To see God will scare you to death.” (p. 150)

Saturday evening “That’s bullshit.” (p. 168)

Sunday morning “It’s a different ballgame.” (p. 195)

Sunday morning (part two) “I never had a sense God cared about me.” (p. 209)

Sunday afternoon “That is greater than Christ.” (p. 228)

Conclusion “You tell me.” (p. 254)

Introduction:

This is your chance to listen, like a fly on the wall, or, if you are theologically minded, to weigh in on, the most surprising, funny, and important theological discussion of Christianity of all time. This is not an exaggeration. Many of the ideas expressed during this discussion are so

revolutionary that they will shape the future of Christianity for centuries. The participants at this discussion group are all highly educated contemplatives desperately trying to understand the radically new ideas of the greatest mystic of all time- Bernadette Roberts. Her understanding of Jesus, Christ (two different things), the Trinity, Mary, Eucharist, etc. are radically new because they are based solely on her remarkable personal experience. Both a humble former Discalced Carmelite nun and a proud mother of four, she was also God's experiment. After reading this transcription, you will be tempted to read her final masterpiece, The Real Christ. Don't do it. Read her autobiography first. Then you will begin to understand how truly remarkable her experience was. Next, read at least one of her other books before trying to tackle The Real Christ. The first half of the book will enthrall lovers of the history of ideas. The second half of the book (after the chapter called summary so far) displays the Christian mysteries in a completely new light. It will go down in history as the greatest contribution to Christian thought, ever.

The participants have all flown to a retreat center in Southern California for the weekend just before Lent on the Western calendar in the year 2016. For most of them, this is not their first time. Many have been meeting with Bernadette off and on for more than twenty-five years. They have studied her books and her videos and have come prepared with questions. There are university professors of philosophy and theology, a Catholic priest, a pastor, a female priest, long-time friends, and lovers of silence. Most have studied eastern thought extensively or followed gurus in the past. They are the crème de la crème of people who know Bernadette's works. However, even among these adepts you will see that they struggle to understand some of her ideas. This is not because Bernadette didn't try very hard in her books to be clear. It is because her perspective is... "well, let's just say it's a whole different ballgame". If you would like to read the off the cuff remarks of the greatest mystic of all time, be forewarned. She constantly cuts people off, occasionally insults them, and sometimes misunderstands them because she didn't have use of her self-control any longer because she didn't have a self any longer. Therefore, she couldn't listen patiently and sometimes accuses them of saying things they never said. On the positive, side she is also encouraging, down to

earth, trying to get the truth across, funny (they all laugh **over** one hundred times!), and certainly not afraid to think WAY outside the box.

You could call this a transcription of a discussion, or a fight. Each person has their own interpretation of what she is saying and they are not afraid to challenge each other, or above trying to prove that their interpretation is the most correct one. Indeed, you may notice a bit of a rivalry between two of the participants. I can say these things because I know almost all of them personally. Just like the early fathers centuries ago, they are often adamantly talking past one another. Most are simply trying to figure out the greatest mystic of all time. If you take some time out of your busy day to follow their lines of thinking, you will certainly be surprised by the depth and precision of their thought.

As you read what she says it will eventually become clear to you that she had no self. You can tell by her rambling style that she is not self editing in any way. See if you can count the times she derails the conversation with tangential anecdotes. In one sense, you could read this transcription as the ramblings of a crabby old lady who couldn't give two hoots what anyone in the room thought of her. On the other hand, you could read this as the enlightened theological ruminations of someone who had been used to speaking with the mind of Christ for forty-five years. Besides cutting people off, she sometimes insults them out of care for their best interest which is that she never be considered a guru. She fought against that for the entire second half of her life. Her earliest "followers" had all followed gurus. So she took up smoking and says here (in her dying breaths) that she does not know, and cannot know, the kind of spiritual affinity that she had once with a nice Hindu man who came a few months back. It's a deafening blow to those who might have hoped to be her chosen heir.

She also tells the story of Jesus who ran away "almost constantly" from the crowds who tried to put him in a box. She says that she relived the interior life of Jesus (and that we all will) and then she limits the number of retreats that she gave to twice a year. What was she doing the rest of the time? Being "almost constantly" away from the crowds. Why, then, have you never heard of Bernadette Roberts? Because she did a damn good job at making it so. She writes about the masks (or archetypes) that one must see through before coming to no self. Guru is

one of them. She chose anonymity. But now that she's gone, I'm sure she won't mind becoming famous.

Bernadette is reading from her book and looking for objections. Her voice is weak at times since she is in the final phases of (physically) dying from ALS. Her dentures are getting loose. The participants are sitting for hours in uncomfortable chairs with problematic lighting. They have gathered to discuss her final masterpiece, The Real Christ, as well as the spiritual life in general. They break periodically to pray and eat meals prepared by the hosting religious community. They have small, simple, private rooms upstairs. Most of them are old friends and are in their fifties and sixties. While they try to stay on task (what (not who) is the Real Christ?), the conversation meanders through topics such as human nature, Alzheimer's, wine, church councils, sex, creedal statements, the Eucharist, Mary, Buddhism, Judaism, Ireland, Judge Judy, her parents, different kinds of love, etc. If these things don't interest you at all, don't buy this book. But if these things do interest you, you will surely wish you could have been there.

A note to the participants: I am making every effort to preserve your anonymity because I don't have the permission of any of you to share this transcription. If some of you become upset that I have shared this, sorry, get over it, and move on. These ideas are simply far too important to remain hidden in your beautiful minds any longer. Each of you, in your own way, contributed intelligently and should be proud of your contribution. I have typed out this transcription not as an effort to get rich off your brilliant ideas. I have done this as a loving act of homage or tribute to a great woman and her closest friends whose thoughts are certainly worthy of remembrance. I mean it as a compliment. I have omitted any parts where the conversation borders on gossip. I have also chosen to not share the prayers each of you makes before meals. Prayer seems to me to be a whole level of intimacy different from theological discussion, so I am not including your prayers out of respect to you.

One of her "friends" remarked that "Bernadette is a stiff drink." So before you jump into the deep end of theological discussion and spiritual insight, you should have some linguistic floaties:

Key Terms:

When Bernadette uses the term “universal human nature” or “common human nature” she means those aspects of our D.N.A. that we all share.

When she uses the term “God” she means infinite uncreated existence (not a person, and not a being).

When she uses the term “Divine Christ” she means the *Logos*.¹

When she uses the term “Human Christ” she means the man Jesus.

When she uses just the term “Christ” she means the non-dual oneness of all opposites that is “known” only after consciousness has ceased. (That’s why you can’t really define it.)

When she uses the term “Resurrection” she means the body’s experience of universality and non-duality after consciousness has ceased. It’s not a conscious thing. It’s the body’s way of knowing.

When she uses the term “Ascension” she means the ending of even the body’s experience of life and existence.

When she uses the term “Trinity” she means the three ways God exists inseparably in Itself. In us, Trinity is experienced as either Other (Transcendent), Within (Holy Spirit), or Throughout (Logos).

When she uses the term “faith” she means the opposite of belief, and the “truth sensor” in each of us. It is the attitude of being open to not knowing and trusting rather than seeking constantly for understanding and certitude.

When she uses the term “man”, she means all of us.

When she uses the term “Formless Unmanifest”, she means the Transcendent beyond creation, beyond space and time, beyond the universe.

¹ More on that soon

When she uses the term “hypostatic union” she means humanity’s union with God, not in man, but in God. It is person less. More on that term soon.

When she uses “theosis” or “unitive state” she means our oneness with God as individuals on this earth. It is personal to the extent that we are persons.

When she uses the term “Kenosis” the term is used in two ways. The first is the process whereby the *Logos* takes on form, senses, then consciousness. The second is the process of consciousness becoming less and less necessary until it falls away because it is no longer needed.

When she uses the term “Incarnation” she means the process whereby the *Logos* created (or fashioned) for itself universal human nature which appeared as an individual. It does not mean creating or assuming a person.

When she uses the Christian term “person” she means that which is created by choices with free will.

Another important term one should have an understanding of when one reads this transcription is “hypostasis”. This is because it is the word the early fathers came up with to describe the distinctions in the Trinity as well as our union with God. It was the only accepted word in four of the five major Churches for centuries. Because the Eastern and Western churches were becoming increasingly estranged (mostly because of linguistic and cultural differences (not theological)), some (failed) attempts were made at mutual understanding. Someone at some council in the fifth century decided that what the Eastern Church meant by *hypostasis* was the same thing as what the Western Church meant by “person” (which it didn’t and still doesn’t). This is why we constantly hear of the Trinity being three persons instead of three hypostases.

Basically, *hypo* comes from the Greek for under and *stasis* means stable or standing. But instead of meaning “understand” hypostasis

means stand-under, or that which underlies, the foundation of the thing. It is what is most real about a thing. The *hypostatic* union with God is our **real** union with God, beyond ourselves, or how it might feel to us. It is personless because it is revealed after person is gone and because God is not a person.

The Logos

Central to Bernadette's understanding of the Trinity, and completely missing from church doctrine today, is an understanding of the role of the *Logos*. The *Logos* is central to a complete understanding of the Incarnation, Recapitulation Christology, the Resurrection, the Eucharist, and more. Without it, Christianity degenerates into a Jesus Cult full of people waiting to eat their pie in the sky.

The Stoics were the first ones to come up with term *Logos*. Stoicism was a world religion at the time of Christ. The goal of Stoicism was to become one with the *Logos*. Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 BC) played an important role in developing our (now largely lost) understanding of the *Logos*. Unfortunately, what remains of the writings of the mysterious man are only a few fragments. He claimed to know the *Logos* while the rest of men were asleep to it. He also said, "Men live as if each had a private intelligence of his own."² Bernadette concluded from this that it is man's awareness of himself that precludes awareness of the *Logos*. The Stoics believed that the *Logos* was the soul of the universe and that matter was its body. They believed that matter and spirit were inseparably united. The *Logos* is the aspect of God that is

^{21.} p. 58 of [The Real Christ](#)

^{1.} p. 58 of [The Real Christ](#)

3. <http://www.butler-bowdon.com/heraclitus---fragments.html>

united to matter. It is the organizing intelligence that guides the process of evolution.

Although he spoke like an ancient, let's listen to Heraclitus: "Listen not to me, but to the *Logos*, it is wise to agree that all things are one and one thing only..." and, "It is the power and knowledge that steers all things - the *Logos* knows...There is but one wisdom to understand the knowledge by which all things are steered through all...The *Logos* is always existent, but men fail to understand it both before they have heard of it, and when they have heard of it for the first time. For although all things happen through the *Logos*, men seem as if they had no acquaintance with such works and words as I expound, dividing each thing according to its nature and explaining how it really is. The rest of mankind are unconscious of what they do when awake, just as they forget what they do when asleep..." and, "Men are at variance with the *Logos* which is their most constant companion... Although the *Logos* is common to all, most men live as if each had a private intelligence of his own. Although intimately connected with it, men keep setting themselves against it". Bernadette calls attention to this living "as if each had a private intelligence of his own" and concludes that to follow the *Logos* is "contrary to any form of individualism."¹ To follow the *Logos* is to not worry about yourself. It is to chop wood when it needs to be chopped, and carry water when it needs to be carried. It is to follow a universal. It is to be in the flow or the "Tao". Notice that the emphasis is on **what** man is rather than **who**. This will be important later.

To help us understand the *Logos* further, we could also look to St. Athanasius (296-373): "Just as the *Logos* is the animating principle of the cosmos, it is of the rational soul of man. Christ's human nature was a part of the vast body of the cosmos. *Logos*, while present in the man Jesus, was **simultaneously present** everywhere else in the universe,

vivifying and directing it with its life-giving power.” Here we have two more closely related terms to ponder - “animating principle” and “life-giving power.”

The *Logos* is the answer to the philosophical problem of the One and the many. At least so says Maximus the Confessor (580-662): “The divine *Logos*, in whom all things were created, contains in himself the diversity of creation... by contemplating that diversity, who will not perceive that the single *Logos* is the multitude of *logoi* (singular form) and that, conversely, the multitude is one in the universal return toward Him?” Again Maximus, “This same *Logos* is manifested and multiplied in a way suitable to the Good in all beings who come from Him according to the nature of each, and He recapitulates all things in Himself. For all things participate in God by analogy insofar as they come from God.” The many participate in the One as their source and return to the One as their end. The *Logos* (the Divine Christ) is both the Alpha and Omega. The One is in the many and, in the end, the many become One.

The *Logos* is kind of a bridge between the Uncreated and the created. Here’s a quote from Philo of Alexandria³ (25 BC- 50 AD): “And I stood between the Lord and you - neither unbegotten as God or begotten as you, but midway between the two extremes serving as a pledge for both.” One is reminded of the curve that both separates and unites the constantly moving symbol of the Tao. A better analogy would be that the *Logos* (while remaining uncreated) is a kind of bridge between God within, and God Transcendent.

The *Logos* is a “union of opposites” (or non-dual as a Buddhist might say). Again, here is Philo commenting on Heraclitus’ notion of unity as, “the oneness of opposites, the hidden harmony is better than the visible, the fairest harmony makes the structure one. The interchange of opposites with one another is itself proof they are only different manifestation of the same thing, the changeless unity in which

³ Philo was Jewish contemporary of Jesus whom she regarded as “one of the greatest mystics of all time.”

all multiplicity inheres. *Logos* is the substance that creates, sustains, and in the end, perhaps, reabsorbs into Itself. The One is All and the All is one.” This aspect of the *Logos* reabsorbing all into Itself is where St. Paul probably got the notion that God will be “All in All” and is the reason for the Ascension.

As to why very few people have even heard of the *Logos* today, we have to point to the Fathers’ insistence on using the traditional biblical language of “Father and Son” as well as translating the word “*Logos*” as “Word”. Even Cyril of Alexandria had a more exalted understanding of “*Logos*” than most modern Christians. This is what he said, “the *Logos* of the Father of the universe is not the uttered word, but the wisdom and most manifest kindness of God, and His power too.” This egregious and ubiquitous mistranslation of *Logos* to “word” is not only an historical wrong turn, but a catastrophic disaster for a Christian understanding of Christ. Such an understanding is not possible without a thorough knowledge of the *Logos*.

One last word of introduction: This transcription is not just for Christians! In fact, most Christians will be so challenged by these ideas that they may become angry. No one likes to have their cherished beliefs called into question. Bernadette was talking about **universal** human experience. (basically, about spiritual life and spiritual death) Non-Christians and atheists with an open mind may very well get more from reading this than anyone. If you are afraid of new ideas, or don’t have an open mind, you should read no further.

(Feel free to skip or ignore my “cheeky bastard” comments in parentheses. And this is where you are headed after the final transcription:)

Conclusion:

So what? Who cares? Did you just read a bossy, funny, spiritual old lady with a theological ax to grind, or did you just read something

completely new? Is it time for something new? I'm not going to tell you what to think. You are smart. You have a big heart. You tell me.

Sound Check: (Interestingly, this sound check sets the stage for the entire weekend discussion. The participants have some pretty fundamental differences of belief. Putting it mildly, Bernadette (hereafter B.) is not afraid of conflict and does not hesitate to point out the mutual exclusivity of certain beliefs. She does not sweep differences under the rug by calling them linguistic. Here she asks about the meaning of certain terms partly because she's curious, and partly because she wants to communicate clearly.)

A: testing...hello?...The Real Christ 1,2,3...

D: no, if people could just speak naturally I think that would...

B: until the cook comes.... Well, say something all of you!

A: Well B. how can you say that?!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

I: That's not right!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

A: You should speak in Sanskrit like you did at lunch today. My God!

B: You can speak Sanskrit?

D: I didn't know that.

B: Where did you learn?

A: In India!

I: I lived in an Ashram for a couple of years

B: Yea?

I: and studied Vedanta and Sanskrit and some of the things that we were talking about at lunch are more explicit in Sanskrit than they are in English.

B: interesting

I: They are.

B: You can speak it?

I: It's not really a spoken language. I remember the prayers. It was said with a cadence because it was written by poets so you could remember it. Today at lunch we were talking about some of the ideas in Sanskrit.

B: Would you say you know it well?

I: Yea. And that's why I went to the ashram because I didn't want to have to rely on anyone's translation of the Bhagavad Gita or Upanishads...

B: Well, what's the translation we have, it's a big issue here, that first Upanishad, thou art that?

I: *tat vam asi*

B: What does that mean?

I: *tat* means that

B: Well, what is that?

I: Generally, it's spoken about in the Rig Veda. He's talking to his son about the essence of God.

B: Brahman

I: Well Brahman is a class, he's trying to get to a point where his son is seeing something that's the essential nature of life.

B: But he said you. You are that. In other words, all this is life and you're life too.

I: Yea. What's wrong with that?

B: Well, the way that is usually understood is namely **that** is God and **you** are that. (B. had a difficult relationship with the East. Most of the people that found out about her did so while looking East because the only publisher she could find to take a risk on the idea of No-Self was

Shambala. Later SUNY picked up her first two books, but in terms of what kind of people would be drawn to her, the damage had already been done. Even today, her books are generally not placed in Christian Mysticism, but in Buddhism or Eastern Religions.)

I: Well, he's not talking about the self.

D: In that particular dialogue... where he's saying as the rivers all flow, blah, blah... the translation that makes more sense, at least the recent recommendation is that it be translated as "that is how you are" that being all that was said previously, all the multiple rivers flowing, etc., that is also how you are. There are several of these and this is a crescendo. I think what has happened is it has been yanked out of the context.

I: All the time

D: There is no context about what the **that** that he's talking about. But in the dialogue it's very clear what the that is, it's what I was saying previously, all the multiple tributaries of rivers flow into one, etc.

B: Could we then say that what you really are, your true nature, is what the Buddhists would call your Buddha nature? Is that what they are saying? All this life that's your Buddha nature...it's all just one but it's all your Buddha nature... in other words you see all this life around, that's your true nature all of that.

What do you think that would mean H.? Buddha nature... what's that? (Voraciously curious, B. launches into the sound check with some questions about Hindu and Buddhist doctrine. Spiritually, she never "went East" but she learned a smattering, just enough to defend herself against false accusations and misinterpretations.)

H: I think the mistake that is made about Buddha nature is people make it sound as if there is my Buddha nature and yours and yours...

B: No, there is only one. Universal Buddha nature...Well that would go with this thing here. You're just part of nature. That's it. Well that's so simple... and yet, that's the ultimate enlightenment, isn't it? (If this statement interests you, pay attention to what she says on Saturday night about the sensory form of awareness she calls "resurrection".) To realize that your Buddha nature... what's that realization like? I think

that's so easy. We're all alive here and that's your Buddha nature. Now what?

H: But to truly realize that the I am

B: But what does it do? Oh, forget the I am. Throw all that out. We are talking about all of us how we all have the same one nature and this is our real, whatever it is, this is our Buddha nature.

H: What's the question?

B: Well, so what?

D: There's a sense in which there is no great mystery about human nature by itself. I think that in this particular context...

B: Well it transcends my human nature or your nature and that's why we call it Buddha nature.

H: On the one hand there is the sense or realization that I in the sense of the absolute I that can never be the subject or object of awareness. (Maybe it's because this is just the sound check and B. doesn't want to scare everyone off before the weekend begins that she didn't call H. on this. When H. brings it up Saturday evening, B. certainly does.) I am Buddha nature and there are many other words for it. But that isn't the end of the story.

B: Well Buddhism says there is no I am.

H: I didn't say there was.

B: But you said in Buddhism that is who I am. Well "who" is going to be a particular individual.

H: Well let's say what I am. Now I'm not talking about the I am. But if I have your question right, that realization is not the end. The next thing is...

B: Oh! I thought that was the ultimate.

H: No.

B: Well, what's the ultimate?

H: The next thing is that the whole manifestation, the whole creation. And these two experiences happen boom! Boom! so and then they are identical. Buddha nature is identical with manifestation. It's a version of the mystery of the one and the many consecutively, the mystery of the oneness.

B: Well, o.k. because there is whole lot around that is obviously not a manifestation of that. For example, self?

H: What?

B: Is self a manifestation of that?

