

CONVOY COURSE LECTURE #1

1. Somebody said to me this morning that they had not worked out the relationship of RS-1 to such a course as this, and I suppose he is only one among many. The thing I fear most is that the romantic I am sure would think that this course does replace RS-1. No. RS-1 would have been a real good evangelistic tool back about 1820, and the reason why is the Christian mindset that was in people. That is a bit of an exaggeration to be sure because RS-1 is a secular course. I like to point out that I taught that course in a highly secular university before I taught it anywhere else, where you wouldn't be caught dead mentioning the word God or Christ or Spirit. It's a secular course. What I said is not quite true. But the way we teach it now, it would have been good as an evangelistic tool in the first quarter of the last century.

2. It has been very difficult for me to get my mind around the fact that a large portion of our world has been Christianized. Where that first dramatically got into my being was in Southeast Asia where you saw that those people had been Zionized, Hinduized, Budaized, Islamized and Christianized. What you are dealing with when you use those terms is that they had been given a mindset or they had been given a structure, in and through which they experienced the ontological depths of life. Tillich insisted throughout his whole life, and this is where he was in some disagreement with some existentialists other than himself; he kept insisting that there was an ontological ground through which you addressed any existential message. And obviously though, in the time in which he lived the emphasis had to be on existence rather than upon essence. We came into this kind of awareness a little bit when we got ahold of what we call the Ur Images. The Western world had been, by the time of the Great Awakening, thoroughly Christianized.

3. I noticed in my early work in the ministry, though I did not have this kind of a broad understanding of it, this same reality when in preaching down in the mountains of Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee. In a given community you were either a saint, a Christian, or you were a sinner boy. And you understand these young people--30 or under -- called themselves sinner boys. If the preacher had asked them about who they were without any sense of humor, they would say, "I am a sinner boy." This indicates the fact that both the saved and the sinner boys were operating out of the same ontology. And the sinner boys were in as good shape as the saved boys in the sense that they had a way to relate themselves to the ground of being.

4. Now, back at the time of the Great Awakening, you had a Christianized world. To use a Methodist term, a good hunk of that world was backslidden but they were still within the ontology of what I mean by Christianization. Now, for better or for worse, the western world, and in my opinion the whole world, is no longer Christianized. My theology tells me that that is good because God did it. Though it makes our work perhaps a little bit harder when you think of evangelism. As long as you are nurtured in the church you are still dealing with that Christian world view that is down in the deeps. Then you awaken people relative to that ontology through the contentless word in Jesus Christ.

5. When you are moving outside of the church in the world, which is what you mean by evangelism, then you are going to have to address a different world view. Now, that is what this course is after. I think that it has a double function -- that the course must be able to address both the world and the church. And there isn't anything strange about that at all. It must have an audience that is outside the church, for that is what evangelism is, but it also has to address the church because the church is that body of people that has to do this evangelism. So that this course, in principle, needs to be taught in every parish or rather in every local congregation to give them the tools to see that is taught in every parish.

6. But it also has another function within the church, which I want to point to for a moment, which indicates to me that the course is two courses though in one. In each instance it doesn't change in terms of its content or its presentation. That has to do with the relationship of RS-1 to this course. RS-1 is the course that communicates the word of life.

7. By the way, my brother called me on the phone yesterday and said, I have an address in front of me that a man gave in the chapel of Boston University last week: "Once there was a man who said All that is, is Good; Point 1. Point 2; Once there was a man who said, Your total life is accepted Point 3: Once there was a man who said All the past is approved. Point 4: The future is open." That's interesting isn't it? That's what we are for, to have people tell the word, no matter how it gets out. A person must hear this conscious/unconscious ontological ground.

8. There is then the task in which he self-consciously relates this word to that ground, and in doing so changes the ground itself. This is what Richard Niebuhr meant by perpetual revolution or perpetual conversion as he put it. The other day we spelled this out, that in the broad it has to do with sociality; with the physical dimension of life, or sexuality; with the psychological aspect of life, or that is what I like to call phaseology, and with the eschatological or man's experience of the transparency, the secular experience of the transparency of existence.

