

The dawning of consciousness was man's discovery that he was being bumped into. In the process of being bumped into and bumping into the 'other,' the question got raised, "Is it worthwhile for me to keep on bumping into that and being bumped into by that?" And this was consciousness of consciousness. But more than that, there had to be an answer to that question, and the answer was the great Yea, that it is worthwhile. There is value in bumping into and being bumped into, and that was the creation of meaning. That was the dawning of consciousness of consciousness of consciousness. That was when The Mystery got its first face. That was when The Mystery was bowed to in reverence. That was when religion began. That was when the self-conscious journey of man began. And that was the birth of the religious in history. Ever since that time the religious has been in history. And as long as history endures, self-conscious history, the religious will be there. Now, we want to talk this morning about the religious in history, particularly the religious in the church.

To get a picture again of the journey we have taken under the canopy of the great resurgences, you remember in the first session we talked about that inescapable consciousness. When William Blake said life is all about learning to bear the beams of God's love, that is what we talked about in the first session under the category of Universal benevolence. Then we talked about "the everyman" yearning for depth authenticity under the category of radical or profound integrity. We also talked about unprecedented human fulfillment and pointed to it as endless felicity. Today we want to talk about the religious in the church, and we will hold that with the holy life. Of course, all of this comes out of the New Testament, the Beatitudes to be exact: blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers, or the "problemlessness" makers. Blessed are those who suffer and are persecuted for the cause of the right, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. In an earlier course we held all of this under the phrase, love for God, after the great knowledge that we have been loved by God.

~~The order of Melchizedek~~ this time about one of the first orders, The order of Melchizedek.

"Note that when a man is chosen as High Priest he is appointed on men's behalf as their representative in the things of God--he offers gifts to God and makes the necessary sacrifices for sins on behalf of his fellow men. He must be able to deal sympathetically with the ignorant and foolish because he realizes that he is himself prone to human weakness. This naturally means that the offering which he makes for sin is made on his own personal behalf as well as on behalf of those whom he represents. Note also that nobody chooses for himself the honor of being a High Priest, but he is called by God to the work as was Aaron, the first high priest in ancient times. Thus we see that that Christ did not choose for himself the glory of being High Priest, but he was honored by the one who said; 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.' And he says in another passage: 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.'" (Heb.5:1-6)

We want to talk under four general headings this morning: first the historical role of the religious of the church, why it is that the religious of the church are those without which hist

of the church are those without which history will not continue. Then we shall talk about the basic definitudes or interior qualities of the religious in the church. ~~And I have been wanting to talk about the deep profound function, the religious in the church.~~ Finally, we consider the holy life, or spirit discipline or the religious in the church. And I keep adding that phrase "in the church" because we want to restrict our use of the word religious to talk about that dynamic which has always been within the church, which has always been within the world.

THE HISTORICAL ROLE:

At times, in my skepticism, I still have a hard time believing history will go down the drain without the historical church. But then, in my better moments, I begin to understand that is the truth, and I have to think about the word which is held in history and who bears that word without which life becomes meaningless. I have to think about those who keep the symbols or hold the cultic dimension without which life will be meaningless. And I have to think about the parish or the guild dynamic of those who would be mission to history without which history would just sort of plunk down and stop moving. My picture would be that right up against the world is the historical church; and I know that there has to be something right up against the historical church which we have called the movemental church: and right up against the movemental church there has been and needs to be something that we have called the religious or the religious order dynamic in history. You could keep on going and say right up against the order dynamic are the sanctified ones or even the sanctified one. Finally you could say the resurgence let loose by the mystery puts the sanctified into history.

