

Summer '73  
Congregation A  
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## NEW EVANGELISM

1. Maybe it's time to go back to the old evangelism and discover the new evangelism. We have a taste of that in the LENS course. Or are you teaching RS-I differently? We are not teaching RS-I to a bunch of bad guys. I must admit that I don't quite have it down like Don Quixote. Don Quixote was the new evangelist. He walked up to Aldonsa and said, "My Lady!" And she said, "SHUT UP! I'm just an old whore!" Remember how offended she got? She wanted to claw his eyes out. The Word is so offensive. It is not the offense of going up to somebody and saying, "You are just an old worm on a dungheap." No, that's not offensive these days. That may be what people want to hear, depending on their neuroses. But to go up to somebody and say, "My Lady, you are whole, you are perfect, you are well, you are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world, you are a royal priesthood, you are the savior of the world." The response, "No! No! I am not just right, this moment!" Just one little flick of the dial is all the difference in the world, and you go out and look at this creation. This is fundamental to the ontology Of the New Evangelism.

### I. ONTOLOGY OF NEW EVANGELISM

2. The ontology of social change is contained within the understanding that spending my life is doing nothing other than going out and announcing to people and to society that they are whole wherever, whatever they are at this moment. It is allowing them to see that that piece of wood there is burning, that their life is sacred, that all time, space, and relationships are whole, because the Mystery is everywhere and all is stuck in the Mystery, planted in it. That means that the whole thing is sacred, or that the Other World is in This World, or that This World is transparent to the Other World, or that this world and everything in it is a secondary symbol. Everything is pointing to the presence of the Mystery in all. You can take a person, a table, a piece of Wood, a rock and just look at it, knowing that the Mystery, if it decides to, will erupt.

3. Then it gets a little harder, for example, the tragic transparency inversion. Everything appears tragic, all external appearances seem rotten to the core. Apparently Watergate is tragic. Apparently death is tragic. But, what's apparently tragic is transparently glorious. I'm going to shower you with a lot of poetry like that. It is not what meets the eye, apparently, that we are talking about. It is like Dali's "Crucifix", the one where the crucifix is sort of stuck. I can't tell whether it is stuck in the Other World or This World, but somewhere in the back of that three-dimensional picture is this eschatological hero sort of leaning. Maybe he is tied into this world and hovering over this world, representing the Other World in This World. Dali spends his whole ministry, as an artist, revealing the Other World in the midst of This World, or taking mundane things like watches and allowing the Mystery to come through a little old watch curled over a box to illuminate the Mystery in it all.

4. Everything is a portent. What is the portent of this burning candle? Someone, anyone answer. ("It is expending it's life.") A man just did it on us here. The portent of this cradle? Someone else, what is the portent of this candle? ("The light has never been put out yet") And I don't know. I don't want to look at its etymology, but I put the "in" in front of that word and everything is "in-portent." Everything is full of portent. Portent is in all. Everything is "in-portent." We will have to look at that word.

5. All of that old brainwashing that the Church is holy and the world is a "pile," and the "holiness" of the Church has to go out there and be with that "pile" and maybe the "pile" will become more "holy?" You know all of that old programming we did on ourselves? The good guys and the bad guys? Now the church is not holy except as it is in the world, and the whole world is holy. Period! Because the Church is a part of the good creation, it is holy. Everything is finally the good creation, and the church happens to be stuck in the good creation, like everything else is.

6. However, the church happens to have a special function to play in all this. It is to go around and say, "Lo, here; and lo, there," and to point to the importance of everything; to the significance of everything. The Church re-presents the world to its essential glory. It goes out and introduces the world to itself and says, "World, you really are holy." Or the Church goes out and holds art form conversations-- that's about all-- and allows the world to see - what it really is, not what it thinks it is; the world thinks it is just a "pile." The Church allows the world to see through itself to what is behind what appears to be only a "pile." The Church goes about objectifying to the world its reality, or the reality in the midst of it at its bottom.