9. If this is not done, you finally do not live out of the word. I wonder if you notice the difference between somebody who has just heard the word, and someone who lives their life out of the word. Then in a given situation you don't have to hit this second guy with a 2 by 4, you wink you eye and he is called into question. Or you don't have to go and pastoral counsel this guy when he gets into despair. He just rehearses to himself that his life is accepted and that this despair is a creative word from God and he better find out what God is trying to say in the word. Do you get the difference between these? The second one is the one who has done this.

10. We need to relate in terms of a concrete practicality which has to do in the broadest sense with the crucial problem. For instance in this course, we say that the male, and I am basically going to be working with the male here, that today he has a vocational problem. I mean he has a vocational problem, he has a problem of disengagement in society, and he has a problem in the family. I do not mean these to be related only to one section of the course in that fashion there. All of these relate to all. He has a problem in what I call education, or in understanding how to be a civilized person. Then of course, this comes down another level and another and another perhaps until you get to the uniqueness of my own situation. For instance, this vocation problem is the problem of any male in the world today. Then you get down to my concretion. I am a lawyer in a given law firm at a certain age. If I am a woman lawyer there, it is something different than a man. You get down to my unrepeatableness.

11. That's the relationship of RS-1 to this course as it relates to the church. You take this whole thing and switch it around, what you have done is to make RS-1 have a double function and also shows you where you touch in evangelism. This course, if you are going to get the person outside the church, is geared so that you hit him here to penetrate here to lay open the possibility of this. Then he's ready to hear RS-1 and say, as the New Testament puts it, "Abbe, Father." So that if you hook a man in this course he is not enlivened until he hears RS-1, until he is able to say God by name. You and I are going to have to do some hard theologizing here. I am not telling you anything you didn't know. This is the time when we have to get this concretely thought out on behalf of the church. So what I am trying to say, the new course, whatever we call it, has a double action, or double function which discloses the double function of RS-1. I suspect what I am saying now has been true from the very beginning. Another way to hold this is that RS-1 deals with God the Redeemer and this new course deals with God the Creator. And there is a double function in each one of these.

12. That is what in a way this course is all about. I do not think that anybody is naive enough to think that anybody is clear that this is the course, but I think that the direction that this course is moving is correct. It is a matter, I would judge, of four years of getting this course refined and cleaned. The crucial issue for me is an adequate philosophical statement relative to it. This means that you young ones who have just recently come out of the arena of philosophy are the ones who are going to have to get said what needs to be said in this arena, with one drawback. I have been beating myself over the head because, whatever the reason, I am not on the edge of philosophy. But then I have a sneaking instinct that right now formal philosophy is not the place where you read to get up on the philosophical edge and that the Lord forced our whole body this year to reading where you do go to get up on the philosophical edge. That is in anthropology. If that be true we are more prepared than one would think otherwise.

13. One more thing on the course as a whole is the general layout. Though that layout is fairly rational now on the surface, I do not think that the rationality of it has really been thought through in the particular units of the course,

or the particular lectures of the course. There is still the problem of getting clarity on the basic theme and how the parts of it are variations on the theme. We are on our way toward a symphony, but we do not have it yet.

14. There are five units in it: one introduction, one conclusion, and then the guts of the course in the middle lectures -- two, three and four. As the course was built we thought it out by analyzing the concrete problems of the man in the world today, and boiled those down to the problem of vocation, the problem of disengagement in the social process and then to the problem of the family life. A fourth problem of personal integrity or authenticity I will put under the first and last lectures. And in one sense we came up with the idea of a kind of lack of corporate integrity and a lack of personal integrity though the downbeat was on the first.