H: I know you say that, and there are probably a number of people who would disagree with you on that in that tradition, particularly Zen, that everything is a manifestation, including my delusion.

B: Including your delusion...

H: It's very striking when you say (God is) everything "but self". Whereas later in Zen tradition, particularly master Dogen in the 13th century, really gave a sense that even delusion is manifestation.

B: That makes no sense. Because look, then you can be happy with your delusion. There is no use going into Zen or into Buddhism... Hey my Buddha nature is part of that too! And now let's go down and have a drink!

H: That's not a realization. There is a difference between manifestation, the teaching of the party line, and the realization of the truth of it. They are two different things.

B: Oh! I couldn't understand that.

H: I know.

B: So, let's see what that thing (recording devise) did...

D: Oh. Yea.

Friday Afternoon: (Their discussion starts off with I. accusing B., in a Shakespearian tragic-comic sort of way, of being a Mormon! Then they

discuss tradition, human nature, unitive state, deification, free will, and the Eucharist.)

I: Do you know that the Mormons actually believe, now I'm not trying to be rude or talk bad about any religion, but did you know they actually believe, I didn't realize you've spoken quite affirmatively to me at times about the LDS faith, but did you know that God the father and the son and holy spirit have their own bodies?

B: Oh, yea!

I: All have flesh and blood? You know that?

B: Oh, yea!

I: How is that going to be helpful in transforming my human nature until...that they each have separate bodies of flesh and blood?

B: Now, that's what the MORMONS believe!

I: Right, yes.

B: Well, I'm not teaching Mormonism!

I: But you almost, when I first met you a couple of years ago, you almost convinced me to become a Mormon again.

B: Are you serious?

I: Oh, yes.

B: You sure don't know me!

H: You became a Mormon again?

I: You were going on and on about...

B: Well, I know all about Mormonism. There was this sister in the monastery. She was a sister of Romni, who was one of the twelve apostles, and after writing all these books and everything well she walked into a Catholic Church one day and just fell down and became a Carmelite nun. And her family would come out occasionally and they would do anything to get her out of the monastery because she was of

such worth to this Romni family, one of the apostles. She had contributed so much. Anyway, she wrote a book about the inner workings. Right now, we know a lot about the inner secrecy of the whole thing. And I remember she wrote a book, which will never be published, about the Mormon church. She would just sit around in recreation, (two hours every Sunday afternoon during which Carmelites sit around and enjoy spiritual chit chat or holy gossip) she told us all this stuff that the Mormons believe. In fact, I remember our monastery was on Holiday Rd. right there in Mormon territory. I invited them in and we were all sitting around the table there and I questioned them and I found out they didn't know a thing about Mormonism. They couldn't answer my questions. And they went out and got all their missionaries and I questioned them and found out that they couldn't answer my questions either. I mean it's a strange church, the stuff that they believe, it's unbelievable. I don't see how they. And yet, I gotta tell you this, they are the nicest, most generous people, most family orientated people you could ever meet. There is no Mormon on earth that doesn't have everything they need. The way they take care of their own. I don't know any group in the world. It's an extremely wealthy church. They own airlines and railroads and the kids have to earn their own money, at the age of ten they are out there. But how you would think that I would want anyone to become Mormon! It's unbelievable that you would even think that! I can't believe...

A: Well, I'm glad you didn't do it T.

B: Protestant churches do not recognize Mormonism as Christian.

F: Absolutely

B: So anyway, I don't know where you got that idea. What were we talking about anyway?

H: We weren't. We were just...

B: Christology from above and below. Paul started from above, Rahner is bringing out the Christology from below. He almost comes right out and says it but you have to understand how difficult it is for a theologian. Remember how scrutinized they could be. It's a terrible thing. Look at poor Eckhart. He only had about five or six sentences that were wrong. I understand this problem but what are we going to do about it. But we

are talking about the church as a whole. If you have a small congregation, you can do it. We have people who have been brainwashed. This particular view has been so out there. They think inside the box.

F: How do we do this without doing violence to the tradition? (This is his first question. F. is short for Fr. because he is a priest. He is taking the risk of censure by his Bishop by simply being there. He wants to be part of a transition to a new way of thinking in the Catholic Church. He doesn't want a rupture. You will read B.'s response to this attitude when he brings it up again later.)

E: It's cellular... they are a little bit more open minded...

D: Even in the book "there are two parts to the tradition." It seems to me that...

C: Well, the Eucharistic tradition would get us away from that.

E: The social gospel is what is talked about in my church.

J: I understand because I have had experiences of at least two of those modes. Until people understand the trinity, it's just reading a book...

C: You have the social activists on the left, and on the right you have people like catholic answers. (a radio talk show of Catholic apologetics)

B: I was just listening to them! They are onto Galileo now...

C: Who will say when we say Jesus Christ became incarnate that isn't exactly what we mean? So from the right and the left we have this cleave that seems to disallow a true understanding of the Real Christ.

B: The theologians are not dummies but they know that if they come out with a corrected creed... (The very idea is scary and therefore anathema and heretical to most.)

H: S. I think that is a really good point.

E: It's all about our experiences. That's the problem with the bible.

B: The trinity is the heart of Christianity and yet it is nowhere in the bible.

C: The Eucharistic Christ is nowhere in the bible. That's why we often hear 'receive the body of Jesus'.

B: Do some people actually say that?

C: This was one of the goals of Vatican II. They wanted to get back to the bible. They wanted to say...

B: Well, that's Protestant.

C: Right, the rich Trinitarian vision of the fathers has been set aside in favor of what can we find out about Jesus and the bible which disallows a kind of rich Trinitarian vision.

B: I question in the book the extent, most of the fathers didn't really articulate the Trinity very well. In a way, yes. There were big fights about this too. What do we call these Sabellianism? There was too much interpretation on the son and begotten, that's the Arian heresy. Who was the son? Who was begotten? The logos, or Jesus? Big fights! They were actually arguing one side, they knew the Logos. That's the second person, that's the divine. But look in our creed. It tells us that it was Jesus who was begotten. That's not the Logos.

D: That view is that Jesus is the Logos wrapped in flesh.

B: yea.

D: That's why it's easy to mix up God and Jesus because it's just, you know, God wrapped in flesh.

B: There were big fights about that. You have Antiochian view was the God-man, and then you have the Alexandrian was the God-flesh. To be human all you have to have is flesh? Well, that's like the animals. Even the animals have souls, you know the form. They fought for Jesus to have a soul!

D: The party line is written now from the point of view...

B: Yes, the wrong point of view. They fought over this stuff. It isn't just somebody came up with it. They fought over it and how to put it across and make it make sense.

D: Yes

B: I often wonder, who wrote up those final documents of the council? My view is that we don't have those original documents. They have been long destroyed. What we are given is what they say pretty much later. I don't trust them (Most Catholics strive to be in line with the *sensus fidelium*, as articulated by council documents. Bernadette didn't. She thought for herself.) But anyway, I understand F.'s problem. The book points out the problem but I don't think in itself, it doesn't present a problem. And this goes to E's um, you remember you all got a copy of E's question? What does all this have to do with us? The thing is this, what I would say, it's the same answer I give to father and anyone. I was raised with the party line, are you with me? I came upon the real Christ. (Not without the help of excessive grace, you didn't.) All I did was ask God what is my eternal existence with you and that's it. That's Christ. It never wavered, I saw it perfectly. It never bothered me.

You can know that truth and say it to other people. They will have their interpretations of it, but then let God take care of the rest of it.

G: Yea.

E: That's a good point.

B: Just let them hear a few words. That your eternal oneness with God, that's Christ and let them think about it. That's all, you know, to tell you the truth, a lot of it was in Latin and I didn't understand it anyway

G: Ha, ha, ha...

B: which is why it was terrible when they changed. Now, it's so boring when you hear it, it's so awful, it makes it worse.

All: Ha, ha, ha... (So she wasn't going to Mass to hear the priest, or the readings, or the prayers, only to receive the Eucharist. Since she chose to worship in an Eastern Rite, and since she said she missed benediction and adoration, one could probably assume that, for her, worship should reflect the beauty of the transcendent, refer to the other dimension, not be too wordy, and include time to merely sit in the presence.)

B: It's only after Vatican II, in my house there wasn't a lot of Jesus talk.

D: No, no.

B: My parents were above that mentality.

D: But I wonder, at least my personal experience is, which is one that the reasons why the readings don't bother me that much, because in the readings when you hear Jesus said this and Jesus said that, etc., you clearly know that the reference is being made to a human being, an historical person, etc. To me the problematic phrase is "Jesus Christ".

F: yea.

G: Yea, I agree. It's confusing.

D: Jesus is o.k. and if you have Christ and you have Jesus, it works o.k. It's the "Jesus Christ" word...

B: Well, it's supposed to be Jesus THE Christ because Christ is just a title.

H: What's the difference between um, you know, I remember always being so careful to say Jesus of Nazareth. You corrected me and said it's o.k. say Jesus Christ. What's the difference in hearing the reading...

D: The reading is not what God said.

H: No, I said what Jesus said. Is there a difference between looking at this man after the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and...

B: He's still not God!

H: I'm not saying anything. I'm asking is there a difference. Is there a difference in how the person is referred to?

D: No. No. When people hear the reading and they hear Jesus said this and Jesus said that I don't think people substitute God.

B: Well, now wait a minute! They hold up this book and they say this is the word of God. Now there are people who actually believe the literal truth that God actually said this, meant this. You don't dare question it or...

H: I think all I'm asking is, is there a proper use of the phrase "Jesus the Christ"?

B: Yes, as far as this world is concerned, with the historic man...

D: In fact, in that equation, "Jesus the Christ", we are still using Christ in that title way Jesus the messiah. That's how we're using it. We're not saying Jesus the oneness of the divine and human...

G: the anointed

D: That's the issue with the term Christ, right? On the one hand, it's a translation of messiah. On the other hand, we are saying that this reality of the oneness we are calling Christ. You cannot say Jesus is that oneness.

B: This is the whole issue that has to do with that. People want to know what is the difference between God's human nature, only one human nature God created for itself, and Jesus' human nature? What's the problem there?

G: It's not God's.

B: Let me ask you this, was Jesus' human nature, God? Was it God's human nature? (She loved to quiz people on their understanding.)

C: Yes.

G: no.

F: Jesus' human nature?

G: It was transformed.

B: There's only one human nature. So, if you're going to say Jesus' human nature, then you can say Mary's human nature and Paul's human nature. Is that our human nature? Is that God's human nature?

D: Right. It's not God's human nature it's to be transformed...

B: well, no wait a minute...

D: It's to be transformed INTO God's human nature.

B: Well, yes. But now in the case of Jesus though, how does that go? That is very important.

D: That is very important. Correct.

B: So we have, what it means is that Christ preexisted the man Jesus.

L: Yes, yep...

F: Right

B: Are you with me? At some point God united itself to humanity, we don't know when...we don't care. But now we have the revelation of it. Well, was this some coming down or was this actually God creating some, it had to be the same human nature.

F: Yes.

B: But is that God's human nature? That has come down and taken on, undergone this whole worldly thing and then returned to God. Is that God's one and only human nature?

G: I think that was the kenosis.

B: There you go! That's the kenosis.

G: That's the first kenosis! Not the one going back, but the one coming down.

B: O.k. this goes along with Paul. That's his view. A decision was made. There is no man up there making a decision but to be able to get involved with this world and be an example and whatever and then return that is a huge thing. Therefore, but we can't say it was Jesus' human nature.

D: no

G: no

B: Well, then to say that's God's human nature, um, that makes it very important, (If you are wondering how God can have a human nature, it is by possession or ownership.)

C: um hum

B: and I like that. Well I personally like it and I'll tell you why because I thought he (the person) was so wrong on so many things, and I thought, if that's God's human nature, well, good grief! We can all feel good about ourselves!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

D: There's a part in the book though where you say, Bernadette, that one way to think about Jesus is Jesus is the person of God's person-less human nature or something like that...I forget exactly how...

B: Yes, well I make him out as a full human person. I will not tolerate people saying he was not a human person, because you have to understand what a person is, it's the self. Jesus certainly had a self. It's the one who governs, who has a say, who's going to makes decisions, who thinks and feels, this is the self.

F: Could it be...

D: One thing I think would be clarifying, and this is a question more than anything else, on earth human nature is individual.

B: yea, individual that's in my research paper

D: human nature ... individual is universal and all that, but the only way human nature exists on earth is as an individual.

B: yes. it's with the self, more or less

D: One question... this was one of the things I had with the book is... God's own human nature, let me unpack this. There's a couple of things. One is, I can understand Christ as the oneness of divine nature and human nature, I don't quite get the idea of God's own human nature separate from Christ meaning the way I every time I read

B: Wait. Christ is God's own human nature, by definition

D: right

B: by definition

D: correct

B: well I said so!

D: Yes. Yes. But in ...now there is the eternal Christ, and there is the Christ on earth (Jesus)

B: yea

D: and it's, it's,

B: Well, you can say this is God's own human nature on this earth. But it wasn't Jesus'. He was the person. He was the self.

D: But then isn't that the case with every one of us?

H: Yes

B: Well, now that's a good question. No. Absolutely not.

D: Yea. Yes, no that's...

B: absolutely not!

H: And why not?

B: Because that's what we are to become. (We are not all Christ because we are becoming Christ.)

H: O.k.

B: I don't want to say none of us are God's incarnation, because that doesn't belong to individuals. There is no such thing as God's own human nature belonging to a single individual. When we come into this world we're all single individuals, are you with me? That's what we have to become, is the universal. We come into this world as individuals created with self. *And now we have to become a universal.* (I will italicize select phrases that I consider to be spiritual jewels.) Now we have to become that. Jesus had to go back and become that too! Are you with me? Jesus also had to take on a self, all that, become a person, then he had to get rid of all that, become person-less. Because God's human nature is person-less. (Person is what prevents us from being God's human nature?) We're not all the incarnation. We are not all God's one eternal...

I: so what's the difference between Jesus and us?

B: Oh, well I don't see any difference.

I: You just said it was very important.

B. No not Jesus! (**Who** he was, was not as important as **What** he was, or his nature, because it was God's.)

H: you're right.

B: Not Jesus. We're talking about the human nature. Big difference.

H: Jesus had to become Christ.

B: Yea. His human nature is no different than yours. Now he was born, then you have death, ascension, and in heaven yes but he isn't the Christ you don't get it, it's not him. Listen God owns that human nature, not Jesus. It's not Jesus' human nature. When you get up to heaven it's not going to be your human nature. We are going to be transformed into God's own human nature whatever that marvel is.

F: Would you say the self is our human perception, it's wrong, that we have our own human nature?

B: Yes, basically yes. For example, well I'll tell you on a philosophical level, it's obvious there is only one human nature, right?

F: Correct.

B: But a lot of people argue that a man and a woman have different natures. People used to argue that blacks had different natures! Right?

F: right

B: Don't you remember all this division?

I: yes

B: We're still going on it. You still have men who are heads of the Church and everything else, you know they're just different. That has to account for a lot of it. But to realize there is only one human nature. (Sounds like an argument for women priests.) Which is person-less and *it belongs to nobody but God and we have all got to become that.*

K: Bernadette...

H: K. wants to say something...

K: But Jesus was different because he was born in the state of theosis.

B: Oh, yes, that's different. That doesn't do away with the self. (It doesn't do away with the self completely. It only does away with the ego self. The apostles and early fathers probably had so little

experience of either, that they were not able to make this distinction. So they concluded Jesus had no self when, in fact, he had no ego.)

D: No

B: He was born more spiritually advanced. That is my view. And I'll tell you what gave me that view. I never paid any attention to the guy at all, until coming to the unitive state when I came to realize, now I'm beginning to understand. I can relate to that human being and his talking about oneness with God, and that's only because I was in that unitive state. He was born knowing his union with God. That's what the unitive state is!

In fact, I wanna tell you something, I'm convinced, the reason why God supplied the X chromosome, the reason why he was born of a virgin you might say, (banging fist on lap or table) so that Mary would TELL HIM God is your real (laughing) father! You are so one with God and you know who knows how they understood that years ago. They didn't know anything about Y and X chromosomes. That he came right from God.

When you know that your whole being comes right from God, that what the unitive state is! That's it's realization! That's the marvelous wonder of it! And so he knew he came straight from God from the time he was a baby. I can see this...and... as I say, that's my view. And I don't see anything in the Gospels that tells us otherwise. He never went around looking for some Rabbi to tell him or he was lookin' for God so he went off someplace. As far as we know. He wasn't a searcher.

K: The man Jesus. God could have picked anybody.

B: What do you mean? No, this is prior to his conception. He couldn't exist without that x chromosome. He never existed prior to that. God planned that whole thing. That was his conception.

K: Right but he could have been named anything. ("picked" was not the right word. I think the point K. was trying to make was the **what** Jesus was, was infinitely more important than **who** he chose to become.)

B: Yea, we don't care about the name.

C: That was Duns Scotus' point of view that there wasn't some uniqueness about Jesus that he was selected.

B: God planned this whole thing. We don't care about the name.

D: No, no, that's missing the whole point. What Bernadette is saying is there was no preexisting person to select.

B: Yea, well that's what he said and that was Cyril of Alexandria's thing. He was scared to death that people would think that God selected this man because he was good and everything else and Cyril said no way!

C: Can I make a point to connect this?

B: Yea.

C: O.k. You are really emphasizing again and again in the book there is one human nature.

B: Yea.

C: So I just want to follow that human nature from the highest and...so at the moment God, um...

B: Now wait a minute! Now we don't know when it happened. Are you with me?

C: Sure.

B: All right. God decided that he really loved and cared for man, he's not going to create a man here.

C: Right

B: *He's going to create right from Himself, a human nature created one with Itself.* It wasn't created **not** one with itself, are you with me?!

C: Right

D: Yes.

B: And not just that! It was created Hypostatically one with itself!

D: Yes.

B: Which is why we say that this Christ was created in the Godhead.

C: Yes.

B: You and I we're down here in our mom and dad. Are you with me?

C: Yea.

B: We belong to this dimension whereas this (Christ) belonged to that dimension. Now then, so that's that, whenever that happened. Now God wants to reveal to us all that man means (to God). In the meantime, all these people are walking around we're all here being born into this world. That's our end! This is what God has planned for us.

D: Right right. o.k. Can I just make one clarification here because I think it confuses people. There is a sense when we speak about being one common human nature to think that human nature was created once by God and no other human nature has ever been created again. By saying that there is one human nature we are not saying that there has been only one act of creation. What we are saying is the incarnation is the creation of human nature in this eternal oneness with God. But each one of us, still human nature, there is that one on one act of creating human nature.

B: It's the same human nature

D: But it's another act of creation

B: Yes

D: That human nature doesn't start there

B: It doesn't start there, but now we have this kenosis thing none of you went through kenosis being born in this world

C: That's the most important question it doesn't start there but let's say right now a baby is being born in the hospital. It's not Jesus, does this baby have the exact human nature

B: yes.

D: but it's in a different state

C: Because now we are talking about levels almost of human nature

B: No! you're way off!

C: O.k. so let's throw the idea of levels out for the moment o.k. So there is bare human nature which God creates for itself which we call the heavenly Christ, human nature in glory. Then there is also let's say a person being born down the block

D: That's a new act of creation

C: A new act of creation, but his human nature is no different, he's not experiencing God in glory but somehow he is experiencing the same human nature it's one human nature

B: That was my big question, how are you going to get from the one to the many?

C: O.k. Can I just continue?

B: I know where you are going.

C: All right, so that...

H: But we don't!

C: Let's go to another place, let's suppose that person at 35 years old comes to the state of theosis, it's the same human nature that began, he's not...

B: No, you are so off the cuff! You are off!

C: But you see I'm trying to affirm that there is one human nature.

B: You're off!

D: No, no, no the confusion seems to be that, you are equating, um by saying there is one common human nature, you are saying all human nature belongs to God.

C: Yes.

D: No, that's what we're saying. There is one human nature, now there is human nature one with God...

B: At the end for all of us, what we are to be transformed into, is this Glorious the Christ, are you with me? But you're off. Leave the divine Christ alone. Did you read my research paper?

C: I did!

B: That's exactly what that is all about! How are you going to get from the one to the multiple? I said for me you take the Eucharist, one Christ and billions and billions of hosts.

