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CULTURAL CURRENTS AND THE EMERGENCE OF WORSHIP- PATTERNS

At the present time, particularly since 1960, we are witnessing a proliferation of what are called informal groups. These are of various kinds and of different religious and confessional affiliations. But they seem to possess a certain number of common morphological characteristics rooted in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. We are particularly interested in such of these as are being polarized in terms of new patterns of worship. It is true that this is not the first time that such a thing has happened in the history of religion and culture. "Whenever the relationship between God and the world changes in the minds of men then there follows a shaking up, a crisis in man's understanding of worship; the Old Testament bears witness to such crises, as when Israel, for example, ceased to be nomadic tribal society and became an agricultural society, and the Church in the history of the last two thousand years has from time to time experienced disturbing changes of this sort involving radical thinking and a new expression of her relationship to God in worship and prayer."¹ At the same time it would not be correct to see only a simple repetition of the past in the present-day movement. It seems more reasonable to link the present-day tendency with the specific problems of this century's growing technicature that rouses in people both a desire to control their own destiny² and a feeling of reserve and even a sort of antipathy towards large-scale organisations. This

1. C. Murray Rogers, "Worship and Contemporary Asian man—Some reflections", *Religion and Society* (Bangalore: 1969), pp. 52-53.

2. This is characteristic of the present-day human consciousness achieved by the secularization process: a quest for "profane autonomy" in the words of R. Panikkar, *Worship and Secular Man* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973). PP. 28-54.

phenomenon is now not peculiar to western society alone. Where as it is very conspicuous in the West, it is gradually taking shape also in the East.

Faced with such proliferations of these comparatively small worship groups, we are required to search for the various factors that give rise to them, and also to enquire into their meaning and relevance for present-day man. Some ten years ago sociologists, journalists and theologians prophesied not only the 'death of God', but also the slow death of religion and worship. Meanwhile we see a revival of religion and its ritual expression in various forms, not only in the Western but also in the Communist world: from Indian mysticism to orgy-like drug festivals; from Protestant monastic orders to Catholic Pentecostals; from new totalitarian religions in Japan to spontaneous new churches in Africa; from Pentecostal mass meetings in the woods of Siberia to small house-groups of Soviet and American intellectuals.³ Hence a preliminary remark we would like to make, before proceeding further with the enquiry is that this awakening in religious worship meets a human need, however differently one might evaluate its many-coloured manifestations.

Methodological Considerations

Worship is a human value and has an important personal dimension. Here the concept of person as against that of individual is very important. "A person is a bundle of relationships, which cross at a certain centre which may be called personality..."⁴ The dichotomy between individual and society does not arise if we consider man in his concrete and existential situation. Consequently, worship as a human and personal dimension can be the subject-matter of different human sciences—sociology, psychology, ethnology, history of religions etc. Each of these approaches is bound to be incomplete by the very nature of the phenomenon called worship. Therefore the tools of our enquiry and reflections are not restricted to any particular science. We would rather follow a complementary approach drawing insights and inspirations from more than one of them. We start with presenting a brief inventory of the religious groups with their new life-styles and worship-forms that have cropped up in the last twenty or thirty years. However,

3. Cf. W. Hollenweger, *Pentecost between Black and White* (Belfast: Christian Journals Ltd., 1974), p. 98.

4. R. Panikkar, *op. cit.*, p. 5

we have to be very selective here because of the multiplicity of their forms and the limited scope of our study. Next we shall try to analyse their *raison d'être* in terms of socio-cultural principles and then, finally, go further into the anthropological nature and function of religious rites and worship that necessitate such acculturation and socialization in concrete human life.

I

SPECIAL GROUPS, ASSEMBLIES AND RELIGIOUS UNIONS
SINCE THE YEAR 1960⁵

1. *Scientology Church* This peculiar church appeared in America about the year 1954. L. Ronald Hubbard, a leading science-fiction writer, is said to be the innovator of this 'religion'. His famous book "Dianetics— The Modern Science of Mental Health" is spoken of as the inspiring source of it. Soon it spread to Europe, especially to Germany, by the year 1970. Scientology is said to be an applied religious philosophy, borrowing ideas from different religions like Buddhism, and human sciences like Psychiatry. Its ultimate goal is to put man in a new and absolute state of freedom. And for this it proposes a sort of religious praxis consisting of a rather complicated system, of courses, as well as a precise technique of spiritual counselling using some electric gadget. The praxis also includes a freely accessible liturgical service.⁶

2. *Union of Free Missionary Communities*: This is also called the Evangelical Brothers Society, founded in 1967 by Fritz Berger. Later arose a difference of opinion among the members regarding the content of their faith. The progressive group took a free attitude in interpreting the biblical content of faith vis-à-vis the other religious followers as well as the contemporary world.⁷

5. For this inventory we mainly depend on Oswald Eggenberger, *Die Kirchen, Sondergruppen und religiösen Vereinigungen* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1978).