15. When that was done, we saw that this was a negative course, or it was a course that analyzed and did not get at solutions. There were possible ways in which you could handle that. Then the summer took place where we saw that the work of this summer was actually the answer to the problem. The most crucial thing we saw is that these personal perplexities facing man today could not finally be interpreted in terms of individualism but were the normal fruit of a society suffering deep malaise. That broke the course loose and we began to analyze the economic dynamic of society in relationship to the malaise that had to do with the vocation of the male. We analyzed the malaise in the political dynamic in relationship to the "Mickey Mouse-ism" relative to engagement in society today. Then we analyzed the cultural and in doing this we finally saw that we were dealing with style, if you see the triangles here and that the educational dynamic within the cultural was intimately related to style so you almost had something like the problem of the inadequacies of the educational dynamic in our day in relation to the family and if you will remember that the educational are tyrannized within the cultural dynamic itself, you can see that.

16. This is the general structure of the course and in the first part, we are really laying out the whole course, for personal integrity cannot be disassociated from this, in the light of what I just did over there. There isn't such a thing as personal integrity disassociated from these problems and these dynamics and then the matter of corporate integrity has to do with what in the world you are personally going to do about this situation. And this is where your invisible college concept comes in. If you say that here you have RS-I, you are right but it is RS-I shoved directly at the practical points in life where one at this moment in history is experiencing the impingement of the deeps.

17. We have not really cleaned out this problem of teaching men, women and youth together or separately, although tomorrow we could teach this course with all three if we had to. (Nobody has ever given any of these lectures we are giving today. They are new.) The woman is in 'cultural crisis' to be sure, but here is where you hit the family. For the female, it is not the family the way you hit it over here. It is the family as the cage in which the woman vocationally has been trapped.

18. Now, with the youth, I am not quite sure how they do it, but your problem here is that the youth is saying no to the vocation as my generation experienced it. For instance, when I was young you could choose to be a lawyer, a doctor, a businessman, laboring man, or whatever else. That is not the choice of youth today. They see the disintegration of this. Their vocation is how am I going to be engaged in society and because they do not have the answer, they are floating, period. The only alternative which makes jackasses out of them, is for them to try to return to the normal vocation, like a scientist or something. These are the zombies. You don't quite see them as zombies but in ten years, I prophesy, they are going to be the zombies. They couldn't stand the pain of looking beyond vocation for the sense of historical vocation.

19. I still believe it will work for all three. Take your female over there in disengagement and think of the League of Women Voters. They have had an abstract engagement, horrifyingly abstract, but they have been engaged. The man has just given up social engagement and the woman has been abstract. The youth have been engaged but they have been hitting at the wrong place for engagement, I would guess.

20. You can only be human if you embrace your sociality, you can only finally be human if you embrace the givenness of your sexuality, you can only be human if you embrace the fact (We have to get a word.) the fact that you grow old, your phaseology. Finally, you can only be human if you grasp your transparency, or your capacity to grasp transparency (but I think I will put it only if you grasp your transparency.) You are fooling with *ensoi*, *poursoi*, here. This is not the *poursoi*, this is the *poursoi* within the *poursoi*, the Kierkegaardian diagram that a self is a relationship that relates itself to itself. When radicalized it means that this whole thing here is this line. I will

shorten this to make it a bit more artistic, in which this whole thing now becomes this line. This whole thing is this line. That is, the given that in every situation I must transcend that situation and take an attitude toward it. And then when you decide that your whole life is a matter of taking an attitude toward every situation, then you have taken an attitude toward your whole life. What RS-I is all about, is this. The *poursoi* here. Or this is what makes a spirit a man, when the relationship of the self to itself goes about its proper business of being relationship to, that takes a relationship to itself, it grounds itself transparently in the power that constituted it. The last is this.

21. So in this course you are dealing with the rudimentary ingredients of the ensoi here, toward which you have to take an attitude -- what comes out of this attitude is that you are going to be the one who taken attitude. Then these in the abstraction, are four -- which is what this first lecture is about -- sociality, sexuality, phaseality, and transparency. You philosophers, especially if you are going to shove into anthropology you better check this. It is pretty obvious you have the social, the physical, the psychological in the broad sense of that term, and the eschatological here. I don't know where else you would go personally. But that is where you would have to keep checking constantly; that is the structure of the course.

