

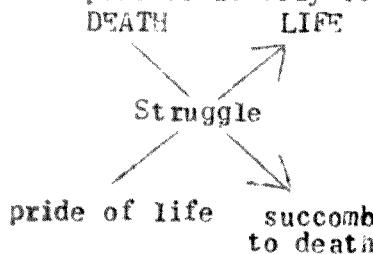
SPIRIT CLARITY

Report of the Academy, Fall 1969

## LIFE URGE - DEATH URGE

I'm going to talk a while about spirit clarity. I sense we have more rich concrete data about the spirit problem of our particular time than we're even able to get into words. The Academy staff has had four workshops since the Academy in which we've spent most of our time trying to nail down where the spirit edge of students is as they struggle with the Academy construct in our time, and I think we have a report to share that's important for the teaching of RS-1, every section meeting, problem-solving groups, local church consultations, and so on. Spirit clarity is critical everywhere.

The struggle that you've been having here (the Life urge and the Death urge) spoke to us very strongly, working over against the Academy. What held it for me



DEATH LIFE  
Struggle  
pride of life succumb to death

was the Kazantzakis image. There's two mighty drives in history, the life urge and the death urge--or there's two mighty drives in history, the drive for life, and the drive for death. Where those two intersect is me, where the struggle goes on. Not very long ago it was the death urge, the death reality, the death pull in human existence, that was addressed in people's lives. A person grasps himself alive--you know, "I'm alive,"--and then the death urge hits him--or not the death urge--I'm not talking about the death urge--I'm talking about DEATH hits him--I mean just the finitude of human existence raises for him questions. So as you communicate the reality of life in our time and the problem of living it, the student is always fighting back: "This can't be true. This can't be the way it is." "This is the way it is." "If this is the way it is, my whole life is meaningless." So there's a constant struggle back to find more truth, more clarity on what under God's heaven was happening here.

Now what's addressing people is the life urge--not the life urge, the life drive, the life reality, is what's going on there. People are incredibly lucid about death. What scares people to death is the responsibility to live. The responsibility to live is so frightening you wish to die, that's the death urge. The responsibility to live that reality that has to be lived is like embracing in your own belly a whirlwind; and the pain, horror, agony and at the same time glory of living is so immense, people prefer to die, to cop out in a thousand different ways. When the reality of life is communicated to students today, the response is not fighting back. The response is sort of catatonic contemplation. The response is deep weariness. The response is, "I need more sleep." Or, "I've got to go to bed to rest up so I can brood." Or, "I've got to go to bed and brood so I can sleep." Maybe that's the way it is. When people's lives are being challenged at the roots of their life decision, they find it extremely arduous to get out of bed, extremely arduous to make it through the next day's structures, extremely deep need just to have time to walk around the universe and back before the next session.

Gaining clarity on the response you're over against is extremely important. And I think when human beings today are faced with the vocational decisions human beings today are faced with, it's extremely important to give time somehow for a person to go aside and think down in the deeps of his own interior being about decisions a thousand miles deeper than he ever knew had existed before.

SICKNESS

"Spiritual" shyness

Shy to get selves into history as one who stands in the Gospel and deals with his neighbor

Personal blindness

Unserious relativity

"The world is relative, so any answer I have is good enough." NO!  
"The Lord says." period

Vocational cop-out

Trapped in blind alleys  
Rationalized reductions  
Moved away from the hot edge of being a spirit person and built up a great theology for it

Personal fulfillment longings

Frankl: transcend rather than actualize the self

Frustration with the mind

"Let's stop thinking and just feel."

Contemplative indecision

Catatonic indecision

Refusal to keep own conscience

Seek to be confirmed as right

Inter-personal apathy

"Give a damn about nobody, nothing."  
(Frightening because we think of ourselves as loving.)

Corporate shyness

"I'm not going to be a part of this group."

Vocational indecision

"I can't do anything."