C: What I'm suggesting is, and if I could just be heard out on this point (In other words, "Please stop interrupting me.") The difference is not different human natures, there are different souls that have different capacities.

B: That's wrong. There are not different souls. Whatever human nature is- body, soul, psyche, I don't care what it is. Whatever it is there is no difference between you and me and all the rest of us here. No difference! You keep making differences!

C: I'm the one saying there is no difference!

E: This difference is "what".

B: That's it. And individual is who we are, and we make our own person. That's part of the function of the soul. Without that function of the soul a person couldn't even exist.

K: We don't know how your 35-year-old may have experienced theosis

B: Well that's besides the point.

C: I'm saying his human nature hasn't changed, his soul has changed, but it's not his human nature.

B: He has been transformed.

C: Yes, that's what I mean.

B: No!

C: I'm really trying to understand...

B: No. And you're not getting it and we are not going to spend any more time on you.

H: He may not be the only one.

B: Well I don't understand, did you read the research paper? (It's called "What is Self?" and can be downloaded for free from bernadetteroberts.blogspot.com)

C: Yes.

B: What was that about? How are you going to get from the one to the multiple? What causes this multiplicity? What causes these differences among us? It's self!

C: Yes!

B: Consciousness, all this kind of stuff here, and we have to live through that. This all has to be transformed. That has to be gotten rid of. Then we can enter into the ultimate state of Christ, that's where we're going.

H: Use the term human nature right there. Then we can enter into... how would you put...

B: Well the ultimate is Christ. Become ultimate Christ.

D: So, I think that...

B: *It's not we, it's the human nature.*

H: But would you say it's to **realize** that we are...

B: No, that word realize sticks in your brain (B. came to not like the word realize because of its intellectual connotations. However, she herself used the word seven times on pp. 33 through 41 of The Path to No-Self.)

D: This view of human nature is like a static view of human nature. It's just there, it never changes, it just sits there.

H: Yea.

D: That's the problem.

C: No, I'm not saying that.

D: You're saying nothing has changed.

C: I'm saying the soul is changing. The human nature is the same.

D: Human nature is part of the soul. The soul is part of human nature.

H: So let's say we go through the life and we get rid of, drops off, and we become personless. How then do you use the term human nature? Is it that we then, would you say it is revealed?

D: No it's transformed into that eternal oneness.

H: But is it the human nature that is transformed or...

C: The soul!

H: What is transformed?

D: The...

B: Well, whatever human nature is.

D: Could we just...

B: The body is transformed. (It's interesting that she says the body is transformed one second after C. says the soul is transformed.)

D: If by human nature we are talking about what we are, that is body, soul, and spirit. So it's pointless to say the soul is separate from human nature and the body is separate from human nature so you split body out of it, split soul out of it, split spirit out of it, then what is it?

H: What is transformed? What is the subject of the transformation?

D: The whole thing is transformed! Body, soul, and spirit.

H: And then into what?

L: If person "a's" human nature is transformed, and person "b" hasn't transformed, how are they the same human nature?

F: Experience.

L: Aren't their human natures now different?

B: Well, one is developed.

L: so both are human nature but...

B: Well, we can put it this way, one has gone on that path that has for it to be eternally one, to become Christ

L: So human nature incorporates the transformed and not transformed.

B: Now wait a minute! Who is going to govern this? Who is going to give themselves up to this? It's self! It's the person you are and it's what is going to make you who you are. You give your whole self to God, you're going to be transformed. If you go out and start murdering your neighbor hey, forget it!

L: Yes, but the question is: Is it human nature that is being transformed?

D: Can I just...

F: Is there a difference...

D: Can I do an analogy here?

H: See, that makes perfect sense.

D: Can I do...

H: Say it again. That's a logical thing he just said, Bernadette.

B: What did you say?

H: Say it again.

B: I didn't hear it.

L: If one person's human nature is transformed. They go through this process...

B: alright

L: And the other person's isn't transformed. Aren't their human natures now different?

B: Yes. Let me put it this way, one has gone on that path and become what God created it to be and one hasn't. We're not saying! Now, I like to think that every human nature is saved, but it may not be.

L: So human nature...

B: I don't believe in Hell. I do believe though that God can cut the cord and they cease to exist. Because to go to hell you've gotta save somebody for Hell. And God's not going to save any of that. No. You don't have different human natures. What you have are human natures in bliss, and you have human natures born in this world. We have to go through all this to reach the end. No man comes here at the end of the journey.

L: So when you say there is one human nature...

B: It makes it...

H: B. say again what the end is.

B: Christ

H: transformed into...

B: Christ

L: So when you say one human nature you're including both the untransformed and the transformed, that whole process of transformation is part of human nature...

B: Alright. One thing we've brought out constantly in this book, is, there is a difference between speaking of Christ's earthly life and the eternal, heavenly life. Are you with me? There is a huge difference!

H: You mean...

B: I don't care who it is. Human nature on this earth is not human nature in its ultimate glorious state. It's a different dimension. Different states.

D: Right

B: It's not that human nature is different, it's that it dwells in a different condition. Here it dwells in a human condition. (The condition of having a self. Apparently, it is also possible for there to be human nature without a self. That is it's heavenly condition.)

L: So the condition transforms.

B: Oh, well, forget it.

H: Wait. Hang on.

D: If we just take a scientific analogy

E: Slow

D: It's a ridiculous analogy but I'll do it anyway. If you take the ice, water, steam analogy, right? They are all the same essential...

B: chemical element

D: thing. It's all H₂O we're not saying the steam has a different make up.

B: That's a good analogy.

D: The chemical composition of steam is exactly the same as the chemical composition of ice.

E: Take this real slow, cause of something she just said. So now we are talking about the transformation of one thing in different states or conditions. The analogy is good. However, we can't say steam is the resurrected, it's the Christ.

D: no, no. It's a bad analogy

E: But we need to know, if that represents human nature to us, what is that transformed into, and I also want to know...

B: Well, it's gotta be perfect.

H: Wait, wait!

E: When you said a second ago if you start killing your neighbors...

B: sure

E: I've been working with a group of lifers who have all committed murder in San Quinten for years. It's amazing. Some of them are coming to Christ.

B: Well, good!

E: Yea, but you can also see on the yard those who are not.

B: Oh. Of course

E: You said a good thing. What someone who is becoming transformed and someone who is not, how do we talk about that? Are we are talking about transformation...

B: No. We are not talking about that.

E: We're talking about the transformation here, the nature...

B: We are talking about people who will leave themselves open to God to be transformed and those who won't, don't want it.

H: Let's stick with this good analogy.

D: No, but here's the other part of it right? Because we've made it very clear that the spiritual journey is a journey through self. Right?

C: Right.

D: And our free will makes the person that we are, which is different from human nature. So this whole thing of leaving open to transformation, and the will to God, etc. is part of this other dimension of the person we make ourselves to be. In that is where I think the journey is. The human spiritual journey is connected to will, and how we use it, how we respond to grace with it whatever else, you know?

H: To take the analogy let's say ice is the transformed human nature, and steam is the...

B: Well, the transformed would be air. (It's an analogy B!)

L: Ha, ha, ha...

H: That's the purpose of a metaphor.

E: Keep going.

H: So I'm not sure what your problem with that was. Namely steam which is, you know, the inmate murderer, is the person being transformed into water through the will, and then into ice, what's the problem there?

E: I have no problem with it. I just want to know what is that whole thing transformed into and you saying God can just pull the plug on...

B: yea! He's gone. He ceases to exist.

E: That's enough of that.

B: You would just cease to exist. There is nothing of necessity that makes the human nature. That's why it was a beautiful thing for God to make it eternal, to give us this chance.

F: An individual may devolve.

B: Well I suppose so.

L: yea

E: That's an example of it.

I: Do you believe that anybody could see God, and not want that?

B: I don't see how that could be possible. If he really thought and knew that he saw God and how he could run out and...

I: When you're talking about how God could cut...

B: Yes?

I: the cord and cause the person to cease to exist, and no longer animate them...

B: yes? So?

I: How could, you know his life is extremely hard...

B: yea...

I: and so there's a guy maybe he killed somebody...

B: Well, look, he could be sorry for it (sound of blinds being drawn) Hey! That's awful father! (laughter) Shut that! (blinds being drawn again) Alright, now sit down!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: Now I don't understand your problem with that.

I: Has anybody every been born that would not come to God if they saw God?

B: I don't see how it would be possible. But I don't know that everybody has seen God.

I: Well maybe they haven't seen God but they will see God.

B: Oh, well, now that's in the future depends on you maybe, I don't know.

D: I think maybe there is an element of response here. Revelation can come our way, grace can come our way. There is an obligation of responding to it that we have. I can see how some people may choose to sit on their bottoms.

E: It's God who determines what we do.

D: No. Then it's not free will. How is it free will if God ultimately determines what we do?

E: It's what Augustine called irresistible grace.

D: No, I think our will is free. We are free to reject God obviously.

E: No one would.

D: What's that?

E: No one would.

B: See I would agree.

I: If they saw God, if they actually saw God...

B: But they haven't seen God.

I: God is able to be revealed to everybody.

B: You know what? Now let's think of this, we want to think well of God so let's say... thinking that God will give everybody a chance.

D: yea

B: Are you with me?

D: Yea

B: God doesn't want anybody getting to heaven and saying, "Oh, gee! I didn't know!"

D: exactly

B: Everybody will be given a chance.

D: right

B: So when you talk about somebody seeing God, well now what's he going to do?

D: Exactly because, no...

I: But you couldn't see him without being involved.

D: I., let me tell you why that's problematic. O.K.? We know that everybody, um, that there's a lot of people who are disconnected from God, right? So we can say two things. Either God chooses to reveal to some people and not to others - stingy God, particular God, special favor God - let's dump that. Now if we say God reveals to everybody but some people do and some people don't (respond well) free will. The alternative is stingy God. So you've either got free will, or stingy God.

L: But I tell you what. Let me describe something to him. I think what you're saying is there are people that are born without certain parts of their brain functioning properly...

B: Oh, well forget them completely!

L: But society is filled with them!

D: But, it's got nothing to do with your brain!

L: It does, because there are parts of your brain that enable you to, there are people with no empathy.

B: If somebody is insane, they are not responsible.

L: But it's not just sane or insane, there are variations. Some people are just born in such a way that they are not receptive.

B: Now I don't know...

L: Biologically, the way they have been created.

I: I saw a documentary a couple of months ago it was called, "What happened to Johnny?" The horrific story Johnny is this kid that was twelve years old and kidnapped, taken away by like professionals, raped repeatedly, and became a male prostitute, this whole thing was about his mom seemed to kind of go crazy too, he came back for a moment, but he was not able to stay...

B: So?!

I: Anyway, the guy that actually kidnapped him came forward. This guy was all, you could tell his mind was all dark and um...

B: So what?! We're talking about normal people.

I: I'm talking about a person whose life has been one hell after another...

B: God takes all that into consideration. God knows about all that. Anyway, I just wanted to tell you, all those things we just have to leave them in God's hands. It's terrible, awful things happen here, constantly. Look, the only thing we can do is make sure our lives are totally given to God.

F: What about L's point?

B: Thomas Merton said this, and I believe it too. The only reason why God does not destroy us all it's because of the good ones, a relative handful, he thinks that the whole world is saved because of these few good people, you know there might be thousands, that God is allowing this, that we're all actually in good hands. Otherwise God would destroy them all. But you do that, and you destroy the good. God's not going to let that happen.

F: And about L's point?

L: I feel it was resolved when she said God takes all that into account.

E: I see that at prison.

B: yea

E: There is this element of will. There are numerous opportunities for every human. There is just something about the darkening of the soul, just too much violence...

B: Yea, how are you going to get out of it? But you know, we hear stories again and again of people coming out of that.

E: And some of them can't.

D: We forget that both Paul and Moses were murderers.

B: Who?

D: Paul and Moses

B: Paul killed people?

D: He was responsible for it.

F: Paul didn't kill anyone. He just held the cloaks.

B: That was different. That was before his conversion. When did Moses kill anyone?

A: He killed that Egyptian guy.

C: B. can I bring up something?

B: Yea

C: The letter said we might break up into discussion groups.

B: The letter said that?

C: possible sub groups

H: I prefer to keep going like this. We are a sub group.

B: That reminds me, how did you know there would be a meeting?

L: I assumed that it was simply a mistake.

B: What do you mean?

L: I last looked at the blogsite and didn't see anything in January and thought it was full.

B: This is a tall story.

L: but a true one.

A: But then he said as an afterthought he asked me if there was any room in this one that's coming up...

B: Wait a minute, you only asked five days ago. How did you know?

H: Does it matter?

L: I was asking...She assumed I knew what I was talking about when I didn't.

E: Don't make him leave!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

E: What I wanna know is, the last discussion was really good. One of the main points we got when we looked at with the will, what did we really learn there?

D: What I was trying to say was, I was responding to I. because I. was saying that everyone who encounters God will turn to Him. What we can say is that God is not stingy and that if they do not turn to God it's got to be something on their side, not God's side. (To be human is to have free will. God "wills" the transformation of all.)

L: I don't see that everyone has been given equal, but I do like what it says in the Bible... from he to whom much has been given, much will be expected.

D: Why would Got not...

B: Now listen! Don't ever quote the bible to me.

E: Ha, ha...

D: But, why would?

B: I'm not a biblical person!

E: I can quote Bernadette to you.

B: Well, that's o.k. because I can always refute it.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

G: God always reveals itself at least once to every person.

B: Well basically I kind of believe that. Just because I said it doesn't make it so.

E: I don't think God is counting how many times God reveals Itself...

B: I'll tell you one of the problems, we have to have a true understanding of the term revelation. Now a lot of people think all you have to do is read the bible and there is the revelation. That the bible or some missionary will reveal God to you. This is not revelation at all. For God to be revealed to you, it's one on one. You'll never get it any other place. And it can't come through your brain, or you figuring it out, or anything else. A revelation is a real revelation of God, and you know it. And if you don't know it, then it's not a revelation.

E: I don't think you have just one chance.

B: Oh, I don't care. Who cares about that? I can't believe that God would condemn somebody that he never gave a chance to.

C: I was going to make, can I make a little point?

B: Sure!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

C: Maybe I misunderstood but I thought that at some point we were going to break into subgroups and

B: Where did you get that? Now you, F. in your discussion groups, you had them divide into groups. And then they all come together and discuss, like this.

F: Yes. We start with them coming together each week and then we break up into five smaller groups. Then they read and discuss the book (The Real Christ) then they bring what they learn to the early part of the next week's discussion then they break into smaller groups again. It's working pretty well except for one group has no spark in it. They haven't really dug into it. But the other groups do a really good job.

B: Do you assign chapters?

F: Yes.

B: And this is going on for weeks?

F: eleven weeks

C: I still think a lot of us are not clear about human nature. We've heard some nice things from D. A good analogy, I personally, and I've really thought about this...

B: Did you read the postscript of the thesis? Where I said this. I'll find it.

C: How many of you are still unclear about human nature?

H: Well, what about it?

C: B. hammers over and over again there is one human nature. But then all of a sudden we hear there is individual human nature.

D: Stop right there. And I'll tell you why, the way human nature exists on earth is as individual.

B: And what causes that?

C: I still don't find that persuasive.

B: It's self.

D: Do you think human nature can exist on earth as some, one amorphous common...

C: Human nature is a mystery.

D: Human nature is not a mystery.

B: All right. Can I read this? This is the last paragraph of the thesis of the book.

C: O.k.

B: By and large, however, the mystery of man is bound up in the true essence of human nature. Essence being a universal and never a particular. Though man has various definitions of human nature, he doesn't even know the true nature of matter, much less the nature of an

immaterial soul. The bottom line, since only God knows the true essence of what God creates, then only God knows the true essence of human nature and what it is destined to become. Nobody of course waits for a definition before he starts to live. Yet even in the living, man does not really know all there is to know. In the long run, however, man's definitions are irrelevant. Because as the early fathers held, man was created to be more than he is now. As the apostle said, we don't know what we are now, we only know what we shall be. Be Christ, that is. So, no use getting stuck in what man is now, but keep your eyes ahead to what man shall be. *Be Christ*. This is why the revelation of Christ is the most meaningful of all God's revelations. Christ reveals that whatever the essence of God is, and whatever the essence of man, the two will be united and one for all eternity. Beyond this, what else does man need to know about God and man? Compared to the revelation of Christ, everything else is meaningless. What more do you want to know? Why are you making this big fuss about what is human nature?

C: I agree with everything you said there.

B: Oh! Listen! That's human nature.

D: C. let me give you simple analogy, all right? We've got ten-to-the-power-of-something oxygen atoms around. Are they all anything other than oxygen atoms?

C: no.

D: O.k. Do they exist as one big giant oxygen something?

C: I don't understand.

D: They are all oxygen atoms and they exist individually. The nature of oxygen is to exist as an individual atom. The way human nature exists on earth is as an individual. You get it?

C: I'll have to give further thought, but I think it breaks down because that's empirical and what God has created it's human nature and only God knows...

D: Who created the oxygen atom?

C: God.

D: So, what's the difference? That's oxygen nature, this is human nature.

C: Because human nature is a spiritual reality and oxygen is not a spiritual reality.

E: Oh?

H: Maybe it is.

C: Maybe there is something wrong with the way I am thinking towards it.

D: I think it's what Bernadette said. You can't see the universal.

B: I think you two should go to the library.

D: We'll stop.

H: B. can I ask...

B: and you go with them!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

D: I think the sub groups have formed.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

H: D. I need your help here. Both of you. So is there, in the transformation, it's as if what makes us the individual, the person is gradually shed.

B: Strictly speaking yes. First you have to know it. Yea. Then gradually, you don't need it any more.

Alright, now listen. Let's get somebody else in here. A., do you have something?

A: I do.

B: Alright. This is P.'s thing here that she picked up from the book that she wants to discuss.

A: O.k. Originally, I had like seven sentences. It started off by considering anthropolatry and how could such a thing happen and why

would people worship a person as God in those days to cause the church fathers to come up with what became the father son problem. It looked to me like the miraculous conception of Jesus was very much in the service of anthropolatry. In other words, if you look at the resurrection, the ascension, etc., these were all God's ways to reveal man to himself. As you've said. To reveal man to man. But the miraculous conception or virgin birth did not seem to me to reveal anything about man in particular. And the fact that it actually led to the father son problem, in the sense that if there hadn't been this...

B: a natural son

A: right.

B: Well, first of all, you can't have a divine son. What do we call that eternal regression?

I: Eternal progression?

B: No. It's eternal regression, because if God can have a son, then he can have a grandpa, and a great grandpa. So who is God? So who is the Uncreated? Who is infinite existence? Who is the beginning of it all? This is a Mormon problem, by the way. They can't tell you. Whoever goes the highest. You don't know who's on top of that ladder!

That anybody could think, as one of the fathers said, who ever heard of God begetting? Look! That means, Arius is the one that said Look! That before the son was conceived he did not exist. So he couldn't be eternal, couldn't be divine. That was Arius' argument.

So, when you talk about Jesus, well it's obvious he's the natural, physical son. And not the divine son. So I don't see how that would lead to anthropolatry. So I don't see how God providing a leg and an arm would make him divine.

A: No, that's not what I meant. If you think of it from the point of view of the simple folk, and how they looked at Jesus and all these miracles and how he died and how he was born of a virgin...

B: Does that smack to anybody, today we have these invitro fertilization, they don't even know who the father is these days. But

does that make somebody divine? Creating a physical body. How could it?

A: I don't think I'm expressing it well.

D: I think what A. is saying is that people take the miraculous birth of Jesus as an indication of his divinity.

B: Well, It's certainly an indication of a miracle, right? Well, we've all experienced miracles! (oh, really?) That doesn't make you divine. Look at Jesus and all the miracles to people, that didn't make any of them divine. I don't see how you go from God providing the male aspect of conception to thinking he's God. He's gotta be God.

F: They were polytheists and worshiped idols and now the idol became flesh.

A: Born of a virgin usually had to do with people being a god or demigod.

H: Biblical scholars will say it is very common.

A: The idea of virgin birth?