## II. THE STRATEGY OF THE NEW EVANGELISM

7. You can come up with all kinds of poetry here. That is the foundation out of which we begin to talk about social revolution. If we ran a social revolution out of "We've got to go out there and change those bad guys," that's one style of revolution. Another style of revolution is to go out and introduce them to what they really are. Once they get an image of that, its done, essentially. It's just going out there and twisting their image one notch. So you begin to talk about the strategies of the New Evangelism. You have to use words like "transformational." Out of this understanding, then, the old social vehicle is good. How in the world are you going to allow it to be transformed unless you allow it to see transparently. Out of this understanding of the New Evangelism, you don't go out and say "nix " on that and then go create this thing over here. That is not the revolutionary strategy of the P.O.G.-- to go out and destroy the old because it is not worth a tinker's. the New Evangelism sort of starts and spins as it comes out to do an end run on the world, and then the world sees the swirling dervish that it really is, and allows the world to become, to see, to get a new image of its glory so that it embodies its essence. We are that type of catalytic presence which holds up a new image, the real image, the authentic image of what it means to be human, for all to see.

8. My best illustration of a tactic is an Irish priest in New York who was in a PLC. One fellow got up and attacked me in that course, and the priest stood up on my behalf and told him to sit down. Anyway, he told about this motorcycle gang, about a hundred of them, with their girls on the back and their black leather jackets, circled up in the churchyard parking lot. He goes out with a big tub of water and a pitcher and just sort of hurls water all over. You know what I mean? No questions asked. You know what? Those guys came to mass one night, 100 of them walked down the aisle in their black leather jackets and, of course, all of the good guys in the church scooted to the outside of the pews. It is that type of a revolutionary strategy. It just plants the flag and says "This is the kingdom of God." It takes the whole nation in the name of Jesus the Christ, "You are all virgins!" This is a wild kind of massive evangelism. It is going up, like we do in LENS, and throws buckets of water on the economic tyrant and say, "You are a glorious being." Not, "Change your ways," in the first place. We say, "Look what you are. Look what is your power. There it is Boy-. Pick it up...Your Greatness." You take the big old economic tyrant that has been eating people alive now for several hundred years and baptize him. All the churches have been preaching against old bad economics all these years. Oh, it's a new type of leavening, transforming that is going on, or trans-substantiating, out of the understanding that we are a geo-spirit revolution; we are a chrono-spirit revolution; we are a socio-spirit revolution. What that means to me is that all of space is holy, all time is holy and all relationships are holy. This is the hour. This is the right time. This is the right place. This is the right hunk of relationships. No other. The People of God in history are those who give civilization a new image of style, do a little dance and get that style present in the consciousness of those who are gloriously condemned to die. A little dance by those totally vocated is the thing. That, all of the world is hungering for. If they see it, they will follow it like following a Pied Piper. That is what happened in the Middle Ages. Society said, "My God!" When they saw it going on and just sort of followed the Church. The Church at first was authentically pointing to the reality of the Other World in the midst of This World. And, of course, later on they got fouled up. But not in the first instance. That was a glorious day in the world because of the church.

## III. THE MODE OF THE NEW EVANGELISM

9. When you begin to talk about the strategy of the New Evangelism and the mode of the New Evangelism, how did it go about doing its strategy of mass awakenment? You remember Peter's vision? This unsacred man came to Peter, this fellow of the wrong religion. Peter had a vision telling him to eat all the meat. Peter said, "No, it is

unclean." And then a big sheet came out of heaven and dropped down its four corners, that big sheet enveloped the whole thing, and the story that was revealed to Peter was that everything is clean. The whole world is clean. Well, out of that picture you begin to see the strategy and model, and you begin to use words like drama, cultic, and, I don't know how to spell it, "pneumation," if that's a good word. These are the types of ways. You know dramaturgically, eventfully, corporately, pneumatically you begin to do it to society. "Cabaret-ily" -- that's the mode. You just go out there and do a song. You do a dance. You go out there and just sort of breathe on society...just "pneumate" all over it..."enthusiate" all over it. "Resurge" in the midst of it. You be the new being. You be that one who lives out the style of the gloriously condemned to die, of the one who gloriously embraces everlasting suffering, You be the one who lives his struggle triumphantly, and they'll begin to fall in line. The dance has always been associated with just portraying the story. Ballet tells a story. The Siamese dance tells a story in the faint wiggle of a finger. Maybe that is one of the critical tactics.