Now this is a picture of how history is changed. This is a picture of how the world that we live in makes its turn. This I confess, looking at history and deep within myself is a picture of how the New Social Vehicle is going to come into being. Now that is not even to mention the 8000,000 of those local bodies within the Christian faith alone around this globe. But I'd probably say the same thing if there were only three, because of the dynamics they have had hold of now for some time. It is going to take the movemental church to keep intensifying to keep the heat on the historical, and the religious to keep the heat on the movemental, and for the alien image to keep popping out the sanctified ones ... for history to go on. And, finally, you know that the mystery is going to keep popping out the alien image which will eternally scar whoever it hits. Furthermore, I am very optimistic about history going on, even as optimistic as that one from Nebraska who used to write about the Platte River and 'snouts' and things. Yes, Eisley. He says it took us three hundred million years to get where we are now, and that we have ten billion to go. He was presupposing this of course. It's hard to get your mind around ten billion, Isn't it? I keep talking about my twenty year model.

There are a number of other presuppositions here. People that gather at research assemblies are what make history keep going. They are people who have a special understanding, a special lucidity, special scars, have been hit in special ways. They are a people who operate out of the Protestant Principle. That does not have anything to do with Protestants in the first instance, but it that principle of transformation, that principle of resurgence itself as over against insurgence, transformation as over against destruction. What intrigues me as you begin to look at history is there are those who have stood defiantly in the face of those who would wrap things up, and say we can never get anything wrapped up. The propensity there is to institutionalize, and that is the way it will

will always go with that propensity, but as soon as we get something encased, boxed off, what we have done is begun to block history from moving. So those who operate out of the Protestant Principle keep trying to get around those fixations which are our propensity as humans to create. I notice in the research dynamic of this assembly that is one of the biggest things we fight, our set images, our fixations. And it is so hard to break that loose. You must "piddle," spin around and go through walls, and do all kinds of strange things (like watch circus films) to try to get up enough momentum to crash through that fixation which is holding history back. And I would point to this stance as the Protestant Principle.

Another way that fixation occurs is through pietism. There is secular pietism and there is religious pietism. Those operating out of this principle, those authentically engaged in this dynamic in history toward the renewal of the world, are those who have always smashed pietism everywhere they have found it, smashed any locked up system of thought or meaning, whether it be moralisms or some code or principles. In one sense, that is all Jesus did. He just came in and smashed the pietism of his day, and history then shot through that. You can point to Luther as smashing through the Roman Catholic pietism of his day, and history kept going. That must happen again today, and it keeps having to happen within me, I noticed: with my pietism, my fixations, the way in which I would want to put a bound on the mystery, on the surge that is in the middle of life, or the way in which I spin off into my false other worlds, and without the Protestant Principle, without people giving flesh to it, nothing new ever comes. So it is a very positive dynamic. It is the dynamic that is part of resurgence itself. That which appears to be breaking down is perhaps an outbreak of life itself. And these are the people that are employed to be a part of that breaking up so that life continues to surge.

Therefore I would say that the religious in the church are at the primal level of those who give embodiment, give flesh to the resurgence in any given time. Without these people in one sense you might say resurgence would come anyway, but in another sense it wouldn't come at all, or it would misfire. It would go demonic without the religious. This, then, makes them a key to the authentic flow of history and paces a heavy burden on their back.

Now when you begin to try to discern the peculiar thing about these people--these sanctified ones through which history takes its positive turn--you find they are clear about the essentials. They have their fundamentals down. They have been invaded by that alien image which has stripped them of slavery to the many things and has left them very chaste about the one thing. Therefore history will not move on without those who are utterly devoted to the mystery and to nothing else. This is the hallmark of the religious, of those who love the mystery and who, as we have said in other ways, are the "radical monotheists", who have only one God rather than where after many gods. They are the ones who live out of the reurgent word that checks messianic dreaming.

Finally in terms of the historical role there is evidence that the trend is that the religious order is coming back, you may not believe this, particularly if you live in Washington, D.C. and visit all the orders that I have visited there on location, with sometimes as many as one person in a fifty to seventy-five room building. Nevertheless, it is coming back, and that is one of the main things this course is all about. That is the trend. That is the trend within

ourselves. You can begin to sense that the earth is beginning to tremble in that direction. And there is a revival taking place. And if it takes place here, watch out, all the way down the line. And that is another reason that the Lord of History has decided it must take place, out of that cry from society.