H: Yea.

D: I can imagine then people worshiping Jesus as small-g-god, in a polytheistic world.

A: To me that could be easily what the simple folk were trying to do with him, and they had to pull him out of that and say he is greater than that.

The other thing was to me, if the things that happened in Jesus' life, the incarnation was to reveal man to man, our way, our destiny,

B: Are you calling that annunciation the incarnation?

A: I'm asking what did that annunciation reveal to man about man.

B: Well, the whole purpose of it was to reveal Christ. What other purpose was there for this man in this life. Can you think of another purpose? He didn't think he was supposed to save anybody. He lived a good life and that's where you're going to get the social doctrine. He was the model of...

F: a just person

D: When I hear what you're saying, and it's linked to what you've said before B., that it was for him

B: to let him know that he was one with God

D: exactly

B: and that's the exact message that God wanted to get across to us! And that not only was he one with God, *so can you be, and so we are all going to be. That's the message.*

C: I actually asked a professor of Jewish studies at Cal State Fullerton this question, if this would have been impressive to Jews at the time, the idea of a virgin birth.

B: No! It wouldn't have.

C: Well, he's well aware of the problem that word "maiden-virgin", but he said as a Jewish scholar...

B: The messiah was supposed to have had a normal mother and father.

C: There would have been Jews who would have read into that a virgin birth and seen it as a sign of the messiah. It would not have been persuasive to all, but perhaps to some. It might have inspired some people to follow him. It didn't make him a God-man because the Jews would never have had that thought, but it might have been a messianic sign. Now Jesus himself probably never thought that but he did get a group of followers...

B: I really wonder if the apostles knew anything about his virgin birth, apart from Luke.

C: I think it's both in Matthew and Luke.

A: That's right.

B: both

A: But it's interesting because in Matthew they show the messianic progression where Joseph is actually the father. He does tell the story of

Joseph and the angel but he does show the lineage coming down through Joseph...

H: About this I have a question. And it's about the end of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. And his somehow knowing what's going to happen.

B: yea

H: The last supper. Who was speaking when he said, "Take this. This is my body. This is my blood."?

B: He was speaking.

H: Jesus

B: yes

H: Take my body. Is this o.k. for everybody?

B: For example, remember Zeno? The stoic philosopher. This is the Logos. And Jesus said, this is the Logos. I can get it. However, there's a little more to it.

F: For me, isn't it Christ who instituted the Eucharist, or Jesus?

H: That was really my question. Who is speaking?

E: It's more of a universal.

D: It's always Jesus speaking. Does anybody think that God is speaking? Does anybody think anybody but Jesus is speaking?

H: That's not my...

D: We don't know what he said...

H: My issue has to do with the notion of Christ. This is someone who knew...

D: Then you get into the communication of properties. If you start to say the things Jesus said can be attributed to God saying them...

H: No, I'm not saying that.

B: There's a whole chapter in here called the Communication of Properties.

E: Sometimes I think I hear the more universal Christ speaking through Jesus. And sometimes you hear Jesus. That's how I get it.

F: Paul said that too.

G: It's very clear to me.

F: Paul said this is me speaking. And then there would be this universal speaking.

B: One of the biggest things here was Hillary with his three states of Christ. Before the incarnation, now on this earth, and then afterwards. We mix them all up and that's a mistake and don't do it. He keeps talking about that.

G: But when you're reading scripture sometimes it seems very clear to me that it is Jesus, this guy, talking and sometimes it feels like the universal Christ speaking through him.

B: That's it.

G: And it's not confusing unless you think it is all Jesus. Then it gets very confusing.

D: No, why is it confusing? It was obviously all Jesus, but Jesus obviously knew the reality of Christ.

G: Well, that would still be...

B: Well, I don't know. That's interesting.

D: To me, I cannot imagine Christ speaking. Because this is making Christ into a being, into some individual something that's speaking, a subject...

H: You misunderstood. It's not saying that the person sitting there at this meal is God. It's rather that there's something about the end of the life of this person Jesus of Nazareth where there is this knowing, this expectation of the resurrection, about what was going to happen to him with the crucifixion and resurrection.

D: But that's the knowing that he participates in.

H: What then is the last supper?

B: You see this is a seder meal.

H: Yea.

B: We need to go over there and get one of their leaflets. Because this was the blessing of that manna come down from Heaven. That was his reference. They understood him perfectly.

G: But then he instituted the Eucharist

H: Nobody would say that at a Seder!

B: That's a later understanding

G: yes

H: It's not Jewish, to say this is my body.

G: Take this, drink...

B: He took the bread and the wine. In the Seder they are not going to say this is **my** body.

H: That's right!

B: But they are going to say this is the bread came down from Heaven. Maybe that's exactly what Jesus said. But the bible...

H: The question is what's the meaning. My question is a simple one. I don't wanna say this is God. I don't want to say anything like that. Something different is happening here. It's different from his middle and early life. It's different from a Jewish Seder.

B: Well, I don't know...

H: The question is, "How do we understand it?"

E: It's new. It's the start of something new.

B: It's not. Listen this was a Seder meal! They got together for this reason.

H: Nobody would speak those words at a Seder!

F: Yes.

B: What did the bread of life mean to them?

H: This is MY body.

B: Now look if I pick this piece of bread up and say this is my body, what are you guys going to think of that? Do you think that they thought for one minute that this was his body?

D: no

B: Of course not. This was heavenly bread. It's not his body.

H: Take and eat in remembrance of me. No Seder ever says that!

D: I think there is a different question.

B: And all this shouting! And it's 6 o'clock...

H: We just finished talking about transformation and this man is on the verge of losing the self in that crucifixion and there is something that is different from the middle of his life. Then he also said take this cup from me...

B: Listen you guys because we can't read during the meals X asked me if they could serve it in there buffet style. But now wait a minute, by the time everyone is done being served, there is no use saying grace. So let's say grace now but I'll be the last one because my teeth are falling out.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: Say grace for us...

A: In the name of the...for the gathering we thank you... all of us. amen. (many animated conversations happening at the same time) Come on in and eat everybody. It's ready.

Friday evening: (We finally hear B.'s reply to the question of being faithful to the current tradition. Then they talk about God's own human nature, God is a gas, Hindu junk, kenosis, a fierce Jesus, and crucifixion.)

B: Can you imagine the fathers of the Church sitting around wondering, well, how about this? And what about that? Some of them got stabbed to death!

F: There were political considerations behind it.

B: Oh, they had everything.

A: You'd have to have a metal detector!

F: About the understanding that we are the inheritors of a living tradition, I want to introduce these ideas in a way that doesn't do violence to the tradition, doesn't separate it...

B: Well, you may not be able to.

F: Well, I'm trying, one of the things...

B: Well, *knock yourself out!*

F: In the invocation I used to say in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Now it's in the name of the father Transcendent, the son Omnipresent, and spirit Imminent so that we are joining old terms with...

B: Did you say the son?

F: Omnipresent

B: The son?

F: Well, that's what the familiar terms are.

B: Well, I would throw out the son.

F: Nobody would know what we were talking about!

B: We've all got to learn the term that John used in the gospel. Logos

F: The word.

B: And that's what all the fathers said. They used the term Logos.

E: Where did the shift come in? Who made that shift?

B: The best I could research it was when it really started was way back there with the Stoics. See that was an eastern philosophy, eastern

religion, but when it came to the west, these people in the west, they didn't have any background in the Logos. They didn't know what that meant. They weren't sure of that. So they kind of figured it out it kind of comes from logic and intelligence, so it means something like it's a word. That's how it happened because they never knew the Logos, period. They didn't have Zeno, they didn't know Heraclitus. Therefore, they started to use the term word. I was thinking the other day the term Christ is just a title. And you might say it's nothing but a word that signifies something else. It doesn't signify anything God said or did, it signifies something else. If you have to use the term word, which I'm against, well the Logos is that which is one with matter, are you with me? This is Greek philosophy. This was the Stoics. This is why they used the term incarnation. One with matter. It's like saying our body is not divorced from the Divine Logos. And this was their understanding of the incarnation. If you want to understand the incarnation, it includes matter. Matter is also saved. Matter is important. This was stoicism and then it came over into Christianity. Which is why incarnate really matches the Logos, are you with me? Not the Holy Spirit. In other words, Christ is not one with the Transcendent or the Holy Spirit, but is one with the Logos, one with the flesh.

I'm talking about a new Christology which would also include the soul which is one with the Holy Spirit and they are both in the Transcendent, the whole of creation is in the Transcendent. That's the best I can research the term.

H: Did you just said the whole of creation is in the Transcendent?

B: Yea.

H: Could you say some more about that?

B: Well, it's the ground of all being, that's our ground! That's the Transcendent and the Holy Spirit is one with that, and also with the matter is the logos. You've got the soul, the Logos, and the source or ground of our being.

A: Is that how matter is saved B?

B: See, to me, the word salvation means nothing.

E: You just said matter is saved.

B: That was the Stoics, not me. You've got to get rid of this, there is no salvation.

H: You just said that even matter is saved.

B: Well, even matter is made divinized. I don't like the word saved. It sounds like, saved from what?! Saved from eternal dirt?

A: B. did you once say that the Logos was all that was manifest of the Unmanifest? Is that one way you talked about it?

B: Well, it's the form of the formless. That's how I saw it. How all form came from divine form, the Logos is divine form and all form came from the Logos and I saw how they are absolutely one.

A: That was really helpful to me.

B: Well I regard the Transcendent as formless but somehow that Logos it has a form inherent. It's the form of God, and it doesn't mean shape.

A: No, right. In fact, there are these great findings in physics where they are going down smaller and smaller and smaller, you know, past the atoms down smaller and they are finding this mysterious thing that they can't define, it doesn't move by laws, it seems to...I mean I know we couldn't see the Logos, I understand that, but I...

B: The big question in science today, in physics today they are wondering how can light be conducted through empty space, a void, are you with me? And, um, they have this theory out there is this thing out there called ether and that transmits light, energy, and so forth, from one thing to another. The reason why ether is the medium is I hold there is no such thing as space or emptiness there is no such thing as a void. It doesn't exist. And yet, the scientists say that there is, that you've got empty space out there.

(While she enjoyed a lively interest in astronomy from childhood, I don't think B. ever studied physics, much less the relationship between the two fields. Probably what she is talking about is not the debunked hypothesis of ether, but rather what physicists call "dark matter" or what Bohm calls "the implicate order".)

What is space? It's what's between objects, that's what it is. So, there is that theory out there about ether, it's something you can't detect. How can that light get to the earth? How can you get it if there is just a void? There has to be something there to conduct it.

Did you have a particular care you wanted to bring up?

C: I had a question. We kind of already hit on it. And that is God's universal human nature.

B: yea

C: I don't understand that. I understand what human nature is.

B: Well, there's only one. Because it's one it has to be something universal. It's not particular. In a way I shouldn't say that because look, whenever you say something is one, we think of a numerical one. Are you with me? A quantitative being. Well, I'm not so sure we can do that with human nature. Because we don't know it that well. *It can be infinite...* the way that, um, who was my favorite... Duns Scotus put it. He said forget the term universal because that's in your head. There is no such thing as a universal. What a human nature is, a universal, is what we all have in common.

By definition a universal cannot be quantitated. That's why he stressed what we have in common. Universal is abstract whereas common brings it down to matter, to the reality of the thing. That's what he wanted was the reality of the thing.

H: Well you mentioned several times...

B: Well I do use the term.

A: Because then you say God created a human nature for itself.

B: Do I say that?! Where is it? I'd like to know. (This discussion could also be called a final editorial meeting for her last book.)

A: It's all throughout the book. Page 112 is one of the first places.

B: I'll knock it out.

H: But you've said it many times.

E: Yea

A: Very first line of p. 112. You say “a human nature” that’s the language that we found confusing.

B: I’ll knock it out.

H: God’s own. We had so much trouble with that.

B: Well, that’s o.k.

H: I’ll tell you how we got confused. You’re using it differently. That’s why “own” is misleading.

B: God’s own human nature, I don’t see what’s the problem with that. Christ is not my human nature. It is not Jesus’ own human nature. Christ is God’s own human nature.

H: Why say “own”? What happens if you get rid of the word own? Why not just say God’s human nature? (This is where B.’s unique education and particular way of speaking become problematic. The apostrophe “s” after “God” renders “own” redundant and unnecessary.)

B: A theologian sitting here would say that is exactly why we say God is a person because he owns that human nature. Well I don’t mind you calling God’s human nature a person, but calling God a person? Because God owns a human nature? Does God own its own nature? This stuff is picayune. This book could have been ten times longer if I took all these little things and...

H: This is a key thing B. that is introduced at the beginning of the book and appears throughout. Does anyone else have a problem with this? I don’t want to be the only one relegated...

G: It sounds like there is...

B: It’s not Jesus human, it’s not your human nature.

G: It sounds like there...

H: Say that again B.

B: Christ is not my human nature, not Jesus’ human nature. Christ is God’s own human nature.

G: Christ is God's own human nature.

H: So then if this transformation happens to this individual or any individual...

B: Who cares?

H: Into Christ...

B: yea

H: Is that the same as saying can we then say that they have been transformed into God's own human nature?

B: yes

H: So what makes my human nature...

B: You can't talk about your own human nature.

H: Yes, we are transformed into God's human nature. Does that mean that my human nature...

B: no.

H: Now we are back to the fact that human nature changes.

B: No!!

H: We are to be transformed into God's human nature.

B: No!

H: Hang on! Let me finish! Does that mean that my human nature is no longer mine?

B: She can't even ask the question. If I say there is no self, then she would ask well who is talking. She can't even ask the question! (B. is saying as long as there is a "you" or "my" there, there is not Christ. Self and Christ are mutually exclusive.)

H: Does that mean that what was my human nature because of the self becomes God's human nature because of the divesting of all of that? Is that correct?

B: No.

H: o.k. Help us. This is important.

G: Christ is the oneness of man and God. So, where's the man part if it's all God's?

B: First of all, H. you never had your own human nature.

D: yea

B: You never brought it into existence. You never asked for it. It was never yours ever!

A: Who's was it from the beginning?

F: God's.

G: Slow down right here. So, it's always been God's but it's not yet God's own human nature which is Christ.

B: There you go.

G: It's not yet. But I think it's mine to the extent that I have a self, I think that it's my human nature.

H: So, what **seems to be** my human nature is a delusion. And as the transformation happens...

B: Wrong. That's the way God made you to be. (B. is still objecting to the realization idea. She later accuses H. of "always trying to get me into that Buddhist-Hindu junk!" Here she is objecting to the words "seems" and "delusion")

B: You've got to be a great human person. *To be a human you have to give it all you've got!*

H: But the delusion is the human nature is mine.

D: It's not a delusion.

B: Didn't your mommy and daddy tell you God created you? Then how is it yours? You didn't create yourself.

H: I don't understand why you say your human nature is not God's own.

B: It's not.

D: H., can I try to clarify this thing? I think, number one, on earth human nature exists as individual. You get that, right? That individual human nature is still common. God creates it one on one with each one of us. It's still common human nature. Its journey is to be transformed into that eternal oneness with the Divine.

B: that's **not individual**

H: absolutely

G: God's own human nature.

H: I just don't understand why B. says your human nature is not God's own.

D: Because this individual human nature is not Christ.

H: Certainly. Here's my question, just bear with my sentences please. I don't know whether to say appears or this thing is transformed by a divesting of the self to become Christ, namely God's own.

B: There you go.

H: That's all I was saying.

B: Well, it's not already. You were saying that already your human nature is God's human nature.

H: I did not say that and there are witnesses here.

E: I saw it, it was dark at night...

B: You said how is it that my human nature is not God's human nature. (The confusion centers around B.'s peculiar use of the terms God's human nature and God's own human nature. For the grammarian, the second is redundant and they mean the same thing. For B., the first refers to man's existential union with God in the sense that everything in the universe belongs to its source. The second, God's own, refers to not having a self, refers to Christ which is the end and not our beginning.)

H: I didn't say that.

B: Did you hear her say that?

H: I asked you if it was appropriate to say that my human nature here on earth...

D: Can I just clarify...

B: You're not asking the right question.

H: Let me finish.

B: because it was never yours.

H: Then let me add this word, what appears to be...

B: Now you're getting into Buddhism.

H: ...because of the self...

D: There are two things that are backwards here. One is that individual common human nature, self is what makes you experience it as my human nature.

H: Exactly. That's what I said.

D: Number two is the self falls away **because** the nature is transformed. Not the other way around.

H: Got it.

D: The falling away of self is the after effect of a transformation that is complete. It's not that the self falls away therefore the transformation happens.

H: Well, that's a little thing and that wasn't part of my question.

D: But it's an important thing because otherwise it gives rise to the idea that my illusion of being a separate self is what is the problem. It's an ontological transformation.

H: I get that, and I didn't say the illusion of being a separate self. I said the illusion of my owning my own human nature.

D: It's not an illusion, it's an actual experience. The self is a reality, it is not an illusion. That is how you experience human nature.

H: Then is it correct to say that my human nature is transformed into God's own?

D: No, because that human nature is individual human nature which you experience as yours.

H: So that's when I say appeared, what appeared to be...

D: So, yes, the common human nature is transformed into Christ. Yes, that's true.

H: And so, another way to say that is it's transformed into God's own human nature.

B: yea.

H: O.k. that's all I was asking.

D: I think what happens is people read the term God's own human nature and interpret it as a being having a human nature because our experience says human nature always belongs to some person. And so, the problem with that phrase "God's own human nature" is it starts to project God as a person. (The phrase also seems to imply that God is human. She means a human nature that belongs completely to God because of the divestment of self which gives rise to the feeling of ownership of one's human nature.)

B: A theologian would say that's exactly why we use the word person because God owns that. (A good point since only people own things. But is God a person?)

H: D., would it make sense to say that it is transformed?

B: What's the difference between saying God's human nature and God's own human nature?

L: It particularizes it.

B: It is particularized. It's the only one.

D: I prefer the term God's own human nature for the reason. To me this is the huge mystery. How can you talk about God's human nature? That's the mystery of Christ. It's only because of Christ you can talk about God's human nature. Because otherwise God has divine nature.

B: That's what we have to be careful about. *God's human nature is Christ. That's the definition of Christ.* We don't want to give the impression that Christ is just God's human nature. (Hang on.)

D: correct

B: That's wrong. Because Christ is really the oneness of the divine and the human natures, not just human nature. (The oneness makes the nature God's own.)

D: There is a problem here that needs to be clarified. So that we are not left with the impression that God has two natures. A human nature, and a divine nature.

B: Oh, yes. God doesn't have two natures.

D: One of the confusions with the phrase God's own human nature is we think there is divine nature and now God has a human nature.

B: God's own human nature. It's not Jesus' human nature.

D: Correct

B: It's not your human nature.

G: yes

B: If you just say God's human nature, people will say that was Jesus. That's our human nature.

F: But it could also pertain to God as well. You could say God has divine nature and now a human nature.

H: It needs to be clarified.

B: I wouldn't put this to anybody outside of the faith. (Let's face it. It is a little confusing.)

H: Well, I think you are probably right in that. Let me just ask one more question...Could one say transformed into what always was God's human nature... to avoid what we came across earlier about the human nature actually changing.

D: No, because we're talking about an eternal oneness.

B: Everything in the universe belongs to God.

H: Yea.

B: Whether it's animal nature or whatever. It all belongs to God. But that's still not Christ. That's our end. It's the end God wants for us. It's not our beginning. The idea that you are somehow Christ at the beginning makes no sense at all.

H: I get that. That's not what I'm asking.

E: I think I have gnarly question that might be related to this, but it might not be. R., you said something really important. The question I came in with has to do with how does the Eucharist really transform us? So...

B: Oh! Well, now wait a minute! You're asking me how does God do miracles?!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

E: When I think of the word transformation...

B: You know, it's really the wrong word.

D: Yes. Divinization

B: And I'll tell you why. This is from my own finding. Um, you know we tend to think that you're, well let's take the butterfly and the caterpillar. You think that someday as you go through this dark night (...of the spirit, not the senses, according to St. John of the Cross, the national poet of Spain. It has nothing to do with depression.) and you come out this gorgeous thing. That whole caterpillar in there dies. It's gone.