10. Another one of the critical tactics of the mode is music, which has something to do with time. It punctuates time with its rhythm and sound, and it fills space. I'm not quite sure what music is out to do, or paintings. I'm sure that paintings have everything to do with space. Do you ask what is going on there? (Turner painting) Now apparently this was just an old broken down boat and some fishermen trying to get in out of the weather, a storm was coming up. And that is what he was painting. But what was he really painting? Do you see the light in the darkness? Everybody knows that that is really the way the world is. How is it that you allow what is really there to burst, even in your dress? How do you dress - What kind of glass frames do you wear? What kind of perfume do you put on? Do you polish your shoes for the last Fat Lady? Do you allow the ontological reason for shaving and bathing and taking your clothes to the cleaner? Maybe, maybe there is an ontological reason for doing all that, particularly if you are going out with the economic tyrant, because of the economic tyrant is a clean human being. He takes baths, and he wears nice suits. Or some of the best-dressed people I have ever seen are those who just had one suit of clothes, too, but they were always clean, even though they were worn out and faded out. Everything reflects one's relationship to life, finally, doesn't it? You can tell a man by the way he dresses. If a man considers himself a slob, guess what. It shows up. If a man thinks of himself as a dance, as an act in history, as a piece of drama, that is, on behalf of something, then he cares about how he looks and acts and whether or not he eats like a pig. That is to get at etiquette or sophistication ontologically, you see? My sister kept saying, "John, you shouldn't eat like such a pig. Hold your fork right." So I held it wrong, but she was coming at me moralistically. "Bad boy" No, I mean if I am an art form, and everything about me is an art form manifesting the glory of the presence of the Mystery in life, then it makes a difference, doesn't it? I decide whether I'm going to have sideburns or not, or a mustache. I have to decide how it is that I am going to re-present the reality of life in my costume. This is just a costume. You do not need clothes, especially in this room. We are in a drama, sitting here in this room, now. The whole thing is a big play, and life is a stage. That bleeds into the style of the guildler, all I am saying about style.

#### IV. THE STYLE OF THE NEW EVANGELISM

11. Every moment is crucial, so you don't sit there unself-consciously, like I do so often, when something important is being said, and I know I need that little acorn in my tree for the future. I just sit there and say, "I don't feel like it. Just pour it on over me, boy." Or you know, it's grace-filled intentionality. If I am an art form, and if everything I do is art in every situation, I just go and "art" the situation. I just be "art" to it. Then my every motion does a dance, and that moment does a dance. I get so mad at some of my colleagues who seem to be perfectionists, they take every little inconsequential sliver of life and just wring it out. They just keep at it; "Let's go at it one more time. Set that table one more time. You know how offensive a thing it was the first time you saw a pedagogue setting the table? You went around and slopped the dishes down, and he came around behind you, and he.... Well see? It reveals your screen. It reveals how you see life. If that room is an art form, a stage, it makes all the difference in the world. Precise, decisive, disciplined, exquisite in every detail-- that is one who is living out of an ontological understanding that all of time, space, and relationships are holy and he, in his holy function, is giving form to that holiness.

12. To talk about passion, if I am an art form then I have to decide how to use my voice, my eyes, my feet, my body. Every man has passion. If you send someone into a situation and he sits there and hopes for something to happen, guess what? Nothing happens, because he doesn't let his passion loose. I was hung-up so long in that, what

was it, "I don't want to be wrongism" and I don't want to do anything unless I genuinely feel like it-ism, all of that bad stuff that psychologism did to me. Then it was revealed to me that I invent every situation. I create every situation. I am the artist in every situation. I am the secondary symbol in every situation pointing to the primary symbol. I am being itself, pointing to being beyond myself. I am passion for God. I am an event in history. I am a one-man Cabaret. I am a miracle worker. I carry the theatrical trunk on my back; and put it down, open the lid and do a little play. You have to carry your theatrical trunk around with you and be ready at any moment to do a scene, to be as ready as those two guilders in Man of La Mancha who marched into that death hole, opened their trunk, did a little whirling dervish here and there, walked out, and the whole place was transformed. Just two men. One man could even do that, I suppose. Look at Jesus. He just walked around and cabareted everything he saw, really happened to it.

13. Well, that is probably enough. Do you have a lot of images flowing now? What we need to do is take all this and give form to it, shape. That is when research comes from the bottom up. The same is true of the New Evangelism.