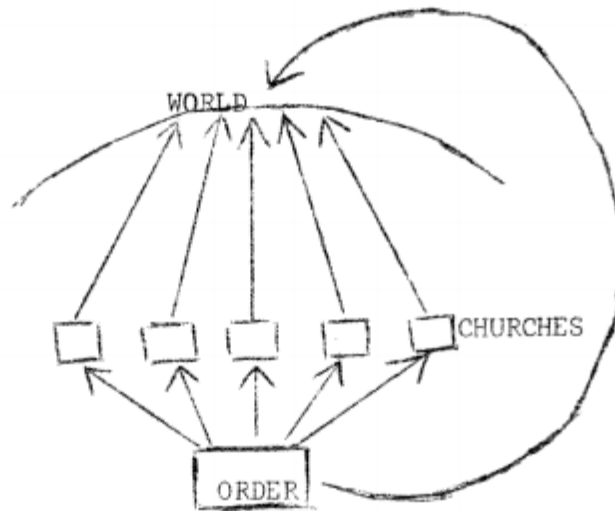


**THE CONVOY COURSE:
EVANGELISM TO THE WORLD**



OUR ONE STRUGGLE IS WITH SATAN 1-15	MODEL FOR DIRECTLY IM- PACTING THE WORLD 16-20	CONVOY COURSE: DYNAMICS AND AUDIENCE 21-28
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1. Two years ago at the time of Advent we were toying seriously with having a corporate nervous breakdown over the problem of contingency (remember the financial crisis and Move 222) but we decided to postpone it to Eastertide because the nervous breakdown was really over sheer possibility. And you can't have a nervous breakdown over possibility except at Eastertide. By the time we got to Eastertide we didn't think it was necessary to have one.

2. Now I come on myself coming up on Advent again, feeling a little disappointed that we didn't go ahead and have our nervous breakdown over possibility at that following Eastertide, because once again I am toying with having another nervous breakdown. I've been trying to relate it to contingency and haven't been able to do so. It's still with possibility. I don't know if this continues until Eastertide, maybe we can go ahead and have our corporate nervous breakdown and get it over with. I don't know quite what would be on the other side of it but the way I feel right now, it would be rather tempting to go on and discover what that might mean.

3. What I'm trying to point to is the complexity of our situation has it got to you also? Do you find yourself sitting down, utterly bewildered, not knowing which end is up? The sense of the compass is gone, and you sit there and say "This can't be." You've got to bring some kind of order into the vision and you sit there doing not anything. At the end of that period of thinking you're even worse off than when you began because you begin to think of more complexity and more complexity and more complexity and more complexity.

4. The more all this goes on with me, the more vivid the poetic image of Satan, or the devil, becomes for me.

5. In the words of Jesus, he calls out from the other world the way it is in the other world. First I know he says the other world is the love of the mystery. In years of working with that I still don't have that clear in my mind, what it means to love God. You read the medieval devotional literature or you read in the Psalms about pining for God, but with the kind of activism and liberalism I was brought up in all that pining stuff was pushed aside as some kind of pacifism, some kind of quietism, and therefore wrong. So I'm having a hard time, but I know it's love of the mystery. It's bathing in the very presence of the mystery in all its dimensions and all aspects and all events of life.

6. And then I am also clear that this other world is freedom. It's awful freedom, but it's the kind of freedom that feels literally like chains have been dropped from you. But it's not unpainful freedom.

7. And, of course, it is responsibility for the world. I don't like that terminology. What I'm talking about is a kind of almost impertinence, almost substituting for God, in terms of saying with your life the way the humanizing process has to be.

8. Then a fourth category has to do with Satan. I seem to remember that the category of the Devil, or Satan, came from the Persians. Therefore in the Psalms you do not have that kind of figure used. And as I've been fooling with the Psalms, I have not yet found what the personification that we term the Devil points to in the Psalms. But I'm beginning to think that one of the audiences (who maybe is always present in one way or another) is Satan.

9. One of these days we're going to have to talk not about how the other world is, but about how this world appears from the other world. And the more I've begun to creep up on that, the more excited I've become. It's almost as if until you do that you can't quite grasp what the totally other world is like. It's like if you were going to give the Being Lecture that I was supposed to give this summer and didn't give, you would say the key is that you set yourself right in the midst of Being. Then you look outwards, you look outwards through chastity and contemplation and doing and knowing. You look through those to poverty and obedience and prayer and meditation. But as you look outward you can't really see poverty and obedience and prayer and meditation all you can see is the inner circle. Now as you look back toward this world, from the other world, you can't see this world because there's a great big old figure there that shuts off the view that's Satan.