THE BASIC DEFINITIVES:

I want to talk quickly about the interior qualities of the religious in the church. They have a strange sort of vision, bifocal vision. It is as if they have one head with two faces. I have had a hard time in my lifetime trying to decide whether I was secular or religious, and so have you. We have gone through periods of being just about the religious through and through, and then we quite naturally rebelled against that. We decided that we were going to be secular through and through. We did all kinds of stupid things to manifest that rebellion. Even to this day you find yourself split as I find myself split with that war: am I a secular man or am I a religious man? The way in which the mystery fools us there is, if you are just a secular man then you are what I would call a half-assed man. If you are just a religious man you are just a half-assed man. I mean you cannot be authentic either way. You lose either way. You lose either way. This raises the question of how it is that we can become whole again in that splitness and in that war, and how we can understand our true identity as secular-religious, ~~religious-secular~~ secular-religious, religious-secular; the religious living in the secular world. There are many different ways to get that said. We have two faces: the religious face looks toward the mystery and the secular face looks toward the world, in our bifocalness. And there is a strange healing taking place between our two faces here this summer under the symbol of the guild. So wear that badge proudly, that emblem, because that is glueing you back together and it is glueing me back together, and you know where we were headed without the guild? Toward half-assedness. We were turning in upon ourselves without the guild, without an overt turning toward the world through the guild or the ecumenical parish. We were just becoming another perverted form of the religious in history. And that thing, the guild reality, that is the pain that has been happening in our loins this year. It is painful to grow, painful to be made whole. But that thing is welding us, that understanding, that action is welding you and me back together as the authentic secular-religious.

Now what we have taken is something like a double swoon. St. John doesn't talk about the double swoon, does he? He just talks about the swoon to get yourself on the ladder. But the double swoon is about swooning from all of the things that have held us slave to this world and swooning to God, or swooning in that chaste love for the mystery. And therein lies our power, because what this symbol means is radical servanthood. There can be no radical servanthood until we have been persuaded by the mystery away from all of the things that had taken and possessed our time and our energies and our resources, toward a longing for God, for the call to God, which again the guild emblem signifies. We have been freed from chasing after the many and several smaller things, and would now chase after one thing. Another way to say that is, on the one hand, all you can be as you chase the things of this world is the immediate man. But when you get swooned to God (and He does that, remember, you don't go out and try to get swooned, it just doesn't work), then you move to comprehensive service and can go back and comprehensively serve all that there is. But you cannot as long as you are trying to serve those things and continuing to be possessed by them.

One of the risks we take is that all of those who are living out of a reduced understanding of the secular are going to be attacking us. Furthermore, all of those living out of a reduced understanding of the religious are going to be attacking us. So if you want to be in an outfit where you get attacked, you are in the right one. This is the case whenever you begin to catalyze friends for the building of the New Social Vehicle. I don't mean there is any special merit to go out there, in the world. Perhaps we ought to take all of our guild badges away and melt them down when we leave here so nobody gets any status out of wearing them. But the Lord will probably take care of that, reminding us that we are nothing but catalysts, and you know how a catalyst ends up don't you? After it does catalysis and brings something into a new type of usefulness in this life, then the catalyst just floats to the bottom and is taken out as dregs. So that is who we are, those of us who wear this, badge the mighty catalysts of history who are really dregs and who will end up the nobodys, the nothings, by intension.

Kazantzakis says, "Smash your houses, leave your wives and children, smash your ideas, smash even yourself that I may pass..." I know that you probably won't go out and do that out of this imperative sense, but what First John has helped us see so much to understand is that we don't have to worry about whether we smash them or not. They get smashed. They just get smashed: our houses, our wives and children, our great ideas... "he who has found the answer has not found Me." That great love the mystery has for us comes in and does that mighty work on us. It humiliates us, turns us into the weak ones that we are, to anger us, suffer us, and give us the opportunity to embrace our suffering forevermore. To say all this is to begin to get a sense of what it means to define the religious in history.