22. The problem in the lecture, it would seem to me with some small areas that are an exception that we have thought ourselves through pretty well in these arenas but what we have not done yet is find the way to turn this into dramaturgy and only then do you have a lecture. I was very interested in Slicker's and McClesky's presentation. They gave the backdrop. Now how you transpose this into dramaturgy is the problem and that is what makes the lectures. As I was working on this last night, one of the problems in that is what are you going to leave out. You certainly aren't going to get up there and give four different lectures, each one of which would take two hours. What do you just condense, what do you leave out? Then the problem is getting across the drama that hooks them in each one. I am not sure that I can at all do that.

23. Anyway, I think the lecture starts out something like this. To say that we are in the midst of radical social change, has become almost a cliché statement. Our whole world has exploded, history has exploded, so that you could say that the man who lived at the turn of the century would have been more at home in the world of Julius Caesar than he would in our present world. Or you could say, more happenings have happened in the last 10 years than in all of civilization up to this particular point. One needs only underscore the dramatic radicality of this moment in history. It is not the crucial thing that has happened in our time.

24. The cruciality of this moment in our history is the Implosion that has taken place in the midst of that explosion. It is the happening to the happening that is setting our age apart. And what I mean by that, is that in the midst of this explosion, man has been forced to rewrite, to resay to himself from the ground up, what it means to be a human being. I want to underscore the fact that it is these externalities that have occasioned, if you please, this internality. You must never get these two things separated, but they are not the same thing. The external situation of our time has occasioned the internal crises within mankind. I say that man has to forge, all of us in our time, a brand new image of what it means to be a human being. And herein lies the 1001 frustrations and self doubts and anxieties that all men across the face of the globe are experiencing today.

25. And let us not forget that this implosion in the midst of the explosion is not something that has happened simply to sentinel people such as are gathered in this room, nor is it something that only happened in western civilization. It is utterly global. I would like to insist, and I think I could support this insistence with practical evidence, that what I am talking about is happening as much to the man among the Zulu tribes in Southern Africa as it is to a man in the midst of New York City. This in itself is worthy of serious attention. One dimension of the radicality of this moment in history is that for the first time this situation is global. And the exciting aspect of this is that all men have become brothers afresh at this moment of history in the common thirst after what it means to be a human being in the post modern world or on the other side of this eruption within history. I am convinced that if one is seriously to forge a new anthropology -- I mean by that an image of what it means to be authentically a man or a woman -- there are certain arenas that he necessarily must deal with.

26. Or to put this another way, if there is anyone who is concerned to personally deal, for his own sake and for the sake of humanity, with the primary imperative in our age, namely, forging a new image of man, he cannot escape wrestling with four arenas of life. The first arena is that of his sociality. In our day we have discovered that there is no escape, that man only exists in a social nexus, even like a fresh fish exists in water. There is no I except over against a thou. Man has been forced to probe this awareness to the depth.

27. The second arena which a man must deal with if he is going to grasp what it means to be a man at this moment in history has not to do with the social, but with the physical or the biological. Man is an animal, and when he shows up in life he either is a female animal or a male animal. And to grasp in depth what it means to be human he has to raise the question all over again as to what it means to be male, or what is the male and what is the female. And indeed, either the male or the female has to ask both of those questions for because man is a social being, there is no way for a grasp of what it means to be a man, save he is over against a woman, and vice versa.

28. And the third arena that a man who is concerned to appropriate what it means to be a civilized human being at this hour in time has to deal with, is that of growing old. You remember the story of Gautama the Buddha, when he had four experiences that awakened him to appropriate the deeps of consciousness itself. One was sickness, one was death, one was suffering and one was growing old. Man grows old. But the exciting aspect of growing old is that you get more than one opportunity to construct your personality.

29. I have always been fascinated, and I suppose you have been fascinated, with the idea of reincarnation. I am not very much learned on the subject of how you change from a jackass into a man, or a man (I can't quite say I don't know something about that) but I am increasingly clear of that move from youth to maturity, to the state of the elder. A man must probe this to the bottom if he is going to redo at the bottom what it means to be a human being.