10. Now I'm quite sure that when you stand in the other world, this world is complex beyond complexity, but because of Satan it is simple. You remember how the 19th century people talked about the simple Gospel? Because they were fundamentally Gnostics, they saw the simplicity first of all like the statement "The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins." They said any fool older than kindergarten can understand that. That's gnosticism. And, because they were moralists, again it was simple. All you had to do was to keep the bourgeois ethic, like be nice to your kids and your wife. And that's what life was all about. Oh, boy. How stupid can you get? But don't forget the gospel is simple. We've often said that once you've made the decision to stand before God you can talk about simplicity, but before that you don't talk about a simple gospel. But now, from the other world, the simplicity is that all the complexity of this world, of temporality, all the complexity of morality which is this world, is focused in one figure: Satan. That's the simplicity of it.

11. Now, you've got to understand this is simplicity in the midst of unbelievable complexity. If we are about to have a corporate nervous breakdown this year, it is going to be far more of an earthquake than if we'd had it two years ago. And if we can postpone it another two years' oh, my, I don't want to be around when it comes up again. I know all this, but I don't believe it. I couldn't go on living if I believed that things could get more complex than they are, but I know that because it's like this, The further you move, if you can use a figure like that, into the other world, the more complex it gets. Living in this world, oh, it's a vale of tears. I mean

ontological tears, if you please, not some crying over morals. It's a vale of tears, the very glory of it is in that, but the very simplicity is in Satan.

12. You know how the cherubim guarded the gates of Eden after God threw Adam out? Well, that's sort or like Satan. Although Satan is between me and that other world there it's not like he's blocking me he's got a chain around my neck tugging me back into that other world. He's the most deceptive person I ever met. Have you read *The Screwtape Letters* recently? A lot of silly sentimentalism in it, but the wiles of the devil is sheer forthright poetry. It's only him you have to struggle with, and you have to move into mortal combat and slay him. But what this means is that in the other world you never have a personal problem. I've been trying to tell some colleagues that for years, but they don't believe me. They think that you can't really be human without an array of personal problems. In the other world there aren't such things as personal problems. There's just one problem and that is to be an ontological being, a man of faith. The devil will wile you this way and wile you that way, but there's only one thing he's after, that's apostasy that's the simplicity of the other life.

13. What enables the man of faith to maintain himself in the midst of a lifelong desire and temptation to have a nervous breakdown, which increases as the years go by and as one grows in the understanding of the world? Our one struggle is with Satan. Some people may witness to the fact that he goes away for a while, Jesus witnessed to that. You ought to go back and reread the temptation story. I think it's all there. I think Jesus was talking from the other world.

14. We can probably get much better poetry, but how do you get all this said? No longer do you have struggles with your family, your children, your nation, your church, your religious order. Those do not exist in the other world. You ONLY have trouble relative to your love of God. And if you don't think that has implications for your family, and your nation, and your friends, well you may be surprised.

15. Now I think in this Psalm 16, the psalmist is talking a little to God at the beginning, but then I'm wondering if he isn't talking to Satan. Then he talks a little to God, goes back to Satan, and comes back to God in the end.

Keep me, O God, for in thee I have found refuge.
[Now to Satan]

I've already said to the Lord,

'Thou, Lord, art my meaning.' Period.

The gods whom this earth holds sacred are all worthless,

[and remember these gods are concrete. Their names are friend, wife, children, family, nation, church, order the goods of this world, and any other temporality you can mention]

The gods whom earth holds sacred are to me all worthless

[Brother, that's right in Satan's teeth.]

and cursed are all men who make their delight in them;

[That's double barreled.]

those who run after them find trouble without end.

[Those are personal problems.]

I will not offer them libations of blood nor

take their names upon my lips.

[Read the rest for yourself, I have to hurry.]

16. That psalm is more important than any report, but I want to report on my recent trip. I'm not interested in telling you the details of my itinerary. I'm interested in the next 40 years, with a passion that's beginning to glow afresh in me as it hasn't for the past 20 years. I became what you might call a fanatic then, but it's as though my "fanaticism" got tamed. Now I'm taking off again. If I seem as odd to you as I do to me, it must be just a touch frightening to you, because it's frightening to me. I'm after a new bubbling out of passion that will just consume my being. I think it has to do with how to directly impact the world.

17. About 20 years ago we built a model that looked something like this: [see diagram, 1st page] you had the world, and the Christian Faith and Life Community (the beginning of our order) and in between those were the churches the world. Our job, we said, was to move on the churches to get them to attack the problems of the world. But we said that if we were going to awaken the churches, we also had to be a sign in the world, had to move directly on the world. In that way we would come at the churches from behind, so to speak, and call them out into the world.