E: It turns to slush.

B: My finding was I never felt anything in me being transformed **ever**. But I felt things suddenly falling away, or taken away and I never felt it again. We tend to think transformation is like you take this paper and make something new out of it. That's not the way it works. This paper is going to get shredded.

H: That's the problem with the metaphor of h2o.

B: What do you mean?

H: Going from ice to water to steam. That's transformation.

B: Well, honey, that's just an analogy, forget that.

H: It's very useful. I'm just saying you have now added a distinction that shows why it's just an analogy.

B: I know for example what I call that ascension experience is the whole body, now we're talking about experience. You know that whole body is surrounded by air. You close your eyes and you couldn't see it, you can't feel it, nothing. Course you open your eyes and you can see it. How do you explain that? I thought I was breathing in some gas. That's o.k. *you could say God is a gas*. It's not so much transformative because the body is still there, the sensory body. But on a very spiritual ultimate level, there is nothing there. It just dissolves into air. It's very beautiful, blissful wonderful air. It reminds me of just going into the ether or whatever it is.

But almost always it was a falling away, you don't feel like you are becoming anything. You don't feel like you are better even! Ha, ha, ha...

E: I'm just looking at that like the wrong...

B: I think a better word is divinized. That was the fathers' word. It's not mine. It was around before them.

A: What would your word be B.?

B: Spiritualized. Just like Paul said of the resurrection, it was a spiritual body... Even so, the term transformation you have to take it with a grain of salt. But ultimately it is being transformed, but we are not privy to that. We don't know how all that works.

E: It's not like...

B: You're talking about something that does not have to be eternal becoming eternal. Nothing has to be eternal, unless God wants it to be. So, you've got to change that. (...word transformation to spiritualization?) I tend to think this. I remember telling father Keating, the only way we can get back to God, so that God can be all and all, is

for God to consume us. I like the idea of being consumed. Of course, we tend to think about fire. But you know when the fuel goes out the fire goes out, so God is not the fire either. But any way to consume us. Like the bread we eat is transformed into our body. The Eucharist is the bread of life that transforms us into the eternal body, well Christ. That's transformation, the bread is digested, broken down, transformed. It goes into all the molecules.

E: Could you say then that we are no thing?

B: Yea, because you are erasing all the ... a thing is a particular something, but Christ is not a particular somebody. (We get to hear her unedited thinking because there was no self to edit.)

C: You could use the word assimilated...

B: Assimilated to the body? I don't know how all of that works...that would be the spiritual transformation. Well, what else? E., was that yours?

E: That was in the ballpark.

B: Who wants to bring up something else?

C: I wanted to share a comment, it's kind of an insight. We were talking about how Greek philosophy and Jewish monotheism came together at the right moment to produce the milieu conducive for a real understanding of Christ, and some people wanted to downgrade the influence of Greek philosophy and see it almost...

B: Yea, we all know that.

C: This is an idea that may be fruitful to think about. Today with this movement of people going East, people seeking truth in Buddhism and Hinduism, it's kind of analogous to the reform of Judaism with the influx of Greek philosophy. Because, in this movement to the East, there are certain similarities. For example, Zen has this Stoic sense that we are kind of above our emotions, so people are attracted to that, in other words what I'm saying is that many of us who have come from an eastern background have found contemplative Christianity much to our liking and perhaps there is a little reform movement. And just as something new was coming out of Judaism, something new is coming

out of conventional party line Christianity by the influx of people who have gone east. (Thank you. That is an idea fruitful to think about. People from both the East and West could meet and discuss Bernadette Roberts and have plenty of common ground, if they understand her well enough.)

B: I have often thought of that.

C: So, when the Logos was brought in by the Greeks...

B: I have often thought of that. (Is there anyone else in the room?!)

C: Yea, Brahman...

B: In other words, in the long run, the people who have gone east and come back, that's to our benefit.

F: I never would have understood a word you were saying if I hadn't gone east.

B: Oh. Really? You're kidding me. I never went east at all! Not even that much.

F: the way you expressed it though

B: really

F: I understood oneness. Once I understood oneness and Christianity as you expressed it, I got it.

G: It also gets you out of the party line.

B: Yea that's good. People have to have the guts to leave it. And when they come back, they have a different understanding of it. Yea. That's a good thing. I don't like, I feel bad because people have to go east. For example, when I first heard about Buddhism when I was thirty and I took a class in eastern philosophy, just for the **credit**. It came to Buddhism, I didn't know a thing about it, he said this is one religion where there is no God. I was never able to understand it. I tell you the truth. To have a religion without God! Impossible!

C: It does get rid of the anthropomorphic view.

B: See, I never had that. I don't care what you call it. But that there is no ultimate source, they automatically reject that?!

C: Did anything resonate in the course with you?

B: No. I don't think he liked us. (Wonder why?) We were a long time before we got to Hinduism. He seemed very favorable. He said he had an Indian friend in England. He seemed to kind of like Hinduism because of his friend in Oxford. Well, I never picked up anything.

F: Recently in the evolution of Buddhism the Dali Lama said, "the creator himself". I thought, oh, my God. We are getting somewhere.

B: Well, that's Tibetan. The Tibetans have always been more Christian.

F: They didn't personalize self of the Creator.

d: Still I think the way in which you talk about some ultimate ground of existence and reality is varied. The idea that Buddhism does not recognize any ultimate reality of any kind is foreign to me.

B: Listen, even reading about Buddhism, all is impermanent, it's just a change of form...

D: Except that the Buddha himself said that without the unconditioned there would be no hope, or something like that.

B: There's no way out of suffering. That's another big thing. The issue of suffering. In fact, how many of you have been East?

G: Do you mean travel East or practice?

B: Well you wouldn't practice if you didn't believe in it.

F: I've spoken to plenty of teachers.

B: I've read and spoken to monks. I do see Hinduism is pretty close to Christianity. I do see there this Christ for them. I can see how...They should latch on to that pretty easy. But they've got a lot of other beliefs that stand in the way. Like the avatars, reincarnation, all that stuff.

D: It would be approached very differently the dialogue today, but I've got to believe, the real Christ as the oneness, not a unity, of the uncreated divine and the human and the whole non duality thing has to

be redone, I think there is actually an interesting intersection. At the end of the day the non-dualists are still trying to find some way to understand how an infinite uncreated dimension of reality and our own seem to intersect.

H: I think that is probably true of all the traditions.

B: I was asked to go to this conference, if I gave a talk there to a few people, I would say Christ, the whole mystery of non-dualism, Christ is the answer to that.

F: yes.

B: Because Christ is the oneness of the Divine and the Human. It's not putting two and two together. God created its own in its own and this is going to be our place too. I would like to present that.

E: That would be great if you presented that there.
(ScienceAndNonDuality conference.) That would be amazing.

D: There are helpful analogies. You know, if you think of our own existence.

B: We are sensory...

D: If you think of us as genetically...

B: Genes are not spiritual.

D: Genes are not spiritual. You've got mother and father genes that don't comingle. They remain separate.

B: But there is a dominant one.

D: Correct. But there is a model here of how something can be, I don't want to use the word combination...

B: You could say all of us have the genes of two in one. Well, that's a terrible analogy.

D: It's a terrible analogy. To me, what is interesting about the reality of Christ is there is not this mixture, nothing becomes God here. You've talked about how it's a whole different dimension. It seems to be the most interesting thing.

B: I think so too. That's Chalcedon. Not a mixture, not separated. They went on. Their wording there was absolutely spectacular. At Chalcedon, they got it right! In defining Christ, it's really great. Everything created is in God and therefore part of God.

They (at SAND) showed a circle and they had all these little dots in there and that's us. God has no outside. They said then that means creation is a part of God and then they put in there like a drop in the ocean. Well in the ocean it just dissolves. I don't know. I don't get it. They said we are just calling it nonduality. It's some big conference. They have it all around the world.

G: It's a very wide definition of non-duality

B: Anyway, I wanna tell you, last year, who was there was Aalmas!

E: I know.

B: You teach his stuff.

E: I'm a teacher of his. I don't teach his stuff. I haven't taught his stuff in a while.

B: How could you be his teacher?

E: He's a very generous...

H: All **his** students have individual teachers. But his teachers don't have to listen to him anymore.

B: How can you teach the spiritual life anyway?

E: I don't teach it. I sit with people, and help them to discover what their...

B: You're a therapist.

E: I will say this B. that after years of working with people, what happens to people who are Christians, they have to deal with what is there in relation to Christ. Then, they come to me, and then they leave!

G: Ha, ha, ha...

H: This is the conduit out.

E: When they start saying, "I'm discovering the Eucharist." he says, "Go talk to E." They have all left at this point.

B: By the way, did you ever read that thing I wrote against him?

E: I did. Every word. I thought it was brilliant.

H: I thought that was great. Every line.

B: I hate it.

E: Honestly, B., I don't think he would write that now.

B: I don't think I could write it.

E: No, him. He wouldn't write that now.

B: They were so nasty. Listen, who was sitting here once was this psychiatrist. He taught at Strasburg what's that up in the Alps? He was a top psychiatrist at the university. What's the next biggest after Vienna? He was a darling man. We wrote back and forth for a couple of years. Suddenly he sent me this page or two out of Aalmas' book. So, I went out and got his book from the library. I'm not going to buy the thing. I thought to myself, when I first read it, it was so off the wall that I wrote to them to ask them to take me out of there. He never asked for permission. And it was way beyond what you are supposed to be able to quote.

E: No. You're wrong there. It actually isn't beyond the limit.

H: What struck me about it was we think...

B: What I got back, I was just asking him nicely, if he had sent it to me ahead of time I would have objected to certain things. I got a letter back from his attorney saying forget you. We did nothing wrong. So, all I can do is sit down and try and get back at him. (Forcing the Fit, was her third book. Divine Justice or revenge? You tell me.)

G: Did he ever read it?

E: I don't know.

B: Probably not. I don't care! Listen, he's not the only one. You'd be surprised. I called SUNY and said somebody is downloading your books

here, she said we've had to hire somebody special just to get after people who are doing this. See, SUNY is huge. She said it's a huge problem. She told me where to look on the internet and look on something of ten something and there were hundreds of people downloading all kinds of stuff from all kinds of books.

E: I have to say that I know that the stuff you were quoted on was under fair use because...

B: Not really.

E: I have worked in publishing for years, so I know this law very well. I think he was arrogant, he...

H: Misinterpretation is not against the law.

B: There you go. Well, we would have to go to court to prove who is right. Whether he did it or not. Cause I say he did.

E: He misinterpreted you, certainly.

B: We don't care about that. But the point is, he's got attorneys! I've got no money. That's a fact. He's got all these big wig attorneys working for him. So, you're the underdog. This downloading stuff is huge. Now there is one place where you are allowed to download 500 words. He took all this stuff out of context.

H: Who's the other guy you went after?

E: Aaraz. Aaraj?

H: No. The Mind of Christ guy.

F: Jim Marrion

J: Booo...

H: Don't go there. I get it.

F: Christ is not Jesus' last name.

B: Well, that's true.

F: But then he got into quoting you.

B: I got back at him hard. And he was really mad at me. Yea. You know what? It's a strange thing, just a week ago, after they invited me to this conference, I looked up the conference and saw Aalmas talking, and he looked like a nice guy.

G: He is.

B: Stupid. In the box. And you know I'm sure Marion is a nice guy too. Marion is too. Who else?

A: Who can we go over now?

All: Ha, ha, ha...

A: B., you really got back at all of them because you sold **a lot** of those books. Those books were so popular.

I: Which one?

A: Forcing the Fit. She's always saying I want you to take that out. I don't want to sell it anymore.

H: Did you hear what D. just said? Sounds like the fathers?

B: They were fierce.

C: Can I raise another issue? So, we know that in the incarnation it is God creating a human nature for itself. And so the incarnation was not simply in the hypostasis of the Logos...

B: Yes, it was.

C: Originally? At the...

B: Yes!

C: Not in the essence of the whole trinity?

B: There you go.

C: That's what I mean by that.

B: Now that's interesting. It wasn't the transcendent that created. It wasn't the Holy Spirit. It has to be something that is connected with matter. So that had to be the first ingredient you might say. The fathers

were more astute than they realized. Because it had to be connected to flesh and matter and that's one with the Logos so that's why it was created in that Logos.

C: Yes.

B: But as I said, later on, we need a new Christology.

C: Yes.

B: Because we have that Holy Spirit was also one with Christ. So was the Father. The whole thing is in the Transcendent. Christ is so one with that trinity, and not just the Logos.

C: Yes.

B: But it's so important, the Logos, because of matter, because otherwise it wouldn't be visible.

C: There would be no incarnation. Carnate meaning something bodily in some sense.

B: Yes.

C: Then it comes down through kenosis, but maintains its unity at this point, certainly with the H.S., which means it's born into kenosis. Especially...

B: Well, now we're getting into more like theory.

C: What I'm just saying is...

B: Well, that's one way to look at it. That's fine.

C: And then through the transformation of the Logos, through the second kenosis, sorry, the transformation of the Holy Spirit of that person it then goes beyond the person, and then is the person-less union of bare human nature with God.

B: Then you have that hypostatic union that is beyond any union we know, of on this earth.

D: You are talking about that as a second kenosis rather than ascension for what reason?

B: The second kenosis is getting rid of all the self.

D: right.

C: Yea. I guess you could look at it that way.

B: The first kenosis would be having to take on...

C: yea

D: yea

B: This, you know, this life. You're living in this blissful condition in God, and suddenly you're in this dark night landing there.... Which is why being one with him, and that Holy Spirit...

C: And in this first movement of the person-less glorious Christ

B: Yea, taking on a person.

C: Even though that person is united to the Holy Spirit, that its true center. Jesus was not born with an ego center as his first center. But the Holy Spirit as his true center because he is born uniquely. That is still not the hypostatic union.

B: No!

C: The hypostatic union only happens when the Holy Spirit transforms it, beyond self, into resurrection and ascension.

B: Well it goes back to its original. In the case where we are talking about Christ on this earth and you can talk about, I have no problem with talking about Jesus as the model of Christ on this earth. I don't have any problem with that. You can say that's Christ's human nature in this world. To me that's good news because he made so many mistakes. He was so utterly human. He made so many mistakes.

C: Quoting your book, you say Jesus is the person of the human nature of...

B: There ya go. We mentioned that at the last retreat. Yea. Where did I say that? I put it down here.

D: I think it's in the problem of Christ.

B: Yea.

A: Page 213. (They are looking at the last edition of the manuscript and not at the published book. In the paper book it is on p. 269. In the e-book it is position 12065.) https://www.amazon.com/Real-Christ-Bernadette-Roberts-ebook/dp/B07DVQ4YRH/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8

D: Yea, it's in the problem of Christ. (It's on the last page of the last chapter before "SUMMARY SO FAR". The first half of the book explains why communicating the Real Christ was such a problem. The second half of the book, after "SUMMARY SO FAR", presents the mystery of Christ and the Trinity in a completely new light.)

B: Well, it's not in my book. (She is looking at a different edition.) All right. One way to understand Christ...

D: Yes.

B: ...is that Jesus was the human person of God's own human nature. I like that.

C: It doesn't say person of God, but person of God's human nature.

B: On this earth...

D: On this earth...

C: One more question, does anyone else who comes to this state, could we say, in some sense, that is a person of God's human nature? Or, do we reserve that word? You kind of get what I mean...

B: Yea. Well I never really thought of it. Yea, well, I tell you what, and I put it in there in terms of my own experiences. Because, when I would say, "What is that in me that is one with God?" and I got we're talking about in the unitive state and I asked this many times, what is there about me or human nature even that is one with God? See, when you look inside God is this nebulous thing in there and there is no rim around it or circle or anything, and always the answer was **Christ**. Christ is your oneness with God. That in you that is one with God, that is Christ. I got that message so many times. The reason it was a mystery, is because who knows what that is?! Somebody says now your oneness with God, that's Christ. Well, you know, what do we think of, Jesus? How are we going to understand that? But, what you are saying, you know in that

unitive state, that you could see that, that would be God's own human nature, or Christ. You would say, yes! But you know, there are so many things in here and about Christ and God. You know, we can't grasp it.

D: yea

B: It's not real to us. We know it, and we have no reason not to believe it, but we can't get our hands on it!

D: Right, right.

B: We can't **fathom** that. It's a huge mystery. Christ is a huge mystery.

D: One thing, when you use the word person, if you always keep in mind that person is particular, then you don't, then this question of can this person also be...no! The answer is no. Because person being a particular, it wouldn't make any sense to ask can you also be that person. No! Nobody can also be that person. You can only be that unique particular person. Full stop. And there's no substitution there.

L: um humm

D: There is no universal person. This is very important.

B: In fact, that's part of the mystery of realizing that your oneness with God is Christ, but that's not you. There's nothing there about you. And so, you kind of just let it go. All you can do is just be yourself as we say and go on with your life and it becomes more clear in the end. But I'm telling you the greatest mystery in the world, the ultimate truth, the mind cannot even begin grasp it. (Which other Christian thinker is talking about God's incomprehensibility from experience?)

D: This is critical because it links to the notion that no person is saved. The person is not anything that continues.

B: No, God does not save any person.

G: We're not using that word saved.

B: Well, how do you want to say it? Goes on?

D: There is no eternal state.

G: assumed

B: So, you can say it is not eternal.

C: This is why we say truly a person is someone who is whole. Whose other half is God because he has been transformed.

D: Not the person. No.

B: Now I don't know about that. The unitive state is a very holistic state in which you feel your humanity is complete. That's as much as you're going to be on this earth. There isn't any better you can get. There is no more growth. You are really a whole person. Now, prior to coming to the unitive state you've got something missing and you're looking and you're divided in yourself, but brother now you're just like this and I would say it's the whole person because it's a sense of wholeness and satisfaction.

G: I liked how you said nobody could be human. Nobody would dare to be human before the unitive state.

B: Well that's kind of cute, and it's true. We have so many fears. What if I do this and it doesn't work out? In the unitive state, you are fearless. Anything that comes in, it's going to dissolve in almighty God. There is nothing there but joy. So, I am sympathetic to that.

F: What is it?

B: What's the name of your book?

C: (I have omitted the title of this book so the author won't be identified. It is a good read. If the author would like the title of her or his book to appear in the future, he or she need only say so.)

B: I never read the book.

C: Right.

B: But did you make a big thing out of...this wholeness of the unitive state of being a whole person?

C: I suggested that Christianity is wholeness on so many levels, and that the unitive state is one of the great holisms.

B: What other levels?

C: I suggested that the Trinity, I call it the transcendent or absolute holism...

B: What other meaning did you give to holism?

C: How should I put this?

B: Everything fits together like a puzzle?

C: The most basic form is the body mind holism. The body affects the mind, and the mind affects the body, and therefore to be artful in prayer you have to quiet the body so the mind can be free. So that's one physical-mental holism.

B: Well, we don't need to know the whole book.

C: The mystical body...

B: oh, that's beautiful

C: The three levels of church on earth, the church in heaven,

B: Oh, you liked that? Let's not go into the church militant!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

C: It's a little bit problematic these days.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: Alright. Somebody else here? Does anyone else have a question?

F: Did you have an issue J.?

B: What are you eating there? Is that your dessert?

J: It's grass fed whey.

B: Oh, horrors!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

H: Why are you eating?

J: Because it's ten o'clock ...

H: It's 11:30 in New York.

B: Well get with it here! Are you guys three hours ahead?

J: I'm in Florida now.

B: Did you move there?

J: I have to take care of my 93-year-old mother now. So, yea. I'm in Florida.

B: So, you quit your job and everything?

J: Yea.

B: What's the matter with her?

J: Well, she's got cancer but she's doing o.k.

B: Well go to bed...

J: No! I like this arguing.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: I. you haven't really hardly said anything.

I: Well, o.k.

B: Except for accusing me of teaching Mormonism!

I: I know you don't like these preambles. Well, I think I'm uncomfortable without it. I don't know what it's like for a woman, but for a boy growing up, we look to athletes, but they fall away pretty quickly as you mature.

B: o.k.

I: Jesus of Nazareth becomes to a lot of people the only person you can respect.