THE PROFOUND FUNCTIONS

Throughout history the religious have shown up playing four functions in their external mission. One of those functions we have referred to in terms of the preaching orders, or the evangelical orders. Perhaps you can call them the spiritual sentinals, or you can use the word "charismatic" here if you wish. Charismatic is a good word. It means those who go about giving spirit to everything that they touch. This has been the external thrust of the preaching or evangelical orders throughout their tradition: to create the spirit methods that have been picked up by the church as a whole and, even beyond that, by society. You can begin to talk about pure evangelism in our day by pointing to that new evangelism which overcomes the good guy-bad guy moralism. My best image for this is my Irish priest friend in New York who understood what pure-or the new-evangelism was all about when a motorcycle gang rolled up on the church parking lot with their black motorcycle jackets on and their girls behind, revving their motors, about a hundred of them. He got a big tub of water and a big pitcher and went out there and threw it all over them, baptised the whole lot of them, without asking any questions. And soon after, they came back for a midnight mass, all hundred of them with their black leather jackets and their girls behind them. They walked down the center aisle, and all the "good guys" moved to the end of the pews. That is the sense of the new type of pure evangelism of Cyril or Methodius. You just go out and take the whole nation; massive evangelism, pronouncing the essential fact that all is good. Those preaching orders played that radical humanizing role of evangelism for all the orders, for the church, and for society.

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Another type of order has been the contemplative. They have been the liturgical guardians, those who have kept the altars. They have been responsible for the gathered community. They have taken upon themselves the responsibility of marching into the holy of holies and grabbing those two bullshorns and holding on for dear life as they began to conduct electricity from the mystery to the people. They are those who have done the daily office for these 2000 years without missing a beat and have kept the word in history playing that crucial divine function.

Another function of the religious has been classically typified in the serving orders. One of my colleagues uses the phrase 'deaconal commandos.' These are the deaconate orders throughout history who have been the radical servants. Now, I have never bought the word "serving." I do not want to be anybody's doorstep, or doormat. But that is not what this word intends. Service in this sense is deciding what society needs in any given moment and giving it to them. The greatest service we can do for the church and for society is the hard analytical work of the past three of four summers. Summer '70 was service for the church, the consequent summers for society, and now for the church again this summer through the ecumenical parish. It means to be that type of radical servant who looks at the comprehensive needs and serves those needs. It is ~~the one who~~ who is out ahead of civilization and guarding civilization on the horizon as it moves on.

Finally, a fourth order that has been in history is what we would call the teaching order. It is like the illuminati in China who ~~what~~ around from villiage to village sharing wisdom to transform the operating images of the whole nation. All of these functions, and particularly this last, is the way you do revolution, the way the religious have always done revolution: by seeding society, by giving them operating images that transform their activity. What you know is more orders now and in the future must be teaching something like LENS. They will be seeding society so the society can take the turn, because society is going to do the revolution. But it is here in ~~the~~ new images that are handed out that the revolution begins. I think that this is the direction of the orders for the future. We cannot again say taht we can be just one of those and be what history demands. We have to be at least all four plus whatever else, is required for we are the religious.

THE HOLY LIFE

When I say the religious, I mean we are the sanctified ones. I mean we are the ones who, whether we wanted it or not, got it; who were invaded, dropped on, and who ended up being elected through the sanctification event. We are the people who have been wounded eternally and bear the scars, bear the marks of that election in our consciousness. And no matter ~~how~~ we beat against it, we never get away from that election, or from knowing that we have been elected. Now we can get away from that election. There is a way out, and that is to say no to that election, which is either subtle or overt suicide. Once one has been chosen, so the story goes, there has never been anything but full time, life-long calling. And I am one of those that got chosen. And you are one of those who got chosen. Some of you would still argue with that, probably, Some of you would still argue ~~with~~ that you are inside the process of sanctification, that you have

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have that type of lucidity. But then as history unfolds there is such a thing as choosing your election, of embodying it, saying the great "yea" to it. It is like the one who holds his nose and jumped off the cliff in the movie, The Sundance Kid. What it means to choose your election is just to jump off, and hold your nose and say Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaa! Now that is the awe-full invitation, and awe-full summons, an awful election. It is God awe-full. Then once you get to ~~that~~ stage there is just a little mop-up work, a few other things you have to understand in the holy life, being the holy one that you have been chosen to be.