30. The fourth arena is hard to talk about. I don't want to say it's the most important, but it is like you ought to deal with it first - though you can't deal with it first, because it is sort of like it embodies them all and yet is separate. Yet until you grasp these other arenas in some depth you are not able to delineate this one which has to do with experiencing the inner meaning of every situation, in such a fashion that you can grasp the relationship of the inner meaning of that particular to the inner meaning of all situations that you have participated in either directly or indirectly through the stored up knowledge of civilization itself.

THE SOCIAL

31. The intensification of man's awareness that he is a social creature and only exists within society has forced him into a broad and deep analysis of sociality. He has not been able to escape from the extremely difficult task of delineating and attempting to understand afresh the fundamental dynamics of any particular society.

32. The anthropological studies that began in the last half of the last century, and have continued through to this present hour, have changed their concern from sometime in the thirties from simply study of man in his past to concentrating upon his present task of analyzing the sociality of man in his present day. That has brought the discipline of anthropology into the floodlight situation that it exists in today, and I suppose that in our time that we have somewhat of a common mind about this dynamic and need only to call your attention to those. And, when I say that we have a common mind, what I am trying to get said is that man has always been in the midst of analyzing these dynamics of society. I do not mean that it hasn't gone on in other cultures. It is just that I am more familiar with western civilization. In drawing together, as I think the discipline of anthropology has done today, it has made use of the insights starting at least back with Plato, and I mean the insights relative to self-conscious events that delineate society for him. So this is nothing new that we are dealing with.

33. Anyway, any society has the problem of preserving itself. Aristotle himself said that one of the basic drives in life was that of self preservation, and that seems pretty obvious, that man has to sustain himself physically, or there is nothing else, pretty obviously. But man, according to Aristotle, never sustains himself for the sake of sustaining himself. That he did as an animal. But when self-consciousness broke in, then man was the kind of an animal that, as they put it in the early days, had an end or an aim in life. And Aristotle called this the rational, so that there was a propensity in the consciousness of consciousness toward the rational or the meaning of life, if you please, as well as toward self preservation.

34. But Aristotle also discovered something else, that if man did not order himself, that the propensity of self preservation would finally destroy him. Therefore the propensity of rationality would be utterly useless. So he saw that there was in man a secondary propensity toward order that had to be satisfied before the propensity of self preservation and rationality could operate. In his opinion, this was the beginning of society. Society has to fulfill these propensities, all of them in men, the propensity for order and for rationality and for preservation, through constructing structures in and through which these propensities can be satisfied.

35. This is the basis of what I have termed the fundamental dynamic in sociality. That is to say, there is the economic process that defines the social process. There is the political process that defines the social process, and there is the cultural process that defines the social process.

36. I suppose it is very clear to most of us that the economic process is also made up of certain dynamic. One of them is the dynamic that has to do with transposing certain materials into useable resources. Without resources, there is no such a thing as sustenance and this was true of the caveman as well as in our complex society. Then, there has to be the means within a society, however primitive or however sophisticated, of transposing resources into usable goods. We usually call that production. Then in any economic process there has to be a scheme by which these goods are relatively equitably distributed to all of the people, and we call this the dynamic of distribution.

37. In the political process, the same dynamic is discernible. First of all, in any society there had to be a dynamic of peace. This is really brute force. Though this force is regulated by law, finally it is force. Without the force that gives a certain kind of stability you do not have society at all, and therefore the whole economic process is useless. You also have to have a system of arbitration or a system whereby relatively speaking and it is always relative, Everyman has an opportunity to participate in the means whereby the order is maintained that makes possible the functioning of the whole society.

38. Then in every society there is a system of, I hate to call it welfare because we have changed this meaning, but you could call it the well being of every man -- his well being relative to the goods of this world, his well being relative to the possibility of developing his own creativity, and his well being regarding the guarding of his own personal existence.