The author treats the groups under different heads as churches, sects catholic, non-catholic, non-christian etc.. But for the purpose of our study we do not make such confessional and denominational distinctions to avoid any value judgment of them.

6. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 169, where one gets more details about the nature of their religious practice.

7. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

3. *Zen-Buddhism*: This 'religion' of Japan is already well-known both in the East and the West. From time to time new centres are being opened in different parts of the world. One of its recent exponents, from the Christian point of view, is H.M. Enomiya-Lassale. According to him, for the accomplishment of "Zazen" (sitting-meditation) three things are essential—the posture, the breathing and the mental attitude.⁸ Apart from its ultimate goals of enlightenment and transcendental existence, it increases self-control and interior freedom, which provide man a better chance to become a useful member of the human society. One of its recent forms is to be found in the "Circle of Zen-friends of Roshi Nagaya" that appeared in Hamburg in the year 1972.⁹

4. *Ananda-Mārga*: Ananda Marga (the way to happiness) was founded by P.R. Sarkar (Ananda Murthi) from India about the year 1955. In recent years, Karunananda as its first spokesman, went abroad and formed several groups of followers in different parts of Europe during the period 1972 to 1975. The Margis, for their religious worship, stand in the tradition of Yoga with suitable exercises and *bhajan*-singing. They have borrowed elements from Christianity, marxism and natural science. The members are said to organize action to remove individual and social misery.¹⁰

5. *Divine Light Mission*: Its founder is said to be Sri Hans Ji Maharaj. About the year 1960, he announced the new divine Light or divine Knowledge to the people of different social strata of India. Its recent history is well-known.¹¹ As for its life-style the followers of DLM (Prēmies) live in Ashrams professing vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. *Satsang*, meditation, and service, are its three important components.¹²

8. Enomiya-Lassale, "Zen-Meditation", *Studia Missionalia*, vol. 25 (1976) 29ff.

9. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 131f.

10. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 132f.

11. Namely, after the death of Hans Ji the widow Matha Ji entrusted its task to her younger son Guru Maharaj Ji, who took it to the West, being very much westernized. Later, when he married a Californian girl, Matha Ji disowned him and thus the movement took a new turn, being split into two branches. The Eastern branch is headed by the elder brother Bal Bhagavan Ji and the other by Guru Maharaj Ji himself.

12. *Satsangam* means coming together and being together of those dedicated to God. Their togetherness in mind (in speech and faith-witnessing) is to be as intimate and complete as the inseparable confluence of three rivers. Cf. also Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

6. *Divine Light centre* (DLC): Its founder is Swami Omkaranda, a follower of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, India. It had its origin in Switzerland, about the year 1966. DLC devotes itself to the message of "spiritual-religious work according to the teachings of the Gospel". According to its founder, man is from and in God, and our task is to translate the Divine in us into reality. This is made possible especially through meditation and, above all, through Mantra-meditation.¹³

7. *Eckankar*: Tradition holds that its beginning goes back to times immemorial. In our time one Eck-master Paul, an American, has transported this 'religion' from Asia to Europe and America. Since 1971, one Darwin Gross, is the Eck-master. Eckankar signifies the way to God-realization through a spiritual voyage, comprising many steps, effected through meditation under a master. The role of *mantras* is very important in this worship-style.¹⁴

8. *Hare Krishna*: This movement is also known as the, "International Society of Krishna-consciousness". It was started by Swami Prabhupadanda in New York about the year 1966. Soon it got wide currency also in Europe with its centre in Frankfurt, opened in the year 1973. Its ultimate aim is the attainment of Krishna-consciousness, which is proposed for the salvation and redemption of the world. Its worship-style is incessant chanting of the Mantra "Hare Krishna". It consists of 16 words and the followers have to chant it daily 1728 times. By its very nature of worship "Hare Krishna" stands in the Hindu Bhakti tradition.¹⁵

9. *Transcendental Meditation* (TM): On the last day of 1957 TM was introduced into the Western society by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi.¹⁶ It is also known by other names like "Society for the Advancement of the Science of Creative Intelligence", "MERU-Society", "World-Plan Centre" etc.¹⁷ According to Maharshi TM

13. *Mantra* is a sacred syllable, e.g. OM. Cf. also Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

14. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 134-5.

15. But when Sri Saṅkara in his Gita-Commentary says, "Bhajan itself is bhakti" (14:26), he means perhaps something more than mere chanting of mantras, namely, "loving service" to others.

16. Una Karoll, *TM A Signpost for the World* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), p. 10.

It may be noted that TM is an adapted (westernised) version of the ancient Yoga-meditation; its roots may also be traced to the so-called Vaiśeṣika system of meditation.