This would mean to touch on such ontological forms of life-together in addition to action in the world. In the past the orders organized their corporate life out of sexuality. They called the male celebrates the first order, the female celebrates the second order, and the married in some cases the third order. That was from the ontological rationale of sexuality as distinct from what is being experimented with today as a rationale of sociality. A fundamental aspect of ~~this rationale~~ would be the use of ~~the symbolic order~~. The symbolic order would live out the rule in a corporate setting. The expanded people would live out the corporate rule in an uncorporate setting. And the movemental would live out of this rule in a "fated" way. For example, if we were to talk about some politician being in ~~the~~ movemental order we could decide along with him that he is fated not to be in that type of corporate structure, at least for the time being.

You could also talk about types of commonness, or forms of the holy life, in terms of the context. That is always "God and neighbor as they confront us in Jesus christ." (Bonhoeffer, Freedom) And that has many thousands of pages of practical implementation. Another expression of form is its constructs, much of which has been documented by our corporate experiment. Perhaps the three big words here are context, constructs and climate. A corporate climate, a spirit climate, and ~~first~~ without which authentic corporateness, life-together, will not go on. For example, we could point to our study of St. John of the Cross as the basis of a healthy climate, a climate making for wholeness and authentic sanity. That brings us to the modes, or the spirit exercises, for those who have been ~~set~~ apart in this special way for life long corporateness. We have now a new way to talk about what's going on in the whole dimension of contemplation. Contemplation is that religious exercise which begins to happen as we are invaded by the alien image which becomes the matter over-riding image that consumes our contemplation. Or we can talk about chastity as being consumed by that alien ~~image~~ which leaves us scorched, burned out, willing only one thing. And perhaps we can just talk about being as another word for sanctification, the process that leaves one transparent, as the one who can be seen through, or the one in whose midst you begin to be ~~very~~ conscious of the mystery. What is demanded here relative to history is the same job ~~that~~ amoeba had to do. Remember the image of the two amoeba who were in the drop of water that was getting very cold? They didn't know the ice age was coming. One of the amoebas said, "It is getting very cold. It is getting so cold that I think I'll die." so he decided to die and curled up and died. The other amoeba said, "I think I'll decide not to die, which means I've got to do something new." And so it grew hair and became a paramecium. That is what is demanded of us today in the midst of the ice age, or the great resurgence. It is demanding that we become a different kind of spirit person. We are

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going to have to grow hair. There is a mutation coming in our time. It feels like it. In my bones it feels like it is about here. We are fooling ourselves if we think that we can continue to be what we have decided to be relative to the future of the globe without a whole new seriousness, a new intensity in our discipline as spirit people.

I like what one of my colleagues said. Last year when we were looking at "The Geat Turn" he had said we were looking over the River Jordan to the promised land. Well, he came back and reported to us this summer that we were not looking over the river Jordan to the promised land, that we had just passed through the Red Sea last summer, and that what we thought was the desert was simply the fleshpots of Egypt. We had just got ourselves out into the desert a few feet. And we have twenty or forty years to go, so we must grow some hair in order to become the desert creatures that history is demanding. In the Turn, in the time of resurgence, the new saint is on the way, the trend is very painful, but it is going to be glorious to see. Instead of 20-20 vision, the new saint will have something like 54-20 vision. He'll be seeing twenty years out of one side and fifty-four out of the other. That is what his consciousness is registering: 54-20, 20-54. To the globe, to the globe; that is what we are about for the rest of our lives.

I don't know how you feel about being doomed to be the religious. I don't know whether you are able to do what Alysha did or not. He spread eagle on the that reality and just kissed it and said it is very good. I pray that will come for all of us, that we can spread eagle, fall down as the weak ones we are and embrace what it is we have been elected to be. That is nothing less than the new religious in the time of resurgence. That is to rise up from kissing that reality with a new resolution that will release us to serve all of creation, and in so doing to serve the mystery; nothing less than that until the day we die.

--John Cock--