39. So the social process, you begin to see, is a dynamical process made up of the dynamics of sustenance, the dynamics of ordering, and the dynamics of culture, or the development of the rational capacity of man. The cultural dynamic is comprised of the educational dynamic, the means whereby the knowledge of the community is ordered, transmitted from one generation to the next, and constantly refined and developed. It is also made up of the communal style that every society has to invent various patterns, and these are abstract patterns of human relationship, that is what I mean by communal style. And then finally, every society is comprised of a symbolic dynamic that communicates to that society its final meaning, or better put, the images and dramas that communicate to the people what that society is all about.

40. It is important to see that this is a dynamical process, and that one of these cannot possibly exist with out the other. There is no political process save there is an economic and cultural, and you can begin to define the way in which these dynamics are interrelated and sustain one another. It is pretty clear to me that the economic process in a way maintains the political process. If you do not have the development of the resources and the transposition of those into goods with some kind of equitable distribution, you do not have any kind of ordering of society. One way to put this is the crude; the political process has to be supported, and it is supported by the resources. There is a deeper meaning of that, but that is a way to get ahold of it.

41. And I like to say that the economic provides the ground for the rational. I have already indicated that if there is not a means for sustaining life, you cannot even talk about the development of consciousness in the sense of producing continuing creativity within history.

42. The political task is to delimit the economic process, to keep it in line, so to speak. I pretty well grasp that if this is not controlled by forces outside itself (and I want to come back to that in a moment relative to our present age) then this gets all out of line and consumes the total life of the people. I think you can point to when this has happened in primitive society as well as in modern society.

43. I like to say that the political is the guardian of the culture. It defends this and particularly it defends it from itself and also from the economic. Or it nurtures this. Our fathers, when they developed the constitution, saw that the function of the state was the total well being of the people. That meant it existed for the sake of this. And I think that was clear.

44. Then we come to the cultural. If you do not have the cultural to constantly illuminate the economic, then man is simply an animal looking for his next acorn. And then it offers direction to the political. Though the political has to defend or to guard this, that which it guards gives it its self understanding or its direction of what it ought to be guarding. I have put this in a very rudimentary sense in order to point out that if something goes wrong here it affects the whole society.

45. Now the moment that man grasps afresh in a new intensification his sociality and was driven to a new kind of analysis or reanalysis of the dynamics of sociality itself, he began to see what was actually going on in his world, relative to the dynamical process, that had to do with the way he was experiencing himself in our time. And I want to put up here a diagram that may indicate what I think he has come up with. The first thing that he has seen is that this economic dynamic has gotten all out of proportion in relationship to the cultural and the political dynamic. And this is somewhat understandable and is the glory of the economic aspect of life. All of us are aware that this dynamic in life, in the social process as a self consciousness entity standing on its own feet, was born extremely late (at least in western civilization). At the time of the middle ages, before the rise of the bourgeoisie which you can say began to come into their own in the 16th century and at the earliest began their rise about the 8th century. But any way, generally in the middle ages, the family took care of the economic dynamic of life. It is only in the modern world that the economic order became a self-conscious independent entity.

46. That in itself is a marvel, but what is even more marvelous is how the economic dynamic of life grew in scope and in strength in such a fashion that it literally captured the cultural aspect of life and captured it as an independent body so that fundamentally within the cultural it is the economic that is giving the content. Now, in doing that it had to render the political impotent. It could not have done this, if this were functioning. I am at the moment talking about the glory of the economic. It became so powerful that it rendered the political relatively impotent in order to finally capture the potent.

47. Now, man in grasping afresh what it means to be a human being, understands that he must now, if he is to be a human being, engage himself completely in the social processes of our time in order to bring a more adequate balance among these dynamics. There is no individual save an individual in society, as there is no society save society is individuals. When you talk about the warpedness in society in this dynamic, you are talking about a warpedness in myself or in yourself as an individual. To be an authentic human being today demands that there is no escape, no question, if you engage yourself in attempting to bring a new balance (which will manifest itself in a new kind of imbalance, for society is ever dynamic), if you are to grasp yourself even remotely as an authentic human being in our time. And we intend this weekend to be dealing with this area.