B: the ideal

I: The only person you can really look up to.

B: I don't have a problem with that.

I: But I feel like in your book you deliberately are very combative. You will say I never cared for the man, and the reason why I don't know that that really helps the cause...

B: I'm being truthful. I don't give a damn about the cause.

I: Anyway, to me that creates a misunderstanding. The reason they may get dislodged is...I read the book numerous times and obviously it didn't dislodge me. Because I saw it as a personal kind of thing. I saw his courage, you even said to us that you saw a lot of yourself in him.

B: oh, yea.

I: I saw this Jesus confront the politic of religion in this explosion that took place. It did take place all over because religion was all over. It was used to separate a true, sincere person from God. As opposed to uniting that person to God, religion was in the way.

B: He was a very practicing Jew. His bible didn't turn him off.

I: I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about how he confronted the authorities.

B: Only on one issue.

I: Not just the blasphemy. He called people lying sepulchers.

B: Oh! He told those Rabbi's off.

I: This was courageous.

B: It was something he should have done.

I: And the people in Palestine, it gave them courage to think maybe God really is somebody that I can have a relationship with. And maybe these church leaders are not reflecting it prayerfully.

B: O.k. They had all these rules. Jesus was against all the rules and regulations.

I: When you sort of make a categorical statement like I didn't care for the man.

B: That bothered you?

I: Yea.

B: Ha!

I: Also, last time you said something, I don't know if you want to go into it, but when you were talking to us as a group, you said something like in fact you don't even think, in a unique way from the rest of us, you seemed to indicate you thought that Jesus didn't exist anymore.

A: that Jesus what?

D: That he still lives?

B: Well, wait a minute!

D: That he's in heaven?

I: I don't mean...

B: That historical figure no longer exists.

I: Well I know. And that's no different than the way I will not exist. Correct?

B: That's correct.

I: It seemed like a further nonexistence. It sounded like he double didn't exist

All: Ha, ha, ha...

I: You qualified his nonexistence as a type of annihilation that even...

B: Well, that's too far.

I: In the book you didn't say that.

B: Well of course not.

I: I'm just being honest with you.

B: It makes no sense!

I: What doesn't?

B: That he became nonexistent. I don't know where you got that.

I: You said it.

B: I never said that! That man does not exist. That person, that human nature ceased to exist.

I: I can understand that. Anyway, in the book, I just think that...

B: In other words, you think the book so downplays Jesus, that bothered you.

I: I don't know that that would have come from a guy. I don't know that the model of Jesus would mean the same to a woman.

B: I'm kind of convinced, I've heard priests go on and on about this. Forget yourself. Loving Jesus and how Jesus will fulfill you even sexually. What do you think I think of? Well, they are gay!

C: What I hear you saying...

B: I mentioned this to Brother W., and he said so?

I: I think for a guy, you wouldn't know you're not a guy.

B: That's what I said. It sounds to me like they're gay.

I: I'm not gay.

B: I'm not talking about you.

I: From a woman perhaps in the catholic church, perhaps you have female saints, or mother Mary, things that inspire you or you want to emulate.

B: I don't believe in emulating **anybody**.

I: You are inspired by. They went before you and you say that's true.

B: I never found anyone like that in my life.

H: I can speak as a woman. I think Jesus does the same thing for women and girls.

E: Absolutely

I: Does it increase your value and communication in this book to be as harsh on Jesus as you are?

B: See, I don't think that I am. That's your view but it's not my view. As I say, people have to take off their two-thousand-year-old glasses and understand him as a man of his own time. I think I can find more to relate to with him than most people. However, I don't like the personality. Are you with me?

I: What was it about the personality you didn't like?

B: You name one thing and I tell you I don't like it. (sight to the blind?) I thought I was glad I wasn't there. I would have kept my distance.

H: He was fierce!

B: He was fierce. His hometown people tried to kill him!

D: There are things that he says, if you read the historical person literally, there are some statements that are, you know, the crumbs off the table, you know and...

E: the dogs...

D: What am I to you? What I found in the book was rather the reverse. I had no real feeling about Jesus growing up or after I became Catholic either. I'll tell you what, when you make him fully human, and not divine, you can actually appreciate the man greatly more.

I: I saw the early states of apostasy. The real apostasy was saying he was like superman, that came down from heaven. I saw him as relatable. He was a guy. That's why he's inspiring because he's a human being. He poops, he gets angry, he burps. He stinks when he sweats.

B: I wouldn't even put that down.

I: The fact that he was human, was the whole thing!

B: How does this book undermine his humanity?

L: When I read those parts of her book, I think to myself, hmm, that is the opinion of the person Bernadette.

B: That's true!

H: I think some of the idealization of the man Jesus and usefulness for children, etc. does not come from reading the four gospels. It comes from a lot of talk around that. When you read those books, that is one scary guy. His fierceness is for a purpose. He is spiritually fierce.

E: It's his relationship to God.

H: If you sit down and actually read those books carefully without any of that stuff around, you'll get it. It's like, wake up folks.

J: In San Quentin, there is a protestant chapel there is a picture of Christ, excuse me, Jesus. And he's fierce and he's got tattoos and he's black, and he's in this relationship with God. Here's how I think about it, sometimes the Jesus cult can be an entry for someone. In the next moment, he raises his hand, and he's about to hit his wife and suddenly he doesn't. And that's like the beginning. I've spent hundreds of hours and something happened to them and I don't think anything that she says really can diminish, when I hear these stories from inmates, it's like God working in them, and it's going to throw them, and it may be an image, then maybe they will start on their journey to God. I think I know what you are saying. I can see how it might diminish that entry point but when I actually sit with men who really are in dire circumstances in the moment to make a difference in this moment in their life. Somehow the truth of Christ, it comes through in some way. They are going to find it. It's almost like a scent. They are going to find something that begins to act inside them. Then you see this astounding thing. They are talking about I have found God inside me and I am filled with peace and joy. There is a real change. There is a process and I appreciate it but when I first read it, I was kind of like, so we're trying to grow out of the Jesus cult as a species, and I'd like to be part of the movement to bring a different understanding, but I also see...

B: Well, write your own book!

J: As long as Jesus as a cult figure...

R: The term Jesus cult is really misleading.

J: I'm not talking about that.

D: We don't have a Jesus as human cult. It's the opposite of cult as we usually understand it. The Jesus as god cult is different from Jesus as

human cult. What the Jesus as God cult does is completely diminish the understanding of Jesus as human.

J: It's amazing. When you walk in and hear men singing gospel, it is so powerful it makes you want to weep.

A: I never really had a relationship with Jesus but after reading this book and all the discussions we've had, I've starting to have a feeling about this human and I love the fierceness.

B: Something that bothers me, is he went directly to God. Are you with me? Everybody else is expected to go to God through him. (People say, "Come to Jesus." Jesus encouraged people to go to God directly.)

A: That's a problem.

B: They have made him a medium, and he had no medium, and neither should we. You won't be forgiven if you don't go to Jesus. It's a lie!

H: It's different also from having Jesus in the bible as a **model** for this life on earth. In fact, that guy is headed somewhere we are supposed to go to. In fact, it's a losing of the self and that whole thing. So, it's a tough trip he's offering there. It really is.

D: Especially the crucifixion which dramatizes death in a way there is no escaping. But it's really...

B: I would love it!

D: I would like to think that humanity had a choice in the matter. That it could have gone differently.

B: What if he had fallen off a cliff or had an accident?

All: Ha, ha, ha...

D: Supposing, you don't think there was even an option for the people around him to say o.k. so he's saying he's one with God, let's just let him be, and not try and crucify the guy. I'm just saying...

B: A lot of people thought he lost his mind.

D: At some level the decision to crucify was a human decision. Right?

B: That was the form of punishment that the Romans had.

D: Yes. I'm saying it's the people around him that decided to crucify him.

B: So, I don't get your point.

D: The party line also says God said he had to die.

B: I don't think they say God said he had to be crucified. But God ordained that he had to die, they don't say crucify. He had to die.

D: The implication of the party line is that...

B: Well, the implication is God is an ogre.

D: yes.

B: That he made this man suffer so we would be forgiven. There is a great, great theologian, I think it is Meyendorff or maybe the other one, (Lossky?) he said, what they did, Paul, made the diagnosis fit the cure. Are you with me? In other words, he came for this purpose, maybe as a messiah to save, now they have to find another purpose. You need him. But why? Here's the diagnosis. You sinned. If you haven't sinned, then you don't need him. Who dares to say they haven't sinned in this world? So, everybody needs him. So first you convince them all of guilt and sin, then you have the savior.

D: It's almost like this. God says, the way I'm going to reveal the truth about the end of self is to have this man crucified.

B: Through my own experience, when I stood before that life-sized crucifix in church. (pages 103-05 in Contemplative, position 3216 of e-book) I thought, what is this enormous mystery? I never believed in sin. Never believed he was my savior. Is there something else to it? What is this about? I never thought God wanted this. I was ten years old. I just stood there. Then this dark horrible thing, it was ominous, it was spooky as hell, but I knew that the truth of his death was so terrible that people wouldn't want to know it. The truth of coming to this, what everybody says forget it, man cannot accept it. You know what that is? *You, yourself, your person, you're going out.* You have not eternal life with God. Not the self. It took me years to realize that. This is what the

crucifix meant to me. Today I still have it. It's always around. All my life I had it around. What I saw was a mystery. I knew someday *that God's going to let me know because I'm tough and I can take it and I want to know that*. So, for me it's a dynamic in my life. It's the mystery of death. Most people can't take it. They don't understand really what went on there. They don't want to know. They wouldn't believe it. The mystery is that nobody really understands it. (Which other Christian thinker is saying this? Could it be that's partly why it's called the Paschal mystery? Because the mind cannot conceive of its own non-existence?)

A: It wasn't just the mystery, but it was like the tragedy of the crucifixion is that no one understands it.

C: Were there points in your life when you saw there may have been a plan for your life?

B: Oh, yea when I was a kid.

C: I don't believe in predestination, but could it have been possible that it was in the plan of God, that however horrible it may seem to us, that this man was supposed to die in that way to reveal that truth?

B: This is my theory, God had to dramatize it as something really awful. Here is this nice beautiful man getting crucified. He did good things, and this is a horrible thing.

F: He would say so that it might be fulfilled, and it looked like he was acting out a lot of what Isaiah prophesied.

B: You know what? He could have run away. Nothing would have been easier. But he knew what God wanted of him. In that garden when he sweat it out, to be or not to be. The only answer he could give was not my will, because he knew he couldn't do anything about it. God's going to do it anyway.

F: The sad thing is that the teaching of the party line about saving us from our sins totally eclipses the true transformation of Christ.

H: exactly.

E: exactly

F: So that's what we lose by thinking that way. It just doesn't work.

B: Well, I don't know; for example, what's the matter with thinking Jesus died for our sins and then you are transformed into Christ?

H: It's thinking that that's the **purpose** of it. It's often said that was the purpose of the crucifixion. Jesus died in our place.

B: Yea, but we also have those other beautiful sayings. That we are all one in Christ.

H: Well, choose your saying. I mean, that's...

B: Well that's it. Choose your saying.

L: Ha, ha, ha...

B: We're all sons of one father...

A: If you ask most people, "Are you going to be transformed into Christ?" They don't know what you're talking about.

B: yea.

A: I'm going to heaven. But does Jesus forgive your sins? They've got that.

J: What would be the purpose F. of living out that prophecy from Isaiah in relation to the real Christ?

F: Well, he believed that he was the messiah and was attempting to fulfill all the prophecies. He said repeatedly, that this might be fulfilled. In the synagogue in Capernaum, he reads from the 61st chapter of Isaiah and says, "Today this prophecy has been fulfilled in your hearing." So, it seems to me he was trying to walk in those steps.

B: I think in the bible somewhere it says to walk in his shoes. He thought he was it. He was one with God, that's what got the Jews though. I can't think of any other reason. Of course, he did start problems wherever he went.

J: He was a rabble-rouser.

F: Just like you're doing with this, upsetting the apple cart.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: I tell you truthfully if they wanted to crucify me, I would **love** it. That would be great! I'd love it. If you could take your pick of how you're going to die. You wanna be in the hospital? You wanna get caught in an accident? Oh, no. It would be marvelous!

F: High drama!

H: In Santa Monica. That would be good.

D: maybe in Saudi Arabia...

A: You wouldn't want to just die in your sleep peacefully one night?

B: This would be more fun. (Who wants to be next in line for a fearless and fun crucifixion? Step right up!)

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B. I could do it tomorrow.

H: It's midnight for me.

A: Good night H. we're going to sit in a few minutes anyway.

B: Anyone else have anything they don't like about the book and wanna chime in before we have to cut out. Did somebody else want to say something here? I can't help you out. If you don't like the Jesus in the book, that's o.k. I had no intention to undermine the guy. When you put him up on this high pedestal, and then your read my book, well I tore him down from your pedestal. But you have to understand, for me, I never put him on a high pedestal. I just put him where I've always seen him. So, for me, it's so stupid, is the man's dead! He's not around anymore. That man that people love and think they're going to see in Heaven, he's a gonner.

F: A Protestant pastor wrote a book called, "Are you running with me Jesus?" and he's like my best friend. The person of Jesus.

B: I gotta tell you. I don't recognize this so-called Christianity, I want to tell you I don't recognize it at all. I don't understand it at all. That there's a religion out there, probably throughout most of the world, and it is called Christianity, it's foreign to me. It's as foreign as Buddhism. I

just don't get it. I don't know what to call it. Pagan? No. What can you call it? People are so in love with this man.

A: Evangelical Christianity?

D: We should call it anthropolatry. (anthropolatry?)

J: Yea but the evangelicals and they are all about Jesus, Jesus in their services.

A: Remember what you saw on television one day. Do you remember telling me about that? You came across some evangelical on TV.

B: He was shouting.

J: What about the Jesus prayer?

B: What about it?

J: That people use. Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

F: That's the orthodox anthem. It works for them.

B: Well, I tell you what, we have to admit that this whole notion of guilt. People find it in Christianity very comforting. People like the idea that God is going to forgive their sins. Do they offer that in Buddhism or Hinduism?

D: No.

A: Not in Buddhism for sure.

D: Because in Hinduism, there is a certain kind of karma that nobody can do anything about, even God.

A: Just many lives. Keep on chuggin'

All: Ha, ha, ha...

J: My point in all of that is using the name of Jesus. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow...

F: I think that has mantric force.

A: I do too.

J: but you could say abracadabra.

A: There are people who do have a different kind of mantra and it works for them beautifully. I know they have a prayer, you know the 108 names of Jesus.

B: The reason people are going East to these other religions is because they don't get anything from this Jesus stuff.

A: completely

B: O.k. I'm forgiven. And now I'll go to Heaven. They are sure about that. That's all they need. I'll be good to my friends and family and that's the end of it. There is no deeper spiritual life at all.

F: They are still living in the old testament, by rules.

D: Even the forgiveness thing is not all that appealing. Maybe some people are happy about being forgiven. But they also want God to fix all the mess you've made. Because to say you're forgiven and you still know the mess you've made is still alive and well, it's not a happy thing.

F: There's no resolution.

D: People want God to fix your messes.

J: People want God to worship the self.

B: You treat God like he's your valet.

D: That's that valet thing.

J: When we worship Jesus, which is what the Jesus cult is, it's the same thing we do with priests or ministers. We put all of it on them, we don't have to worry about us.

F: There's no responsibility.

D: There is another more positive view of it. Just as the saints, there is nothing here to say that Jesus can't fit into that category of people in whose name God will do things. Not that Jesus is doing it. Why should it be any different? You look at the appeal to Mary and the appeal to Jesus as being symmetric. Right?

J: It's good, but it depends on what you do with it. If you see Jesus as being crucified and ascending and you see that that's what we're going to do, we're going to die,

D: Jesus didn't ascend.

J: That's the party line.

F: Richard Burke talks about a painting that is in the grotto in which the disciples are all looking up at the feet after Jesus. And they call it "Rocket Ship Jesus" and all the disciples are watching him go physically.

B: Can you imagine any miracle greater that somebody right in front of you disappear? And yet nothing is made of that at all. Nothing. Two or three words in the whole bible. In fact, if you really carefully read those few accounts we have, something is very wrong. They didn't want to go out because they were scared. They didn't even recognize him.

A: You know B. I saw a wonderful show one time about the ascension. They pointed out that something happened that was so profound at the ascension, that it took this group of frightened men, it turned them into these apostles. They were making the point that the ascension was the thing that actually so convicted these guys of the truth of everything this man was saying. They said look at the difference between what they did before and after.

B: They did nothing until after Pentecost.

D: It was Pentecost.

B: Ascension, nothing, they were still scared and hiding.

J: They were still scared in the upper room.

B: We're all going to go to bed here...

F: The contemplative mass is open to everybody (five minutes of discussion about when to attend Mass)

Saturday morning: (It's about 9:00 a.m. and the recording begins with the sound of people flipping through their manuscripts looking for a particular page. They begin by discussing the problem of Christ, then herd

mentality, talking about the Trinity in a new way, sexual intercourse, created being, locus of the hypostatic union, icons, and the last supper.)

A: I think there are different versions, top of page 199? (This page number is from the manuscript. The paper book page is 251, and the e-book location is 11065.)

B: O.K. Let's see we're all here...where's J.?

C: Right there.

B: Because the problem of Christ is endemic in the revelation of Christ, it's a problem endemic in Christianity itself. All right, in a nutshell this is the problem. God is infinite uncreated existence whereas man is finite, created being. And the union of these two, infinite and finite, uncreated and created, does not result in one individual being. Does anybody disagree with that?

I: no.

B: All right. Thus, the union or oneness of God and man does not make one single being. Nor does it make two beings. Does everyone agree with that?

D: Yea.

B: Well right there. I., maybe you're the one to answer this...How does this make Jesus divine or God?

I: How does this paragraph?

B: No, the fact that Christ is not a single being...those blinds I can't handle it. Forget it C. He can't handle it. It was up. Now it's up.

(Talking about closing the blinds and turning overhead lights on...)

A: Yea, but this one here is broken. Somebody pulled this string instead of using these and broke it. Not here. Before us.

B: So this is all the light we have in the room with the blinds shut. It's hard to read, isn't it? Anyway, how would this sit with somebody who thinks that the man Jesus is Christ? Does this fly in the face of that or not?

D: It does.

H: It would not sit well.

E: They would stop listening to you immediately.

B: Yea, because God is not an individual being. Man however, is an individual created being. I have no problem with that. Do you all agree with that?

I: yea.

B: We are talking about man's common human nature here.

D: yes

B: It's a created individual being. See, ha, I wondered about that myself saying it myself here but let's go on here. Because the union of God and man does not constitute one individual being.

D: no.

B: Christ is not one individual being.

F: That's correct.

B: If this does not make sense to anyone, I would like to hear from you.

D: I think the one thing that needs to be fleshed some more is common human nature as an individual being.

B: Well, we've just gone through it for about two hundred pages (No, they hadn't, and it was a good question.)

D: O.k. yea.

E: When "simple folk" hears human nature, they just think off the bat the word universal human nature

B: You can count heads, but you can't count human natures.

E: Exactly, but that's not what the person in the pew thinks when they hear human nature. No they think it's individual. When someone does something wrong they say, Oh, it's just human nature.

R: But that's human nature in general.

E: But it's not human nature in the sense that Bernadette is talking about it.

D: That thing of E., saying that's just human nature, reinforces the idea of common human nature.

E: If you use the term human to mean what God created us to be. Well then you can't really say that's human.

H: Can't say what's human?

E: If I go out and kill someone, that's not what God created

H: Human beings do that.

E: Human beings do, but common human nature?

H: People kill each other all the time.

A: war's, exactly

E: But it's human **beings** that do that.

B: Now that's a good question. Is it really in our essential natures or is it the person, the self, that decides to do that?

F: The self

B: That's the whole point. God gave us free will. The animals can't help but love God. Somebody's going to have a choice whether he's going to choose to know and love God, or not!

E: Growing up when we hear, that's just human nature, I think people think there isn't a choice. That's just how it is and so that's just how it's going to be.

B: Well they're stupid.

E: Well they are ignorant.