HEALING

Experience his own unique powers

Objectivity on the self  
In vocationally organizing one's life, one needs objectivity on the life he's got

Facing the claim of radical obedience

To see in a new context his personal struggle, unspiritedness  
Intellectual blocks cracked  
Disengage mind from well-organized excuse patterns

Sociological awakening

Awakening intellectual passion  
Permission to be mental creatures

Decide about style and vocation  
(Incredibly solitary decision)  
Enable facing decisions

We see our death urges against structures of life  
One sees the truth of his lethargies, hostilities, selfishness

Ritualizes decision to be corporate  
It doesn't make you corporate; it symbolizes your decision  
Experience vocational possibilities  
Power to bring off accomplishment

HOW - WHERE

Decision to teach \*

Push in teacher evaluation  
Informal chatting

RS-1 papers  
Continuing assault

Lecture that touched spirit  
depths of the situation  
Push in seminar toward articulation from student

Course content

Study (chart making) \*  
Need more indiv. time

Brooding \*  
Need more time

Spirit talks \*  
Informal

Corporate life

Celebrational life \*

Responsible work \*  
Parish/cadre workshops

\*Mood building

PEDAGOGY

SPIRIT

SOLITARY

CORPORATE

RS-1 papers  
Bult. Par. 11  
Tillich. Par. 12  
(Surrender  
righteousness)  
Bonh. Obedience  
Niebuhr, concrete  
repentance

Course content

RS-1 x

CH x P/A I/F

x x x

OT x

x

NI WR S/P N/W

x x x x

P/A N/W

Pers. Glcb.

v

Family

I/F

Hist. C

V

Vocation

### SPIRIT ANALYSIS CHART

The second clue is a chart of concrete data that I think you'll find interesting, helpful (see page 2).

#### Extra Comments: RS-I papers

There's no question that those papers themselves were just a continuing assault. A diagram on just where they were an assault would give us a real key. In Bultmann it probably was Paragraph 11, if you had to pick a paragraph. If you really understood that paragraph, that was the frightening one, I found. In Tillich, which was an extremely hot paper, I think it was at the point in Paragraph 12 where you had to deal with surrendering all--your righteousness, surrendering all in the accepting of your acceptance. After we'd really dealt with that, the whole room was filled with a kind of fever. I remember one time Mathews in his office talking about the burning of incense and how incense was symbolic of the spirit mood that was going on in a room. It was like after you'd done the Tillich paper in any depth, the whole room was filled with a peppery smell, if that communicates. There was a fiery, peppery odor in the room. Bonhoeffer was probably the hottest of all, and it was at the issue of obedience. It seemed incredible to most students as we struggled with that paper that he meant by obedience what he meant by obedience, and that there was indeed no freedom outside of obedience. That was just an impossible thing to understand or to get clear about in the depth of your being. In I. Richard Niebuhr it was probably the area of the concrete repentance. That is, having to decide for yourself what it was that history had to have repented of, and to see the interior dynamics of taking a concrete social stand over against the Lord, which is very closely related in my mind to the struggle with obedience in the Bonhoeffer paper. If I had to summarize all that and say where the healing was taking place, I'd put it: facing the claim of radical obedience. It was here that that claim was faced and yielded to, and that is why the continual return to the RS-I papers was so critical to the Academy.

#### Course Content

Course content itself was a push. There's no question that the hottest place of all was in RS-I. But if you had to mention the other hot spots in the curriculum--and this is taking into consideration student response as well as faculty interpretation--Psychology and Art had a phenomenal wallop. The family course was near the psychotic in the area of wallop. Nation and World was a something-you-never-got-over-for-the-rest-of-your-life kind of happening. Science and Philosophy a little bit less, but there was a deep address there--more the faculty's opinion than the students. The World Religions course touched something unearthly for the students. And the whole column on religion--Church history, New Testament, Old Testament--was like touching fire itself. That gives you a weird diagram (see page 2). Community and Polis, Sociology and History, and Ecumenics were relatively cool, although there was heat there, too. Where you run into heat is in the extremes. The Local Congregation course, coming in the labs, also pushed.

To try to get beneath this: there's a deep preoccupation with the personal which you touch with great power in the Psychology and Art course. And there's a great dread of the global, which you touch in the courses on the Universal. And the family course is the place where the global and the personal intersect and become concrete in terms of extremely personal sorts of demands. The demand to be the Church is driven down the middle of that also. If you had to pick two places where concrete issues were always a struggle, it was the struggle of the family and the struggle of the historical Church. I don't think anything else could hold a candle to those two arenas of struggle. And underneath both of those was the vocational struggle, so you could put them both as vocational struggles, but it was vocational struggle as it related to the family, and as it related to the historical church.