17. Cf. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, 135f.

has two aims—one immediate, concerned with man's daily life, and the other ultimate, related to man's final realization. The first one is directed to the attainment of what is called the "Transcendental Consciousness", or the "Fourth Stage of Consciousness",¹⁸ by means of a technique of deep relaxation through meditation, which, it is claimed, takes the mind to the source of thought, the pure field of creative intelligence. It is claimed that this overcomes stress within the human body and releases an increased sense of well-being and enhanced energy.¹⁹ The other aim, viz., final realization, is reached through the next three stages—cosmic consciousness, God consciousness, and union.²⁰

As for the method of practising this meditation, it is taught individually by recognised teachers and begins with a proper rite of initiation. A particular Mantra is given to the aspirant who, closing his eyes, lets it pull him down in to the silence.²¹

10. *Ahamadiya Movement*: Although just a century old, this movement is considered here for its new European centre started in 1963 with the erection of a big mosque in Zurich, with several branches in Hamburg, Frankfurt, London, Hague etc. This 'religion', teaches about Jesus that he, after an apparent death, was resurrected and wandered towards Kashmir, India, where after announcing the Gospel died at the age of 120.²²

11. *Free Bahai-followers*: (World Union for Universal Religion and Universal Freedom) This is an off-shoot of the century-old Bahai-religion, with its new branch in Switzerland under Francesco Ficcia which came into existence in 1974. The so-called 'sect' of Caravan of East and West has been inspired by this. The life-style and worship-form are oriented to the evolution of a

18. The other three stages well-known in the Indian tradition are wakefulness, dreaming sleep, and dreamless sleep.

19. Cf. Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, *The Science of Being and Art of Living* (SRM, 1969).

It is such a claim that is responsible for the great popularity of TM in the tension-ridden techniculture. It is evident that any way of lessening stress will be beneficial to such a society, which runs after drugs, psychotherapy and other relaxation techniques to combat stress. As for the advantages of TM over these other methods and of its scientifically verifiable (and verified to some extent) claims, see Una Karoll, work cited.

20. For a description of these seven states see A. Campbell, *Seven States of Consciousness* (London: 1973).

21. For more details Cf. Una Karoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-70.

22. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

world religion, world brotherhood, a world Bible made of texts selected from the spiritual books of various religions.²³

12. *League of Universal Religion*: (Other name: United Religious—UR). Since 1964 this movement has been gaining ground in Europe, especially in Germany and Switzerland. UR does not form a well-knit community, nor does it organize regular group gatherings of the members. One becomes its member by self-imposed right thinking and right acting according to the ideal set by UR. The aims and objectives of UR have been formulated in the manner of 10 theses, which emphasize tolerance, collaboration of religions, avoidance of antagonisms, relationship with God through joyful giving, spirit of unity and freedom etc. In UR one discovers an attempt to incorporate the ideals of the Hindu religion adapted to the secularized western culture.²⁴

13. *Pentecostal Churches and Movements*: The Pentecostal Movement began, almost seventy years ago, as revival movement or charismatic movement in the existing churches. It has also a considerably long past among the 'black churches' in Africa and America. In the following paragraphs we intend only to point out the more recent development especially with respect to their patterns of worship.

A. *New Pentecostalism among the Protestants*:²⁵ Since 1950, a revitalization has appeared, especially in the Anglican and Protestant churches of U.S.A. and the Baptist churches of Russia. These are called 'Neo-Pentecostals' or 'Charismatic Movement in the Historical Churches'. This spirituality also spread very quickly to the Historical Churches of both the Americas and Europe.²⁶ Their liturgical expressions are too well-known to require any description here. In passing we may only note that, generally, they claim freedom of the Spirit, creativity and spontaneity in worshipping God. Hence in many cases they differ from the traditional patterns of worship. 'Speaking in tongues', 'giving free expression to one's prayer-experiences', 'being baptised in the Spirit', 'healing through prayer' etc. form part of their characteristic jargon. We shall discuss later their socio-cultural significance.

B. *Catholic Pentecostalism*: This movement is of very recent origin, perhaps the latest among all the Pentecostal movements. By 1962 there were already some contacts between Catholics and Pentecostals in Holland and the USA. "The breakthrough, however, came only in 1966-67, when several Catholic laymen—all members of the faculty of Duquense University in Pittsburg were drawn together in a period of deep prayer and discussion regarding the validity of their faith..." Not satisfied with a life of ivory-tower scholarship, they concerned themselves with the problems of the renewal of the Church... In recent years they had been involved with the liturgical and ecumenical movements, with civil rights, and with the concerns of world peace."²⁷ Without going into details about the history of its rapid spread to the various countries and continents, we may summarise by saying that "there are now over a hundred thousand Catholic pentecostal laymen and priests in hundreds of prayer groups."²⁸ As for its liturgical expressions, these have many elements in common with other Pentecostal movements. But in Catholic circles (especially in official circles), the expressions "Renewal in the Spirit" or "Charismatic Movement" are preferred to "Pentecostal Movement". This option perhaps signifies a more modest claim to the effusion of the gifts of the Spirit in congregational gatherings, than was evident at the first Pentecostal gathering. Consequently, perhaps, the expressions of the prayer-experience in groups through body movements, gestures and prophesying are less obtrusive and less numerous than in other such prayer-gatherings.