H: Could I just go to your nice example of the H₂O? When the water is boiling and burns my lips, I don't say it's because of the H₂O. It's because it was heated up. So I don't say it's because of my use of human nature, it's because of my **use** of human nature.

E: Yea but I don't think the person in the pew...

H: I must say, I have a little trouble with "persons in the pew" and "simple folk". I think that includes all of us. It's true in every tradition. It's a question of our really going deeply into our own tradition and finding out a proper way to understand it. Some people do that, and some people don't. So what?

B: The problem that I have is the church, what I call the party line, it promotes the herd mentality.

E: Exactly.

B: Because that's the only way people can get together. Because if we are all thinking for ourselves, how are we going to get together? I'm not just talking about the Church. Look in Judaism and Islam. These people promote a herd mentality. So that they all think alike. Anyone who challenges that, let's kill 'em all! (Like the parents of John of the Cross, Jewish *conversos* in sixteenth century Spain were given the option, baptism or the sword.)

E: This was my question yesterday too. How do we, while remaining in the tradition, promote that?

B: Get out of that herd mentality. Yea. It's a strange thing in my own life. I thought what it meant to me to be Catholic. I never chose to be Catholic. I don't know if I'd choose it today (laughter) but the thing is that was not even an issue. I do remember, when I was young, the whole belief system, it challenged me.

E: um-hum

B: What do they mean by that?

E: um-hum

B: How does that work? It raised all kinds of questions for me. It made me question my beliefs. Do I honestly believe that?

E: Right.

B: And I could never say yes to any of that. So that's why I say that the party line can be very challenging. It challenges you to be honest with yourself.

E: Well, this is why, when we talk about being a Christian and "going East"

B: These people are being honest with themselves.

E: I came from the opposite place as you. I never was a Christian because I couldn't believe any of it either, but somehow God was able to get through to me and I became a Christian **in spite of** the party line. (She had what B. calls faith. There is not a crisis of faith in the Catholic Church or anywhere else. There is a questioning of beliefs based on scientific evidence, people going East, and deep thinking because, while faith is the Truth, most beliefs are wrong. B. uses the word faith differently than any other Christian thinker. She had "a whole thing on it" at the end of her talk called "The Essence of Christian Mysticism." For her, they are opposites. One doesn't have faith in anything or anyone. One may believe in something or someone, but faith is nonintellectual. In fact, it is God.)

B: Here I am **in spite** of that.

E: exactly

B: It's just about being honest with yourself.

H: I think people become priests and ministers and whatever, I speak as a teacher, as an academic, in a sense they are taking on a responsibility to be teachers and it involves a certain kind of skill and effort to **challenge** people. So that's the answer.

E: That is the answer.

A: I wanna say something about that because I was really touched by what Su. said yesterday. Because I feel like if our priest had gotten up one day and said, "We're going to talk about the Trinity today in a new way."

H: You don't have to say you're going to do it in a new way, you do it in a new way! You introduce it in a new way.

a: Instead of challenging everything you believe, if you start, this is something that is going to surprise you and change your life.

B: Your experiences of God in nature, let's all talk about that.

A: I think that's the door and people open up to that, and say, "Wow. I never thought of that!"

B: There you go.

E: I had this experience and that's what it was!

A: Exactly.

H: That's being a skilled teacher.

B: That's the Logos! It's beautiful!

A: Then you can even introduce, what John **really** said was in the beginning was the Logos, and what does that mean?

B: yea!

A: The people who are going to be scared are going to be scared and go home and say I'm changing churches. But the people who want something are going to say you know I never thought of that before, and when that little spark opens, then all of a sudden, they wanna hear something else.

B: I go to church at St. Monica's, you can hardly fit in the door. People, in a way it's sorrowful for me, all these people going to church. They are hoping to get something. They are going to get a little spark of something spiritual to think about and take home with them. Thousands all over the world. That's the only reason they go to church. Because they want this little spark of something. I don't think they go there to please the priest or neighbor or anything. Although in my daughter's church if you're not there, Monsignor will get on you. My kids tell me, even if we tell them we went with mom to church, or we were gone on a trip, or anything else...

A: My goodness. He's the priest police.

B: This is American Martyrs. But boy has that guy built. Does that guy have the money! Because it's a rich parish. People kill each other to get

their kids into kindergarten. They've got everything. Wonderful teachers. It's a great place. He knows everybody by name! He's out there. Can you believe it? He's out there like that. It's unbelievable. Do you know priests like that father?

F: A few do. It's a great gift, actually, if you can do it.

B: You know, it really is. I remember one time father said, "Hey! I haven't seen you in months! Where have you been?" I think a lot of people like to be recognized.

F: Sure

B: Except my kids.

All: ha, ha, ha...

B: I always go out the side door, ha ha, because I don't want to see Monsignor.

All: ha, ha, ha...

B: I can't stand...He's one of those on Easter he gets out his rabbits, Christmas he's out there with his Santa Claus hat. I just can't take it.

A: He must be popular with the kids.

B: The whole school goes to 8 o'clock mass every single Friday. The whole school, kindergarten to 8th grade. And then you have to back on Sunday. Anyway, so where were we?

E: Can I just add something to what you said A.? I think it relates to how my husband and I., we started going once a week to the Incarnation monastery which is the Camaldolese house of studies in Berkeley. There I think is a model of what the challenge is. The homilies are fantastic. They are so well thought out. Sometimes they invite women who are GTU scholars...

B: Oh horrors!

E: And they uh...

H: Shhhh!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: I've heard 'em all.

E: They are thoughtful. And they are not...

B: A lot of them are not even Catholic!

E: Everyone that I'm thinking of is Catholic. What I'm trying to say is this. The liturgy still has these old elements that are a little bit confusing, but that's minimized. The creed is never spoken, the issues of belief, the energy, and the radiation of the Real Christ is coming through somehow. So you don't have to challenge people so much about their beliefs, just begin to bring it.

A: It's not a parish church. That's a huge thing.

E: That's a big difference.

A: It's a seminary mass.

B: I gotta tell you the monks...

E: The community is listening and thoughtful and attentive and all that. So I think it can be done.

B: Forget the incarnation. I've been there and I don't like it. But at the monastery there, I've never seen anybody, even my own kids, in their heart. You go to mass at the monastery, they only have about five priests. But they are all highly educated and they exude this reality, it's true. The mass there, the way that it's done there, it's beautiful. And the way that those guys can talk, all of them. Daniel finally left. He's down the road.

G: Is that in Big Sur?

D: yea

B: No, he never went away.

F: Cyprian?

B: Oh, no he's prior. Daniel was a Franciscan someplace before he ever became a Camaldolese. He always promoted the Franciscan stuff. The

poor, what we have to do, that was all his sermons. I remember telling him once, Christ said the poor you will always have with you. You're not going to get rid of the poor (Now she's picking fights with the priest after mass). There is no end. They have taken on a little community there in Santa Maria. He went down to put that together. Daniel is kind of running that show.

A: He came back, he was there for Christmas.

B: They might all come up for Christmas. In fact, that's the only time Cyprian comes up is for Christmas maybe. Other than that Cyprian has been out on his own, for about ten years. Playing his guitar and singing. He's very talented.

A: I heard from a lot of people who went to his retreats.

B: He was good though.

A: Even people that aren't into the music, they really got a lot.

B: They come up for some big solemn things.

A: He gave a retreat up there a few weeks back.

B: He gave one in St. Monica's church the other day. I've heard him enough.

A: He's a tremendous example though.

B: He's charismatic.

A: Because I saw him out at the Vedanta center. I have two friends who are members there, and they said, do you know him? And I said oh, let's go. He just reached out in that audience, and touched each person in such a genial way, and then took them to say what was really depth. But first there was this contact.

B: The only personal thing I handed him that, um, Ox herding pictures and said what do you think of that? Well, he said, there's no Jesus here!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: And I said, Didn't you know he died?! (This is why I loved Bernadette. She confronted monks on theological issues.)

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: And he said, oh! He was going on, I love Jesus! I love Jesus! You know going on like that. I thought well, he's gay.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

B: I think a lot of priests are. I remember complaining to someone. He so advanced. He's so beautiful. You know I don't want to talk about him in a derogatory way, are you with me? But when they come across with this stuff and that God will take care of all this stuff, even sexually, that God will take care of that, you know, and this kind of thing.

A: I've never heard anybody say that.

B: Listen! Neither have I!

H: Did you make it up?

B: I never heard anybody talk like that either. So I went and talked to another brother. Hey listen this guy sounds like he's gay here, and he said, so? Once he handed me a book and he said, "What do you think of this Bernadette?" So I looked it over. It was a research project. They were Germans and it was on women's monastic communities. The research was this... all the sisters were given a questionnaire. The question was this: Do you ever in your prayer life have any erotic sexual feelings?

F: yea.

B: Does it promote any sexual feelings? I thought this is awful! How could anyone consent to a thing like that? Turns out about seventy percent! They took dozens of surveys. Yes, the sisters had these erotic experiences in prayer. Father asked me what I thought about that. I said, "Oh, I think it's shocking. I can't hardly believe that!" Then this priest comes up and says how love of Jesus can fulfill your sexual appetites. Well, this is an issue. Are you with me? Among contemplative people...

A: I don't think it's fulfilled like if you're in a lover relationship with somebody.

B: Oh, I don't know.

F: I have read erotic experiences of sisters that describes erotic experiences with Jesus.

A: Well, Teresa of Avila that's true, and even that statue of her, I always thought...

F: Oh, isn't that something? I wanted to have that experience!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

A: You know in Buddhism, when I took a three-month long meditation retreat, there were several talks from the old teaching about what to do if you have these erotic feelings.

B: That's a little bit different, things may come up while watching a movie or something that doesn't matter. We're talking about people having sexual feelings focused on the man Jesus, or God or Buddha...

F: Hot Buddha.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

I: If you see the Buddha on the road, take him to bed!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

H: Once I was involved with interviewing someone for a position at my college, unfortunately we didn't have room for her. She taught at Harvard. She was one of the best teachers in the history of the university and her specialty, what she wrote about was, um, an order of nuns in Germany, historically not the bride of Christ, but the mother of the infant. One of their practices was rocking the cradle. You know a repetition...

B: That's kind of interesting because of Eckhart and Eckhart was German. His big thing was the birth of God in you. The birth of Christ in you. That was his big thing. This is why, you know the usual notion of Mary and Martha? He switched the whole thing around. Throw Mary out, it was Martha giving and doing. It was so cute. He really stressed what it meant to be a woman there. Because there is no birth of Christ in you, or in father, but it's in us!

H: So there.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

F: We don't get labor pains.

H: Kumran there are whole cultures where the men with the wife, go through the whole pregnancy too...

B: Listen, a lot of daddy's do.

A: These days

B: My father, um, these where in the days were men were not allowed in the labor room.

D: yea

B: And my father went to the head of the hospital and he said I'm going in there, of course he's a big attorney. He never left my mother. He went through the whole thing. Now of course my son-in-laws and sons, they are right there. They feel **for** them almost worse than dealing with it yourself. Course I didn't have that. You know he wasn't around, to tell you the truth. Anyway...

A: But you know B., I just wanted to say one last thing about this erotic stuff. We have the spiritual marriage, the song of Solomon, the bride of Christ...

B: Yea, it's very erotic. It's all in there!

E: I think that the union of the divine and human is intercourse. (I KNEW I liked this person!) So I think there is a reality to that analogy.

B: That is so far from my ability to comprehend.

E: It's a process. It's not a static thing. The hypostatic union is a process.

B: Well, I don't see... make your case, write your chapter, and send it to all of us.

H: It's in the language about being ravished by God...

J: being entered, penetrated...

E: Exactly. I think that is expressive of a truth

H: Men and women have that.

B: They haven't gone far enough. That's all I can say.

A: Hurray for old age. The hormones just go away. You don't have to worry about it. If you're married I'm sorry to say that...

E: It's all good. It's good.

C: But there is the opposite language of apatheia. In the unitive state, described as apatheia by the Stoics, and beyond passion...

B: Of course I see sex as a lot of physical. It's just physical. People get caught up in it mentally.

E: I'm not talking about the physical.

F: The problem with metaphors like that is that they are taken as literal.

A: right

F: Everybody is conditioned...

B: To me that's all sex is. It's a physical thing.

F: (inaudible word)

B: No.

F: Is it?

All: ha, ha, ha...

F: There are certain people who don't think so. It's extraordinarily beyond the physical from my experience.

B: I just see it as physical. The only purpose of it, I remember when I was thinking about getting married. I was taking a course on epistemology at Loyola University. I can't remember the name of my professor but he was Jesuit and they are brilliant. I asked to talk to him after class one day and I asked him what's this marriage thing all about? Why bother with that? He said, "Well, B. I couldn't tell the others, but I can tell **you** the truth. Procreation." So, he said, if you want children get married and don't get married to anyone who doesn't also want kids.

H: Be fruitful and multiply. That's a deep biblical...

B: So I went home and told this guy and he thought that was great and I did too. And we only got married to have children. In fact, I said, you have to go to the doctor and prove to me that you can have kids, and I'll go too. And if there is any obstacle, forget it.

H: That's a very Catholic thing.

B: Course he went off and...

A: It didn't satisfy him.

B: See that, to me, that's the truth. I regard that as the truth. I want to tell you when you hear about the gays and lesbians how horrible that whole sexual act must be, but I wanna tell ya, there are heterosexuals, when you hear about all the horrible sexual stuff that goes on, among heterosexuals, you know, married, it's worse than anything I ever heard in any gay situation. It's the devil incarnate because people, it's true, for me it's just a physical act, but people get carried away on an emotional level with this thing.

A: and mental as well as emotional, the imagination...

B: The whole thing plays into it. It becomes more than...

A: People get obsessed.

B: Obsessed is the word.

H: I hope you mean a **pleasurable** physical act.

B: Well, I don't know about some women. Men yes, we can guarantee men. (She did just say that for her it's only purpose was procreation.)

All: ha, ha, ha...

H: There was an amazing, fascinating article several weeks ago in Sunday Times magazine about an ultra-orthodox Jewish woman who has permission now from some Rabbis, to help orthodox Jewish women gain some sexual pleasure.

B: How about Islamic women?

C: Egypt

B: They cut out that whole thing, so there is no possibility of it. It goes to show you, it's a male thing. It's a male thing.

(C. probably raises his hand)

B: Don't. C., get out!

All: ha, ha, ha...

A: This is going to be a **great** recording!

C: Turn it off before it's too late!

All: ha, ha, ha...

E: Are you recording this?

H: Well, so much for the problem of Christ!

All: ha, ha, ha...ha, ha, ha...

L: Was this on the agenda?

F: I regress!

H: Digress or regress?

G: This is an example of our subtle thinking.

E: You see it really is all about sex!

B: I don't know how we got off topic (It was **her** fault with, "I gotta tell ya...")

F: B. have you heard the story about the, uh...

B: Oh, God no!

All: ha, ha, ha...

H: Let's have it!

F: God looks down from heaven and sees that the earth is in big turmoil, wars and violence, so God sends two angels down to review the situation

B: Oh. God!

All: Ha, ha, ha...

F: About 95 percent of the people really aren't paying much attention to you and well five percent are. God thinks about it and decides to do something about that. So God decides to send an e-mail to the five percent. Do you know what his e-mail said?

B: "Have a good time" (You may wonder, it sounds like Bernadette is arguing with everybody. Is **she having a good time?** Here is a direct quote of 240 words from her autobiography: (age 15, in boarding school, 1954) The end of August school began with a happy reunion of schoolmates. My roommate this semester was Pat T. who, next to Maria, became my most endearing friend. Although Pat was the brightest and perhaps the most sociable in the class, her most outstanding feature was her keen and subtle sense of humor, her perspective on the world seemed to verge on the humorous. Pat was highly verbal and the fact she loved to argue and debate - about anything - is what made us a match. We would sit on our beds facing each other and deliberately choose a topic to discuss - politics, psychology, religion, whatever - and if we had to quit for gym we'd resume as soon as we got back, then go right on after study hall that night, and end up after lights-out in our walk-in closet where we'd sit on the floor, snack, argue and laugh till the wee hours. Although pretty serious about our topics, sooner or later we'd break into such belly laughs it brought us to tears. After lights-out it was all we could do to muffle our laughter and not get caught - as Pat would say, "We must be careful to laugh at the right time!" Often the night watchman banged on our wall to warn us we could be heard. I never had so much fun with a roommate, there we were, the academically brightest and dumbest thoroughly enjoying each other's company." Is she having a good time? You tell me.)

L: You didn't get the e-mail either?

All: Ha, ha, ha...

H: So the answer is, no. I don't know, because I didn't I get it. Very good.

F: It kind of catches you by surprise... (For a brief exploration of what B. **might** have meant by "Have a good time", see my first e-book, Bernadette Roberts, God' Big Experiment)

B: O.k. let's go. Christ is neither God, nor an individual created being. Christ is the eternal oneness of the two. Alone, neither God nor man has dual natures.

D: um hum

B: Of all that we know to exist Christ is the only one who is, or has, dual natures. Christ then is neither one uncreated being, nor one created being. Now look, this right there, I said that man however is a created being. Now wait a minute, and yet up above here we had said, um, man is an individual created being. See, I'm not sure about that word individual. I could put man is **a** created being, but that wouldn't mean one. We could put man is created being, but so is everything else.

G: What do you mean by "man" B? Do you mean humanity?

B: Man! (Notice, she doesn't answer the question. She would rather fight. Personality is not person.) It's the generic term for mankind.

H: Then that sentence needs to be. If you mean any particular man, that's one thing, but you can't say mankind is an individual created being.

B: There you go. So I think what I should do is erase the word individual.

D: All you have to say is man is created being, not **a** created being.

B: But so is a plant or tree or whatever. Man is created being.

D: yes

G: Where is that B?

B: The second line down there

H: But hang on a second, in the next one you are playing off that word individual.

B: Then I have, man does not constitute one individual being. Are you with me? Christ is not one individual being. That one sentence up there.

Man is individual created being. That's where I got hung up. Man is created being. Then down here, I have Christ is not one individual being. That part is o.k.

H: How about saying, "any man" is an individual created being.

G: How about any human?

B: Wait a minute. Are we on the second? What should it be there?

H: Any human is an individual created being.

B: No. I won't go with that. Any means any one of many.

H: That's right.

B: I don't want that. Christ is not just one of many.

H: We are talking about mankind, human beings.

B: That's not going to work either. Christ is not an individual.

H: That's right you're making a contrast, so if you take out the word individual in the second line, you can't make this contrast in the same way.

G: Um, I have some notes from last time and I'm trying to decipher them. Man, however, a universal being, is individually created, each one.

E: You could also say mankind is created being, each human is an individual created being.

G: That's good. Spell it out.

B: I get the point. Because when you write something like this, I'm coming from a different perspective.

H: But keep in mind that next sentence.

B: Any chance that they have to put in there, that one individual being that God created, that's Christ, that's Jesus, because that's one individual being. What she said leaves the door open. You don't want to leave the door to the possibility of misinterpretation.

N: But in the next sentence, you clear it up. You make a contrast. Unlike individual men, Christ is **not** one individual being. Therefore, it is not an individual created being.

D: The moment you have the idea of one, you have the idea of individual.

B: It's a numerical one, it's quantitated.

D: So how would you do the second sentence?

B: Let me ask you this, do you regard Christ as a quantitated being?

F: no.

B: We're talking about man's human nature, even God's human nature, is that a quantitated being? Don't think about the man Jesus. Is God united to a single, one quantitated, numerical one, being? Is man's human nature one being?

D: I wouldn't think of it that way. As one being.

B: Man's human nature is one being? By one being we mean individual being.

D: Exactly. The moment you say individual or one, it automatically implies a multiplicity.

B: Quantitative

D: Just leave it as created being. There is only one common human nature.

B: Well does that one common human nature, is it an individual? Well, you can't say man's human nature is a created being.

D: I would put something like, "man, however, is specific created being"

B: Well forget that.

D: Yes.

B: We take that for granted.

D: Yes. The sense we are using individual that human nature is different from plant nature is different from... That's how we're using individual.

(background conversations occurring)

B: Man is a microcosm. He includes everything.