### Personal Fulfillment Longings

One particular paper illuminated this for me--the Frankl paper, where he talks about self-actualization and self-fulfillment. When it really got clear that what it meant to be human was to transcend yourself rather than to actualize yourself, earthquakes took place 4,000 miles beneath the ground. It's that kind of an arena. Our whole society has been brainwashed to believe that personal fulfillment is what life is about. To finally get that undermined and to grasp that the meaning of your life is only in vocational decision over against real sociological reality, that is an earthquake dimension of struggle.

### Healing in Corporate Life

All of us see our death urges. Over against the structures of life, which are highly impersonal, just there, one begins to experience the truth of his selfishness, and the truth of lethargies, and the truth of his hostilities against life as it is. The next time that somebody comes by to pull me out of bed to come to a class, all of my lethargy and all of my hostility against life, and all of my selfishness suddenly are revealed to me with exhausting power. This kind of experience day in and day out, day in and day out, day in and day out gets to a guy, at an extremely gut level. Probably at no other place was the spirit struggle more intense than the constant dealing with corporate life.

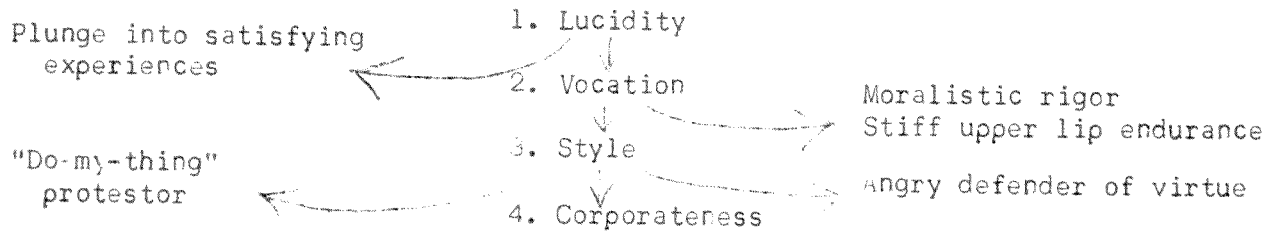
### CORPORATENESS

The Academy staff also tried to push to the roots of the spirit problem in our particular moment. People who have come to an Academy today, people who have come to RS-1 today, are already given the gift of lucidity. It's not like it used to be, that when you pushed some obviously real reality about human life, people fought back. It's like you can't find anything in the Bultmann paper anymore that people don't already know about. Their problem is beyond lucidity or on the other side of lucidity. Or, it is when you push lucidity down into the midst of itself that you begin to make contact with the real spirit struggle of our particular moment.

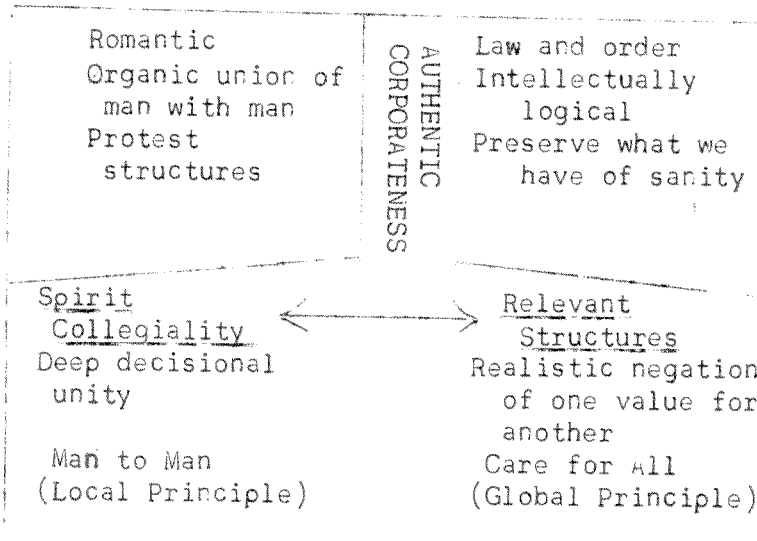
Just a little ways below lucidity is the question of vocation. You don't have to push any further than that, before you begin to make real contact with the spirit struggle. It's as if many awake spirits in our time see the need to do something with their lives, and just immediately skirt off into the plunge into satisfying experiences rather than really dealing with their lives. In Kierkegaard the category of the plunge really pushes hard--the plunge into satisfying experiences, something that will make this lucid life tolerable, a way in which it can be honored, a way in which it can be nurtured--whatever subtle phenomenal ways human beings have of not really raising the question of their relationship to the totality of history, and what's to be done about it.