C. *Black Pentecostalism*: In the context of the revival of Pentecostal movements in various churches, special mention must be made of such movements among the 'blacks' in Africa and America. For, the Pentecostal movement in America began in the same milieu in which the spiritual, jazz and blues emerged. Yet, while black music has gained recognition as a contribution by the Negroes to universal culture, the black influence on the Pentecostal movement—which has today around thirty million adherents—has been almost forgotten.²⁹ Black Pentecostalism affirms that liberation is always a consequence of the presence of the Spirit. Authentic liberation can never take place apart from genuine Pentecostal

23. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, 144-45.

24. Eggenberger, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

25. For the sake of convenience we use here the expression "protestants" to designate the various non-catholic confessions, like Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians as well as the Anglicans and the Baptists.

26. Hollenweger, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

27. Hollenweger, *op. cit.*, p. 76; Cf. also Philippe, O.S.B., *Information generale le renouveau dans l'Esprit*: Bruxelles.

28. Hollenweger, *ibid.*, p. 56.

29. Hollenweger, *op. cit.*, p. 18-19.

encounter, and likewise, authentic Pentecostal encounter cannot occur unless liberation becomes the consequence. Opinions vary concerning the origin and function of the Negro Spirituals.³⁰ However, they are not enough evidence that the black people reconciled themselves with human slavery. On the contrary, they are black freedom songs, which emphasize black liberation as consistent with divine revelation.³¹ We shall see later that from the socio-cultural point of view black Pentecostalism and the emerging black power are both movements of social transformation. Their worship-forms are typical of their socio-cultural milieu: As Prof. Hollenweger observes, with respect to the Kimbanguists of Zaire, their worship admits no strict division between sacred and profane. The social get-together, the profane singing, making music, palavering, giving and receiving gifts has as much religious character as the 'religious' singing, praying, making music, the offertory and the stylized dancing.³²

II

DIFFERENT LINES OF INTERPRETATION

The above patterns of worship lend themselves to different interpretations when considered in the light of insights derived from the human sciences. All of them may not fit into every one of these interpretations, and every single interpretation, by the very fact that it sees the phenomenon of worship from its particular point of view, is bound to be incomplete. At the same time different interpretations from different angles appear to be necessary to explain in a satisfactory way the complex phenomenon of wor-

30. Hollenweger, "Spirituals" G.J. Davies ed., *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship* (London: SCM, 1972), pp. 394f.

31. James H. Cone, "Black Spirituals: A Theological Interpretation", *Theology Today* (1972) 54-69; also Cf. R.C. Cunningham, "Social Concern Articulated", *Pentecostal Evangel* (Springfield: no. 2840, 1968).

32. Hollenweger, *Pentecost between Black and White* (Belfast: Christian Journals Ltd., 1974) p. 67.

It may be noted in this context that a recent discussion among the African theologians centred on whether an ordinary African can express his sincere thanks and admiration for God's wonderful deeds without profound gestures—singing and dancing etc. See for example, Bishop C. Sebwa & Fr. D. Kyeune, "Worship: The Source and fullest Expression of the Christian Community", *African Ecclesiastical Review*, XVIII (1976), pp. 288f.

ship. Having made these observations, we shall now attempt to describe a few lines of interpretation.

1. *The Psychological line of Interpretation*: This is something we shall develop only very briefly. This approach utilizes sociological data regarding the forms of worship in question and tries to find the unconscious motivations that stimulate the external visible patterns of behaviour. Thus this perspective would explain the proliferation of informal groups of the type we have examined in terms of anonymity and isolation of modern man.³³ Behind the apparent spontaneity, creativity and intimacy of personal relationships so well manifested in such liturgical gatherings,³⁴ a psychological exploration of individual participants may discover some 'concealed' motivations, not perceived by the individuals themselves. The enquiry may reveal, for example, that the majority of the participants are immigrants and socially marginalized citizens, thus confronted by social and economic problems.³⁵ They will oppose the society that has so isolated them, and the churches or religious organizations that have connived with the former in this strategy of isolation. In such situations the new-found worship-groups will function as a substitute and compensate for their social frustrations and isolations. And this will, in its turn, multiply the number of such groups within which they feel they can communicate, share and be appreciated for their own sake. According to this view, therefore, the liturgical expressions will symbolize a pathological condition of the participants.

It is evident that this interpretation, though not totally wrong, cannot adequately account for the wide range of worship-experiences evidenced by the foregoing inventory. No genuine Psychology will attempt to reduce religion and religious experience to mere psychic and internal factors of man. At the same time this interpretation does have some valid points, at least with regard to some of the types we have considered. The Western society, especially its urban environment, is characterized by the multi-

33. Cf. J. Remy and L. Voye, "Informal Groups in the Present-Day Church—A Sociological Analysis", *Concilium*, (1974), 86.

34. These values are more conspicuous in the Pentecostal types of gatherings, which sponsor individual charisms and initiatives.