18. The first job, that of moving on the churches, is in principle done. Now we are moving head on in terms of the world. We are still out to awaken the forces of the churches, because a group of our size could no more do anything out in the world than fly to the moon. But now we are coming at the churches from the other side, coming at them through the world. That, it seems to me, is the next 40 years. In the next 40 years we will encounter the masses.

19. We have to have tools. That is what the so-called convoy course is about. We've always been evangelists, but our audience has always been churchmen, and those who might be churchmen hanging around the periphery of the church. But you do not do evangelism, in the raw sense of that word, within the church. You reawaken, you nurture. Evangelism (if we are ever going to use that word again) has got to go on in the world.

20. I am extremely clear on one thing, and if you look through history you will find proof of it. That is that no one ever did what I call evangelism directly. It's always done indirectly. Those people who came up to you on the street corners a few years ago saying "Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" were not doing evangelism. They were trying to reawaken the memory you had, your Christian memory. Now I'm not against that, mark you. Most of the revival meetings fall into that category. Billy Graham is not an evangelist. He is working within that memory. Evangelism moves out into the pagan (and I mean this very kindly for there's nothing any sweeter smelling to me than a raw pagan.) That is our job now.

21. Within the arena of the new social vehicle, style is the key as far as I'm concerned. And the three aspects of style as we have laid it out in the social process triangles are the life phases (cyclical roles), the procreative schemes (you can't put family there, it's something broader than family), and community (social aggregations). What the Convoy course does on one level is attack the life phases, youth through elder in terms of roles, and the family in terms of the male and female, and those have to be webbed together if you are going to come at the basic problem of authentic engagement in rudimentary community. I have no sentimentality about that. I'm talking about hardheaded naked engagement in the human enterprise.

22. It is our work in the research assembly this summer on the new social vehicle that created the convoy course. In terms of that work, we have created a powerful attack. The convoy course deals with the social problem through style. It deals with the roles of the male and female, the youth and the new and then with the spiritual.

23. We need to work further on the dynamics of the course, particularly on the dramaturgy of the lectures. It is the lectures that bring off the symphony of the course. In every one of those lectures you have to be spinning people. You've got to be twirling each person like a baton until you get them going so that they don't know what you're doing. Then, at the end, it's as if you pull back the veil, and they get a picture of their interior. You have taken their hand without their knowing it, and let them step over into the other world. They don't know what you've done to them. Then you take them back, and at the end of the lecture you invite them to walk into the other world

24. How is it that you get said what it means to name the Name? We have talked about it by saying that anybody who lives before the mystery does not finally know what life is all about until he calls that mystery God. Only then does he live. It may well be that he who names the Name is, to use Paul's term, only he who believes and confesses, not in terms of some moralism, but he who says ontologically "GOD", knows what it is to be God's people. In this sense the Roman Catholics were right in saying that "outside the church there is no salvation." That goes to the bottom of humanness itself.

25. Now, that understanding, it seems to me, is the wellspring behind the convoy course. Therefore the Convoy course has got to be a setup for RS1.

26. There are three audiences for the convoy course. One audience is the galaxy churches. There is no such thing as the renewal of the local congregation if that congregation is not itself moved out in radical engagement, and the engagement behind all engagement is ministering unto the spirit of mankind. If you do not minister unto men's spirits you have no new social vehicle. I think the glory of this summer is that we discovered that when you push at the arena of the social vehicle with integrity, there you discover the spirit. It is also crucial when you turn it around the other way: save you minister unto the spirit deeps of mankind, you can't have a new social vehicle. The convoy course gives the galactic structures of the experiment an instrument by which they can move out. In many ways, all this is is popular preaching.

27. The second audience is the Union churches of the world. The Union churches represent the international community of this world, and form something of a global network. Now, we need to involve the Union churches first of all for funds. We aren't going to do our global program without funds that come out of every corner of the globe. The Union churchmen have influence, and we need their influence. We need their contacts. They have contacts with the affluent people of all the nations of the world. If we sent a hundred more people overseas now, we might wake up nine months from now and find that the miracle we have created across the globe had collapsed because we could not maintain and support it.

28. Third we have what I want to call a direct audience. That means the establishment itself, the power centers of the establishment. If it be true that the problem in the social process today is the economic, which has become the controlling dynamic, then you look for the power structures within the economic arena and attack head on. But you will not impact these people with RSV1. You are going to have to be highly indirect. I read an article recently about how the corporations in this country are snowballing the idea of training their executives, but no longer in terms of the techniques of their trade, but as they say, in what it means to be human beings. But they are helpless. All they've got is some modification of sensitivity training, and that's sicker than anything. So the time is ripe. They are sitting there waiting for us, but we have got to be good. We must, it seems to me, find a way to attack the hidden power structures of our society and change them from within.

JWM