D: Yes, that's correct.

B: But I'm just trying to think of this. Is it possible, see, I don't have this problem. But, is it possible that when people think of Christ, because we're talking about a human being, the essence of man's human nature, does that constitute one created being? Is that a created being?

D: Yes, it's created being.

G: Not **a** created being, just created being.

B: When people think of that, they want to think of God...

H: You've got to take into account the next sentence in thinking about how to clarify the second sentence. Because the next sentence has a contrast using the word

B: It does not constitute one individual being. That's fine, but that's getting on to union. Before we even get to union.

D: Before we get to union.

B: Is universal human nature a being?

H: You said something about man and now you're contrasting Christ with that.

B: What I'm asking

H: I'm talking about the sentences. That's all.

B: Forget the sentences. What I'm asking you to do... Do you regard man's common one human nature as a being?

All: no.

D: I don't, and I'll tell you why B., In my own thinking about it, I think of being as the specific experience of life. I see being completely attached to self actually.

B: Oh! That even complicates it.

D: Because for me the terms existence and being have a different connotation. I prefer created existence to created being.

B: I understand that. This is the whole problem with tritheism and everything else. As soon as we bring in being, we think of an individual or entity.

D: exactly right

B: Whereas with existence we don't think of that.

D: exactly

L: or human form, perhaps?

B: What is so interesting about human nature is that it is considered the microcosm of the macrocosm. Are you with me? Human nature will have to include all of creation. If God is going to save human nature, all of creation has to be saved. Matter, the body, the spiritual aspects, whatever, plant, animal, humanity. God has got to save it all. So it's a summation, like Paul said, and of course the Stoics believed this as well, it's a summation of all of creation. Therefore, whatever Christ is, that created nature, not the divine nature, it has to be something that is not just a being. Are you with me? Unless you are going to say all of creation is a being. But you can't do it.

D: no

C: Being seems to have a sense of existence in space and time. Human nature has about it something much more subtly profound and mysterious than simply being. Somewhat in line with R.'s thought. When we think of being we think of it somehow as an entity.

D: As a person

B: I don't think of being as a person.

C: That's why I am uncomfortable with saying God is being itself. It's beyond being and non being. Being doesn't quite get at God.

B: I agree with that.

C: Being has sort of a limitation about it.

B: You're right. So it's better to say created being, created existence? However, man is more than just created existence.

D: It's sort of a unique created existence, no?

H: Let me say the reverse here. In the history of western thought, starting with Aristotle, there is a concern with being with a capital B. or beingness. Once the word existence is brought in, it starts becoming the existence of x, y, or z. So there is some confusion here with whether we are talking about being with a capital b...

B: I get your point but to rely on Aristotle for anything, I wouldn't do it. Because of how he has been understood today.

H: yea

B: What it meant for him was the ultimate. What it means for people today is very different.

H: What it means to **philosophers** today is being with a capital B. We're talking Heidegger and so on this concern has its roots in Aristotle. I'm just saying...

B: Well God is not **a** being. God is Being.

H: exactly

B: That's why I call it Infinite Existence. Being today, for most people, is understood as some kind of an entity.

H: I think it depends on the sentence in which the word is being used. Absolutely, if we say **a** being...but if we say something has...

D: The way this is structured Bernadette, the thing that gets difficult is, we say God is not an individual being, but man is. And then you've got the oneness of the two which is not...There is the implication here that one side of this can be considered...

B: There you go, one side, the divine side, but you can consider the human side as a single being.

G: Can I try this sentence again? Individual man, however, a universal being, is an individually created being. So it encompasses both the fact that man is universal being and individual created.

B: Well there's a truth to that.

D: But here Bernadette, ahead of that, you say God is infinite uncreated existence, whereas man is finite created being. That, to me, sounds fine. Just leave it like that.

F: yea

H: Where is it again?

F: It's the second sentence.

B: In a nutshell...

D: That to me is capturing the essence of it.

F: It's sufficient.

D: Just let it be that way.

B: Alright, then let's get on down here.

H: Finite's a good word.

B: Christ then is neither one created being nor one uncreated being. There you go. Christ is not one created being. As a numerical individual being. Christ is the eternal oneness of two natures. Not beings. Infinite and finite being.

F: yes.

B: Since you can't point to the uncreated but only to the created, how then can one point to this union? Point to Christ that is. So if you want to point to Christ, since you can't point to anything uncreated, the only thing you can do is point to something created. *So if you are talking about man, then you have to point to some created being.*

A: right

B: Well who is that created being that everybody points to?

G: Jesus.

B: Well, there you go!

A: Right

B: So pay attention to that. Since no one can point to the uncreated, how can one point to the union? We're not talking about pointing to the uncreated, how can you point to a union?

D: You can't.

B: Can you point to a union of the two?

F: No. There is no locus. There is no place.

B: Well, that's interesting because the fathers of the church said the Logos is the locus in God of that union.

F: In God

B: Oh yea, it's in God. That's the difference between a hypostatic union, and theosis or the unitive state. That unitive state is in you. That's the ground of your being. The hypostatic union is not in you at all because it's in almighty God. This is the fathers. This is not me. This is the fathers.

E: Aren't you saying in the end though, that we can point to the Eucharist?

B: Well yes. That's all we have. Who's that? Does anyone point to the Eucharist as a who?

H: Eucharist is such an ambiguous word because...

R: You're actually pointing to the bread. The Eucharist is not...

D: It also means the whole, what shall I call it?

F: presence

H: It's actually, in ceremony and ritual, it's a word with several uses.

B: Well, don't get hung up on words. The word Eucharist came from the Jewish Seder. It means thanksgiving.

E: I'm not talking about the rite. I'm talking about what's in the monstrance.

A: What's transubstantiated.

E: When you're in the chapel and...

B: We always talk about the blessed sacrament.

E: the blessed sacrament

B: That would be one of the more ritual aspects of it. At least in Catholic circles...

E: I guess what I'm saying is maybe there **is** a locus because in experience...

B: The locus is in God. Listen, this was huge among the fathers. That's why they wanted the Locus... you know, there were two schools we talk about. Cyril was always accusing the Antiochians of saying that God was in him. God was in the man Jesus. Are you with me? His soul, the center of his being, was the locus of his union with God. That was Cyril's accusation, and that's not what the Cappadocian fathers thought. This was the whole reason that Cyril got after them, and it's really marvelous, although he's such a skunk, he said the union was in the Logos. Not in you, not in anybody. This was in the Logos. Not the Holy Spirit or anything else. And that's the hypostatic union because it's **in** God and doesn't have anything to do with you. So the point is this, you cannot point to the Logos. So you can't point to the union of God and man.

C: Yes. The locus is in God.

G: It's abstract.

B: It has no human locus

C: yes

A: but in order to

B: *You can't point to a human being*

F: no

B: *as the oneness of God and man.*

A: right

B: Well, that's really important to remember, isn't it? Because everyone wants to point to the man Jesus or this holy man or whatever.

A: It would seem like if they had explained, the early church fathers, that the Eucharist would have been a good place to focus.

B: That's why I say, when they started arguing about all of this, why didn't they focus on the Eucharist as an explanation of this?

A: exactly, and you even say...

B: However, who did was Irenaeus. What did he say? He said *our whole thinking is guided by and based on the Eucharist. Hey, that's the greatest thing anybody could ever say.*

A: right

B: If you want to talk about a mystery. It's just glorious.

A: And you say right here about that iconoclasm, you remember when they wouldn't allow them to paint any pictures, but they did allow them to paint the Eucharist. That was the one thing.

Page 203, at the bottom of the page (again, they are working from an unpublished manuscript. The footnote is on page 257 of paper book and position 11391 of e-book) The iconoclastic controversy. It is one thing, however, to ban man's artwork but who can ban the human mind from forming images? Interestingly, however, the one exception made by the Iconoclasts was veneration of the Eucharist, this was the only "Christ" man could venerate - The imageless, eternal Christ.

B: I was surprised when I read that.

A: Yea, I'd never heard that.

B: That was sixth or seventh century and that's when Islam came on the scene. And I can't help but think that God had something to do with that.

A: That was a big thing with them.

B: Because those polytheistic Romans and converts and everything else, they had all their statues, and everything else, and it didn't bother them at all. Now here comes Muslims...

A: No images, that's right.

B: The Protestants are also iconoclasts.

A: Yea, definitely.

B: Absolutely, they don't want any of that stuff around.

A: no statues

H: So the iconoclasts did not win the controversy.

B: No. They didn't.

H: So then how are the icons perceived?

B: Wait a minute! They won as far as Protestantism is regarded. They won in terms of Protestantism centuries later, but in the immediacy of it, they lost.

H: Then, in light of what you're pointing to here, how then to understand icons which are venerated and which are painted (written) in a very particular way?

D: But, you know...

F: They call them windows to heaven.

H: Yes, I'm just asking in the light of the problem of Christ, and how this footnote describes it, how

D: I think the...

H: In a sense, you don't point to the icon either...

B: no

H: But you venerate it.

G: It takes you beyond.

F: You are looking through them.

B: Venerated. Well, we put flowers and light candles. Why? This is something we are doing for God.

H: But in the Orthodox church you don't come into the church without kissing the icon.

B: Yea, I've been there.

H: It's right there. And the painting of them is, you know,

G: writing

H: It's a totally different... so in the light of the problem raised here how does one understand the whole iconography because it's really the most sacred. In light of the problem of Christ because there was no totally different church at this time.

B: Listen! Basically the answer is in the thing. Because the church says this, we can venerate this man Jesus as a human icon of this whole thing here, but we're not worshipping him as god. But I think what happened, the reason the whole issue came up, is that people **were** worshipping the man Jesus the icon as God. Then the Church says no, we are not worshipping the man as God but we have the right to display his whole life of oneness with God. In other words, they took the human side of Jesus. We can do his whole life up. What's the matter with that? We are not saying that he's God but that's how the whole thing came together.

H: I understand that then we have the split.

E: In the orthodox they don't worship the icons they believe they are windows to heaven.

H: This is what I'm asking. There's one metaphor, but the point is

D: A couple of things on that...

H: It goes beyond the mistake made that caused the iconoclastic movement. There is something in how icons are made and venerated that goes beyond that mistake.

D: The way I see it H. is, recognizing that you cannot point to Christ, we have all of these signifiers that, we are not pointing to Christ. That's

indicating the mystery of Christ, rather you're pointing to something that is another indirect reference and I think that's how the icons function. Most of the Eastern Orthodox that I know don't see even icons of what we would think of Jesus, they are icons of Christ, not Jesus. (So icons are theologically valid because they are an indirect reference to something that cannot be perceived? Sounds right.)

H: That's right! It's the risen Christ.

B: These aren't pictures of the man.

D: That's exactly what I'm getting at. That's how it transcends the problem.

B: O.k. so now you've got your answer.

G: It's using the senses to go beyond the senses too. The senses are what we use. It's the same way D. with the Jesus prayer, it's the same thing. It's pointing to, it can be a tool or a pathway to the unitive state.

F: I think so.

B: So the problem is this: How can they point to Christ, image Christ, even speak of Christ, when Christ is not just one individual? It's problematic. Yes. The oneness of two disparate natures does not constitute one being. So do you all understand why Christ is a problem?

I: Yes.

D: I do understand Bernadette but what I'm saying is that, I think that... um (two second pause...)

B: Well, say it later.

D: O.k.

All: ha, ha, ha...

B: Thus Christ is neither one being, but the inseparable oneness of uncreated and created being, the unmixed union of divine and human nature. Christ is neither one human being nor one divine being. This is the problem endemic in the incarnation. A problem that is the real mystery of Christ.

G: Christ is its own order of reality.

B: Yea, well, I put that in here. It is its own genre that we can't get hold of.

C: The unitive state is part and parcel of Christ and the unitive state is never a union of God and the person, it's always God and the soul.

B: This is important to bring out too. We all talk about our union with God. Are you with me? Strictly speaking, we are never one with God.

E: Right.

B: We! The self is never one with God. The individual I. This is what is happening in us. It is our human nature that is one with God and those two together constitute Christ. Cause we all say oh, he's in the unitive state. Well, isn't that pompous? But how beautiful the reality and truth of it is. If you say, he's not one with God, let's talk about Pope Francis, I like him, hey, he's not one with God. Christ, *his human nature is one with God*, not him. Do you think they'd get that?

G: no.

F: no.

B: Hey, let's talk about Jesus then, he's not one with God. His oneness with God is Christ and you know what? Jesus said as much! Only God can reveal this to you. Just because you see me in the flesh, you're not going to get it! He knew that. Flesh and blood cannot reveal this to you. I say it again and again, if it's not revealed to you, go become a Mormon.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

G: You are saying that we shouldn't point to the union.

B: I'm saying you can't.

G: I know. And because you can't, I'm saying we can stop the pointing.

B: I'm not going to tell people anything...

G: As I read through, this I'm thinking in my mind, I'm thinking stop the action and you begin to **understand** something.

B: I don't think everyone is going around pointing anyway, but I'm pointing out...

A: ha, ha...

B: All right now, question (pop quiz time!): Because Jesus was an individual being who was one with God, is he then not Christ?

D: no

B: Jesus had no dual natures! Christ is neither one individual human being nor one individual divine being. Anyway, just as Jesus, Mary, Paul and a host of other human beings are one with God, but they themselves are not Christ. Like Paul, Jesus could have said, not I, but Christ lives in me. A truth that does not make me Christ. Christ is the true nature of everyman's eternal oneness with God, which oneness is no particular human being. That's just what we were saying. Christ really is everybody's oneness with God. But it's not you. You are never one with God.

F: You're not you.

B: Well, you're not Christ.

F: But you're not yourself either. Your who-ness.

B: I say that's wrong because I believe you are who you are.

F: You are identified as such, but that is not my existential truth.

B: You've got to be careful with your vocabulary! (Pot calling the kettle black?) This is a big vocabulary thing.

H: That's right!

B: When you say he or she is Christ, that's wrong. That's why Paul is so great. You know he said, Christ lives in me. The "I" in you is gone. And Jesus could have said the same thing.

C: Whereas, in Hinduism, they say thou art that. Since Christ is really two what's, the divine and the human what as it were, we could say, Thou art not what. (B. probably makes a funny face here)

All: ha, ha, ha...

G: Thou **art** what.

C: The divine in me is not the self.

H: He got an A-plus. I just want you to know.

B: Unbelievable. You know last time we had a retreat here and C. was here and I said C. can you pull those blinds? O.k. and we all went on talking for at least five minutes! O.k. so he got up and went over there and pulled the string and that was the end of it! And there's C. lookin' around. And you've been here a dozen times! (She's teasing him because she loves him.)

C: I know.

B: I don't get you!

H: So he's not mechanical, so what? (as Dumbledore said before awarding ten points to Neville Longbottom (who was Gryffindor through and through), "It takes courage to stand up to your enemies, but it takes even greater courage to stand up to your friends" (of thirty years).)

F: Is it proper for us to say that Jesus instituted the Eucharist? Or is it really Christ?

H: That was my question of last night.

B: Oh course for me, I don't see, No! No human being would even think of it!

H: That's why I said, who's speaking?

B: The Divine Christ. When we refer to the Divine Christ we are referring to what? To God! The Divine Christ is the Logos. It's the human that is, most people want to refer to that as Jesus. I don't really have a problem with that cause that's God's human nature but I say God instituted the whole thing. God is the only one who can do the miracle! Which is what it is. No human being can do this miracle. Jesus never worked a miracle. (Perhaps he felt used just as she felt used.)

H: That was I's point yesterday.

E: H., when Paul says no longer I, but Christ lives in me, to me it's that Christ living in me that's speaking. It's the Christ living in Jesus that is speaking.

B: Now look, I look upon this Paul thing as two different states. When he says **living in me**, that's the unitive state. Are you with me? When he says **no longer I** that's the hypostatic union. That is beyond the unitive state.

G: When Jesus instituted, or when that even occurs, it's Jesus thinking through the unitive state. It's not just a human being making this up.

D: I have a real problem with that. Empirically, it's always Jesus speaking. Informed by what knowing is the only question. It's not who is speaking.

G: yes

D: Empirically, it is always Jesus speaking.

G: Yet, haven't you ever had the experience, personally, every one of us? Where something just comes out and we don't even, I do.

D: I never have had any experience of saying, "Oops! Who said that?"

H: Remember Moses who said I can't be a prophet, I can't speak, and God said, don't worry. I'll do it.

A: What I want to say is the revealer does not necessarily know what is being revealed.

B: Oh! listen to this!

F: Oh, my!

B: I said it can happen. We were talking at lunch and I said sometimes you blurt something out and it strikes us, where did that come from? (B. writes about how surprisingly profound her "blurtings" out could be in her autobiography.) And then he said sometimes, what did you say?

F: I don't know what is being said until I hear it.

B: He doesn't even know.

G: exactly

F: every homily

All: Ha, ha, ha...

D: I'll tell you why I'm very cautious about this because it's one millimeter from automatic writing.

H: The importance of discernment. This is why I ask the question the person instituting, I mean this is the first time anybody said anything like that...

B: He didn't institute anything! (She is not saying nothing was instituted. She is saying no man can work miracles. God did it, not him.)

H: It's a difference between the beginning and end of his life.

B: A. wants to say...

A: I was very moved by what B. said, maybe Jesus at the end of his life didn't even know. So for me the institution of the Blessed Sacrament could again have been this instance, where in the midst of this Seder meal, he's saying these things, even afterwards not really sure what happened, but that God

H: This is exactly what J. was saying.

A: But I got the feeling that you're saying God is speaking through him.

G: no

A: I think maybe unknown to him he revealed that. Now we know what it was.

F: In John's Gospel, it says the man born of the spirit is like the wind. No one knows where it comes from or where it's going. I think that is true of the man himself.

I: Particularly in the context of the gospel of John, and Jesus knowing that this was going to be over in 18 hours and the sense that what could happen in terms of, a type of a letting go, that could initiate that Eucharist and that...

B: It's a way of saying, even though I'm going I am not leaving you. That was his way. He knew and he said no matter what happens, he said I will be with you always. This is a huge saying.

H: And then the risen Christ said it is better that I go. (The Ascension reveals that even the body's way of knowing will eventually be absorbed into the Absolute.)

C: Yes. If I don't get out of here, you won't get going.

B: If I don't go you won't get it.

H: Exactly!

J: I'm thinking of your circles...

F: The Eucharist is more of a post resurrectional reality.

B: It is.

F: Not the last supper reality

H: But the words of the last supper are being remembered.

B: We didn't know anything about the Eucharist until months after, at Pentecost, weeks later. And they were just thinking well, what do we do now? Well, let's just do the one thing that he said. Then all of a sudden... What did you want to say?

J: I was thinking of the circles.

B: Yea

J: So Jesus at the time of the last supper was a very thin line.

B: yea

J: So what would be speaking was basically God at the center. (What? Not Jesus?!)

B: Basically, I would say.

J: So even though the outer rim of the circle may not fully understand exactly, all this inside (the circle) was what was speaking.

B: You know what? This is my view. There is only one compensation. Like I say, I wouldn't wish no self on a dog. Ten years trying to adjust to that. Walking around like a dead man. Forget it! The one compensation is that knowing. Brother, that is enormous. And you don't know how you know, and it's not your knowing. The brain doesn't even function. But it's a **knowing**. Strictly speaking, even when we go through the circles, more and more we are participating in that divine knowing. And you know, well, it's amazing. Because everything else is going wrong, everything else is falling apart. But somehow you know you're on track, and that everything is going to be all well. You know this. Nobody wants to get rid of that rim. That's the only consolation there is. There isn't bliss. There isn't any of this other junk or anything else.

G: That's it.

B: There is a knowing. And it's not yours!

J: Yes

F: And you know that!

All: ha, ha, ha...

F: an existential knowing

J: It's not you that knows.

All: Ha, ha, ha...

F: The rim knows.

B: I know a whole lot! But it's all just **fluff** compared to, you know, the truth. You are just trying to get the truth across that's all. And you write books and books and books and you're really just trying to get what you really know about the truth across. Anyway, you want ten minutes?

All: yes.

B: All right, let's get out of here!

All: Ha, ha, ha...