35. In recent times a sociological enquiry is said to have been conducted among some Pentecostal groups of the USA. This case study is said to reveal the above-mentioned characteristics of the participants! Cf. A. Vergote: "Regard du Psychologue sur le symbolisme liturgique", *La Masson-Dieu*, 91 (Paris: 1967), 129.

plication of functional relationships, distinct from personal relationships.³⁶ Such contexts stimulate informal groups of the type we have just mentioned. In the given context of the technicature, these groups may function in two ways: They may provide affective protection to the members while training them for a life marked by risk and lack of love, characteristic of a society structured on functional relationships. They may also function as useful 'energy-source', one can periodically resort to, in order to recuperate oneself, whenever one feels uncomfortable and insecure in the anonymity and functional quality of modern city life.

2. *Socio-cultural line of Interpretation:* In this approach we shall adopt the following method of presentation: One by one we shall pick up the salient features and concerns of the worship-groups we have considered, and in each case try to find the *raison d'être* in terms of sociological principles.

a) *From big religious organizations to small groups:* One of the notable characteristics of the groups considered is their emergence as fragments of some big churches and religious organizations. Everywhere there is a tendency to fall back on comparatively small group worships, as against the large congregational worship of earlier times. Apart from the psychological explanation already offered for this, there is also a relevant sociological reason behind it. The present day cultural evolution is undergoing a process of transformation from a culture of mechanical solidarity into one of organic solidarity.³⁷ And by its very nature mechanical solidarity is built up and maintained through collective social rites,³⁸ because

36. Functional relation is always on a utilitarian basis, whereas the personal one is on an affective basis.

37. Sociologically speaking, when one passes from a society or socio-economic life with very little scope for division of work to a society in which this division is very strong, one also passes from a model of mechanic solidarity to one of organic solidarity. In the former type of society, the technico-economical interdependence is too weak to constitute a priority basis for social integration. On the other hand, in the latter type, the complementarity of tasks and roles is such that no one can satisfy his needs without passing through some constraint relationships with the other. The techno-economical interdependence is so great as to keep the social interaction and integration indispensable, at the same time making allowance for ideological liberty and individual autonomy. Cf. J. Remy & others "Form Liturgiques et symboliques sociales", *Social Compass*, XXII (1975), 177f.

38. About the nature and function of social rites, see later—the third interpretation.

they will guarantee the necessary collective functioning of the society. At the next stage these social rites will assume the role of religious rites, which are supposed to enable the society to organise itself with respect to certain uncontrollable forces, on which it depends. Thus the decisive rites become automatically religious rites or liturgies to be performed always collectively in accordance with a unitary and hierarchical vision of the universe.

Now, this concept of collectivity in performing liturgies undergoes a profound change when we come to a society where organic solidarity is predominant. This latter type of society assures sufficient ideological liberty and autonomy of action. Here the mode of integration in the society is not so much in terms of conformity to a common ideology that would guarantee a collective identity, but more according to one's technical capacity that would affirm individual identity. Consequently, it tends to break up into diverse symbolic groups.³⁹ Evidently, this new structure of the society will express itself in terms of symbolic rites, necessitating a diversification of liturgical forms, which would not, as before, conform to the strict monopoly of a 'Rule' or a 'Tradition'.

b) *Symbolic of Socio-Political Commitment:* A second feature of the new patterns of worship is their call for socio-political commitments. This is particularly so in the case of youth worship groups and the types of Pentecostalism among the 'blacks'. It can be seen that these are being structured on the basis of a contextual social involvement. In a recent comparative study made by Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia Hine on Black Power Pentecostalism and Black Power they discover and describe these both as movements of social transformation.⁴⁰ They come to the conclusion that both movements are not opposites but very much related and complementary, one symbolically (in the framework of a liturgy) articulating the revolutionary concerns of the other. And in the words of Pro. Hollenweger, "such examples of political alphabetization are not only found in the black Pentecostal churches in the USA, but also in the Russian, South African, Swedish and the Latin American Pentecostal movements."⁴¹

39. Remy & Others, *article cited*, p. 183f.

40. Cf. Luther P. Gerlach and Virginia Hine. *People, Power, Changes. Movements of Social Transformation* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1970).

41. Hollenweger, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

c) *Symbolic of Mystic-Aesthetic Vision of Life*: Some of the emerging liturgical patterns appear to be totally withdrawn from socio-political involvement. Some varieties of the so-called charismatic movements, especially among the Catholics, as well as some Hindu Christian syncretic worship-forms may be said to belong to this type. The question before us now is how we can explain this phenomenon in sociological terms.