Those who dare to deal with the vocational issue and to push on below that run into the issue of style. And maybe again there's a tendency to skirt off to the side and not push on through to the roots of what this really points to: being an authentic style, being a style that gives form to the actual agony of man in this moment, the actual whirlwind of history in this particular moment in history. Instead of taking on that kind of vocation that has the deepest kind of authenticity about it, they reduce the vocational struggle down to something that always expresses itself as some kind of moralistic rigor or some kind of stiff upper lip endurance--I'll get myself a style of life that protects me from life, and I'll be that style until I die. I'll do my thing with great nobility.

ROOTS OF THE SPIRIT STRUGGLE



Compulsive quest for human sympathy, flesh  
 Need for sleep  
 Hollow eyes  
 Immature smiles



Victimized by guilt over immediate failures  
 Overcompensation in work, efforts to please  
 Fury over lack of acknowledgement

CORPORATENESS

Not Psychic, human love

Spirit Love

Real Situation

Not Ideal Community

Hedonism  
 Everyman seeks for the peace of satisfaction--  
 lack of anxiety, dread guilt pain---  
 a "satisfactory" group

Faith is deep HUMILIATION GLORY

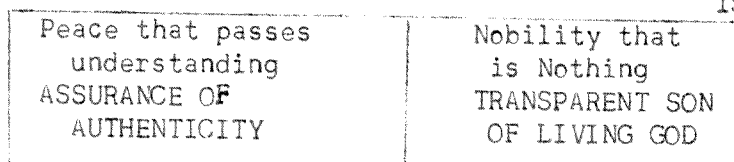
Stoicism  
 Everyone seeks for nobility of life, character, self-esteem before peers, membership in a "good" community

No immediate affection

No righteous in-group

RADICAL DISCONTINUITY

CORPORATENESS WITH ALL THAT IS REAL



If you push the style issue clear through to the bottom, what you run into is corporateness. In this wierd, fascinating, overwhelmingly mysterious category is where the agony of groups of people finds itself centered as they struggle with their lives at this particular moment. People skirt off from corporateness in a couple of ways. There's a kind of de-my-thing protest against all structures. This is an extremely powerful pre-occupation with style, but it's a protest--a protest against any structures that really try to take into consideration the global reality or the entire reality or the kind of demand upon you to be concerned about every man's life. This can be a group thing: "I'm going to do my thing in my group," or "do my group." And on the other side, an angry defender of virtue. To try to get an underground perspective on what's going on there is the tough part.

There's two different conceptions of corporateness operating here, along with a third in the middle that you might want to call authenticity or real humanness. All three believe in corporateness, but the two reduced kinds of corporateness are always fighting against authentic corporateness. And in those struggles, one meets the struggle that is the struggle of his own being.

One kind of corporateness is romantic organic union of man with man. There's a sort of nausea about giving that form. Also a nausea about anyone who pretends to give a truth value to some particular way of being related. It's like, "He's doing that, and if he's doing that it's good because it's him that's doing that--it's him that has that particular kind of..." On the other side we can put law and order as a first symbol of corporateness. Corporateness has to do with being an intellect, being intelligently logical. You're not going to have any corporateness unless you bring structures to the situation, but it's like a desperate attempt to preserve whatever sanity there is. It may be that the Middle Ages are gone, but it's at least clear. It may be that capitalism is gone, but we at least know what that is. It may be that the way we've done it in the Church through the years is gone, but we know what that is. The valid part of this is old Thomas Aquinas's kind of statement--it's better to endure the present tyranny than to wage an unsuccessful revolution. At least you know where you are. This kind of virtue is present. This kind of hierarchically imposed or accepted from the past kind of ordering of the situation--while it preserves some kind of value, also is reductionistic. And you sort of sense yourself in the midst of the situation saying, "Thank God for some people who are still moralistic, or we really would be in a pickle." And then you say, "But the moralistic ones are wrong." And you say, "Thank God for some people who aren't moralistic." And then you look at them a little more carefully and you say, "But they're also in chaos." If you're saying that kind of response, you're saying it out of something that needs to be articulated down underneath this in terms of what real corporateness amounts to.