First of all, the peculiarity of a society built on organic solidarity, as we have seen, is its fragmentation into specialized groups according to the mode of insertion of the individuals. Now, this mode of insertion is basically motivated by interests of self-establishment in the society, which may be achieved in various ways. One way of attaining it is through socio-political commitment, which then is expressed in the symbolic of religious rites (certain types of liturgies do this as we have noted above). Another way to achieve this same goal is through a mystic-aesthetic vision of life, withdrawing from socio-political commitments, which in turn is expressed in the symbolic of some other types of liturgies.⁴²

d) *Disregard for the Space-Time Significance of Worship*

Worship-gatherings in improvised situations—temporary sheds, private houses, sometimes even in the heart of the buzzing city life, as well as utilization of 'sacred places' for 'profane purposes', without attaching special significance to a particular time (Sunday) as time of social coming-together, against a 'work time' (Weekday) of dispersed activity are some special features of the new patterns of worship. This change of perspective springs from a marginalization of the difference between the sacred and the profane.⁴³ The 'collectivistic vision of the mechanic solidarity had projected itself into all the realms of religious life—spatial, and temporal, radicalising a dichotomy sacred/profane and its correlatives.⁴⁴ The disruption of the unitary world-view structured on

42. Remy & Others, *article cited*, pp. 188f.

43. The concept of a "sacred heteronomy" or hierarchical structure of reality is at the root of this dichotomy sacred/profane, which is characteristic of primitive societies—See M. Eliade, *Le sacré et le profane* (Gallimard: 1965).

44. Such correlatives are, for example, centre/periphery, Sunday/weekday, work/leisure etc.

hierarchical centrality, which is now brought about on account of a societal transformation, is at the root of this change of perspective. Diverse projects of different interests cannot naturally come together in the same place to give symbolic expression (liturgies) to their concerns and preoccupations. Thus the significance of Sunday for collective life has been reduced, and the same applies to town and village centres.⁴⁵

e) *Disregard for Action-oriented Significance of Worship*

Not only with regard to time and place, but also regarding the very liturgical action (celebration) there is a change of perspective in the new forms of worship—a relativization of 'Rule' as something to be conformed to. The old conception was one of all 'efforts' in the performance of a rite in order to make it conformable to a "Law" (*Lex orandi*); the new tendency is to consider the rite in the style of a "feast", a conception which springs from one's preoccupation with self-establishment in the worship. Instead of viewing worship as morally obligatory, something imposed from outside, these groups take it as an occasion for "celebrating" the experiences and preoccupations in diverse socio-cultural contexts.⁴⁶

Thus we find that in the sociological line of interpretation there is an appreciable degree of correlation between the proliferation of new worship-forms and the present-day cultural evolution. But we have to admit that everything has not been explained. There are questions for which we require perhaps some other line of approach. Consider, for example, questions of the following type: By its very nature and as understood in sociology, "a rite is a repetitive stereotype of symbolic action."⁴⁷ How does this understanding of rite tally with the social exigencies of multiplication of religious rites as a result of the so-called organic solidarity of modern culture? Indeed every social ritual is conservative:

45. Cf. Remy and Liliane, *article cited*, p. 88f.

46. Cf. Remy and Others: *article cited*, p. 185f.

47. J.Y. Hamelin, "Aspects du rite", *La Maison-Dieu*, 119 (1974), 102; We are aware of the ambiguity of the meaning of rite, for example, cf. Huxley, J. ed., *Comportement rituel chez l'homme et l'animal*. Trans. from English (Paris; Gallimard: 1971). But in all these—about 30 definitions—its repetitive and conservative aspect can be noticed.

Take the case of "medical ritual" or "psychoanalytic ritual"⁴⁸, or the administrative systems of the court of justice.⁴⁹ Or what is really happening in the so-called liturgical improvisations? What is really being changed? Or again, why does a sacred ballet make sense in a cathedral but not in a modern chapel? Why does lay dress appear meaningful for the celebrant in a family worship, but nonsensical in a big church? One can prolong the list indefinitely and it seems that one has to enquire into the very anthropological nature and structure of rite in order to be able to shed light on such important questions.

3. Cultural-Anthropological line of Interpretation

Since the turn of the present century various human sciences have drawn attention to the significance of rite in human life. But this emphasis has led, in the current language, to a negative understanding of it—stereotype behaviour, obsolete ceremonial, rigidly formalised religion etc.⁵⁰ In the following paragraphs we shall concentrate on its positive aspects, that it is something intensely personal to man, to his cultural and religious self-actualization.

a) *Rite and Symbolic Expression*: We first appeal to the symbolic character of rite in man's life and thereby mean to say that symbol is constitutive of man's 'being-in-the-world' and his 'being-with-the-other'. It is inherent to his being that he 'expresses' himself in symbolic systems—language and body gestures, which are not instrumental actions.⁵¹ They are symbolic gestures, because

48. See R. Castel, *La psychanalyse* (Paris: Maspero, 1973), p. 15f.

49. The tribunal, judges and advocates in their official costume, stock phrases, speeches etc. do they not really make up a ritual? we may even think of table ritual, theatre ritual etc.