Maybe just some clue words to start out with. Push this romantic vision a thousand miles deeper and you come up with what we try to point to with our category spirit collegiality. This hasn't got anything to do with liking one another, as we've often said. It's a union, a deep decisional union of flesh with flesh, man with man, spirit with spirit. There's an intimacy in spirit collegiality that goes beyond any kind of intimacy that the most wild nudist colony has been able to dream up. And yet, no! In spirit collegiality every solitary individual is a million miles apart from every other solitary individual.

Spirit collegiality is in tension with relevant structures, which is the other dimension of corporateness pushed to the bottom. Relevant structures have to be defined, but one thing they involve is realistic negation of one value for other values. The Romantic can't grasp the fact that realistic negation is necessary. For instance, if the whole countryside is unwilling to live in the twentieth century, one answer might be to put them in concentration camps and train them to live in the twentieth century. But that is an impossible consideration, that finally you have to use force on history

in order to affirm, negate and push on the kinds of utterly necessary options that are there in history. This is what realistic structure is all about. And structure always means forfeit; it always means negation of certain directions by force of economic, political, and cultural power.

Collegiality is man to man. Maybe this is what's at the heart of our local principle, that finally collegial relationships take place locally. The root of collegiality is where one spirit meets another spirit and looks through the depths of his being and makes decisions in relationship to him and decisions back, and so forth. The local vicinity is the place in society where man meets man, spirit to spirit, and makes decisions about life that affect the whole globe.

In relevant structures, on the other hand, you're dealing with something that has to do with a care for all. Or maybe it's the global principle. And don't get lost in these notations, because we're talking about a spirit reality. If you're thinking about the global destiny and care for all, you cannot leave out the roots of the global society, where man meets man. That's where humanness is. It isn't anywhere else. Humanness cannot be taken from the top of the globe and worked down to the last man. Humanness occurs on some skull hill somewhere and then, only then, can you work humanness into the global care structures.

Back to the spirit problem of corporateness. When you see somebody in the corporate style trap of the Romantic, what are some of the signs of it? One is a compulsive quest for human sympathy---human flesh---and a need for sleep. One of the most crucial ways out of authentic corporateness is to find some way to rest, some way to relax, some way to get out of the box. Just an overwhelming need to get out of the pressure point and go off somewhere to rest. When this man's life is addressed, it's impossible to get him reengaged in the next day. Another way we characterized this person was to say that he has hollow eyes and immature smiles.

A person caught on the side of law and order is recognizable by being victimized by guilt over immediate failures. He has difficulty in relating to his inadequacies. If he is criticized after a pedagogy session, he almost collapses. He over-compensates with work, trying to please people. And there is a compulsiveness about him. He lashes out in fury if he is not acknowledged or if his moralism is pushed.

Bonhoeffer's Community paper deals with this kind of depth. For Bonhoeffer, authentic community is not psychic and not human love; it is spirit love. This love takes place not in an ideal community, but in the real situation. Moreover, there is a tension between spirit love and the real situation. The real situation is what spirit love loves.

Human love cannot tolerate the dissolution of a fellowship that has become false for the sake of genuine fellowship, and human love cannot love an enemy, that is, one who seriously and stubbornly resists it. Both spring from the same source: human love is by its very nature desire---desire for human community. So long as it can satisfy this desire in some way, it will not give up, even for the sake of truth, even for the sake of genuine love for others. But where it can no longer expect its desire to be fulfilled, there it stops short, namely, in the face of an enemy.

Joe Mathews once said that for the lucid man there are only two options to faith: hedonism and stoicism. On the hedonistic pole, every man seeks for the peace of satisfaction, an end to anxiety, dread, guilt, pain---a satisfactory group, a satisfactory situation. On the stoic pole, every man seeks for nobility of life and character, self-esteem, status before his peers---to be an iron man. But real corporateness has nothing to do with immediate affection. This is an assault to the hedonist. In real corporateness there is radical discontinuity between the closest of colleagues. And the peace

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that is here is the peace that passes understanding. This is the assurance of authenticity. In real corporateness, the stoic will find no righteous group to be part of, no in-group. We must be corporate with everything that is, with every fat lady-- corporate with all of reality. The only nobility that is here is the nobility that is nothing--to be nothing, but real--the transparent Son of the living God.