50. Cf. Vergote, R. *Interpretation du langage religieux* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), p. 204.

51. An instrumental or technical action seeks an end, which is outside itself. For example, pressing an electric switch to have light, eating and drinking in order to appease hunger and quench thirst. These are not expressive actions, they express nothing. Neither is expression mere exteriorization; only a static internal state can be exteriorized, such, for example, are our emotions—joy, pain etc. They come out spontaneously as occasion presents itself. We are not expressing them. On the other hand, offering a present, shaking hands with another (welcoming folded hands), embracing... these are expressions, gestures which signify

they always connect body-attitude with intentionality, because they are symbolic signs. Every such gesture unites man with the spatio-temporal world. Now, rite may be said to be 'operative expression', meaning thereby that in it meaning and sign coincide, that there is no functional subordination of the sign to something exterior to the meaning. Otherwise rite becomes an instrumental action, and religious magic, to say the least. Thus it is natural to man, a 'symbolic being' in the sense as explained above to have recourse to rite, to operative and expressive symbols in order to symbolize 'his being in the world' his existence. In fact, to be human is to symbolize existence.⁵² Man's nostalgia for ritual symbolization of his privileged moments of existence can be seen in all ages and cultures. The so-called rites of passage⁵³ are not mere ceremonies of insertion in the society. They are highly symbolic celebrations of the essential dimensions of existence. It is interesting to note that such symbolic celebrations of the body-dimensions of existence are manifested in the Yogic patterns of prayer, in the diverse charismatic prayer-forms as well as in the hippy style of life with its protest against a monotonous lifestyle. This need of man for ritual symbolization of existence is displayed in another form in the craziness for modern ballets.

b) *Symbolic realization and Cultic Expression*: From the above brief discussion regarding the anthropological meaning of the term 'expression' and its relation to rite, it must be clear that rite in its true sense is operative in itself. It is an operative expression, realizes what it signifies, a power which is in the nature of every symbolic sign. However, there is a tension between signification and realization in every ritual expression. There remains always a surplus signification, an experience of 'beyondness' (au-delà), in the very process of its realization. We will try

an intention and actualizes it at once. Cf. Vergote, "Gestes et actions symboliques en liturgie" *Concilium* (French edition) 62 (1971) p. 39f. and "La réalisation symbolique dans l'expression culturelle", *La Maison-Dieu* 111 (1972) p. 114f. In the same sense language is 'expressive' in its performative function. Cf. J.L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, J.O. Urmson, ed., (Oxford University Press, 1962).

52. For the symbolization dimension see among others, C. Levi-Strauss, *Anthropologie Structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1958); E. Ortigues, *Discours et symbol* (Paris: Aubier, 1962).

53. Rites of birth, initiation, marriage, death etc. Cf. A. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, Trans. by B.V. Monika & I.C. Gabrielle (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).

to make this idea clear, by an example: When the husband and wife embrace each other, we have seen that this is an 'expression' in the true sense, expression of an inner disposition.⁵⁴ But in the very gesture of embracing and all that accompanies it, there is something that escapes them. They cannot fully accomplish all that they would, namely, the intentionality beyond. In other words, the two things—expressive gesture and inner disposition (signification)—are not always co-terminus, co-extensive. Similar is also the case with any cultic expression; there is created by it an opening, a void entailing surplus signification.

Thus from the anthropological standpoint, every religious rite and liturgy or worship takes man through his body-bound subjective 'expressive' experiences to the brink of 'something beyond', to a 'void' in which is experienced the irruption of an 'Other', the Divine. It is the juncture of 'presence-absence', "the emptiness created by the symbolism of the rite is filled by the irreducible alterity of the sacred, the divine."⁵⁵ For instance, we may consider the rite of offering. The cultic gesture of offering is first of all a negative rite.⁵⁶ "To offer is to separate from common and profane use. The negativity of the rite is determined here with respect to its profane use."⁵⁷ At the second instant it carries also the idea of mediation between two asymmetric poles of exchange—human and divine. However, it does not evoke the DO UT DES (give-and-take) mercantile concept. Whenever this latter idea is present, offering loses its symbolism, whereas as a symbolic gesture it 'represents' a 'presence in absence'. This negative moment is essential to it, because it transforms what is immediate in life and in the experience-data into a signifier of what is being re-presented—existence and all that it means. The efficacy of the rite of offering lies in this that through its negative moment it opens the human world and in the void (absence) thus created, it allows the divine present itself. In this sense (and only in this sense, we hasten to add in order

54. This example, though seemingly vulgar, brings us to the point. In fact it has been used several times by A. Vergote in his writings.

55. L.M. Chauvet. "La Dimension sacrificielle de l'Eucharistique" *La Maison-Dieu*, 123 (1975) 48.

56. It is negative not in the sense of a Taboo, which one should avoid at all cost.

57. A. Vergote. "Dimensions anthropologiques de l'eucharistique" *L'Eucharistique Symbol etc Réalité Réponses Chrétiennes*, 12. ed., Duoclot (Paris: Gembloux, 1970), p. 36.

to avoid all magical understanding of it), every liturgical rite is operative by itself (*opere operato*). This is the type of divine-human operation inscribed in the scheme of Christian sacraments, so well typified in the Incarnate Word.

From the foregoing brief analysis of the structure and meaning of rite and its capacity for symbolic realization of man's existential experiences opening out for a divine-human encounter in every ritual expression properly so-called, it may not be difficult to understand the importance of having recourse to every possible means that would make a worship ritual 'expressive'. In the following paragraphs we shall make a few observations on this aspect. The horizons of these observations are limited to Christian liturgies, even though in a broad sense they may be applicable to any religious worship.

III

EMERGENT WORSHIP-PATTERNS

1. *Prospective Orientations*: A preliminary observation is in order here: To make a liturgical form expressive is not to overwhelm it with unnecessary details—secondary signs ceremonies and rubrics. In fact, such encumbrances will only render a rite less expressive and revealing and so irritating to intelligent participants. In fact, contemporary man's distaste for liturgical participation springs not so much from the obsolescence of the rite in question as from its 'ceremonialization' and 'pontificalization'.⁵⁸ Having made these observations, we shall consider certain points that, we hope, would render worship really expressive.

Since worship is 'expression' pure and simple with all that it implies anthropologically speaking, there are three areas of it which need to be attended to—Texts, Actions and Gestures.⁵⁹ *Texts* include written forms of prayers, readings and songs in worship. *Actions* mean sacramental actions and ceremonial actions

58. We mean by these terms the undue ceremonial display of liturgical vestments and things, and the clerical fanaticism of radicalising role-differences in liturgical celebrations.

59. For a fuller and clearer exposition of the 'movement-dimension together with the verbal dimension' (*Bewegung neben Wort und Ton*). Cf. A.R. Sequeira, *Spielende Liturgie* Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder, 1977).

during the liturgical celebration.⁶⁰ *Gestures* imply every symbolic body-movement in the liturgy—inclination, prostration, yoga-praying postures, dance-postures etc. Liturgical texts are expressive, as a whole, with specific illuminative force at work.⁶¹ Liturgical actions are also expressive in so far as they form part of the rite in question, but degenerate into magic, when devoid of any symbolism. Gestures as symbolic body-movements are always expressive. A happy concurrence and co-ordination of these three dimensions are necessary in order to make liturgy fully expressive. Unfortunately, the third dimension has not been sufficiently taken care of even in the present-day worship services, not to speak of the earlier forms. The recent liturgical reforms and renewal programmes in diverse churches have mainly centred on the first two dimensions. Even here the so-called 'simplification' of rite has often led to the suppression of essential and elementary gestures and the addition of a lot of singing in and out of place. The dimension of gestures plays only a negligible part in the celebrations, even though it is the most elementary and primitive of human expressions. "In the same period of life in which the first words let the absent one present, the child acquires the upright position and walking", says Buytendijk.⁶² In fact, the child attains the height of expression, as soon as it knows how to play symbolically.

Symbolic play is at the root of our expressive gestures and body movements, above all the dancing gestures and postures. And it is to be regretted that this last aspect of body-movement, namely, dancing, has not been so far incorporated in the worship forms in an appreciable manner.⁶³ To those who look askance at

60. For example, actions over liturgical objects, place etc.

61. Based on the theory of 'speech acts' developed by Austin and Searle, J. Ladrière has explained the performative function of liturgical language. cf. "The Performativity of Liturgical Language" *Concilium* (English), 2 (1973), 50-62.

62. Quoted from A.R. Sequeira, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

63. We are aware of the so-called 'Beat-Masses' of the West. They have been able to make the participants pray with body and mind, being drawn into the rhythm of music and singing. The same may be said also about certain forms of 'Youth-Masses' in Holland and America. At the same time it may be remarked that if the aim of such liturgies is only to capture here and now the cosmic dimension of life entirely, without any reference to the 'beyond', their expressions become magical and the celebrations degenerate into a 'Feast of Fools'. For a description of such Masses cf. A.R. Sequeira, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

dance being introduced, we have to say that cult is not dogma, but action and actualization of faith, that liturgy has to be put in the category of art rather than of science. As E. Tinsley rightly remarks, "The liturgy is a composite, art and form which contain what is specifically human: his word, his gestures, his singing and dancing before God".⁶⁴

At the same time one cannot indiscreetly introduce the dance-dimension into the liturgy. Since cult (worship) and culture are not unrelated in life as well as in linguistics, this dimension (all the three above mentioned dimensions for that matter) has to assume cultural incarnation. If a 'Beat-Mass' with its thundering rhythmical 'Gospel Songs' and 'Spirituals' may be more appealing to the cultural ethos of Africa and America and, perhaps, of Europe,⁶⁵ it may be mere deafening noise to the Indian ears. Indian culture has produced its own specific forms of dance—Bharatanāṭyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri etc.—and their variations, which are highly symbolic and devotional. Indian Christian liturgies have to assume this movement dimension in order to make them expressive according to the genius of the native culture.⁶⁶ Of course, we cannot resist natural cross-cultural fertilizations in worship patterns, which are concomitant of socio-cultural interdependence. Such may be considered, for example, the 'Spiritual' and the 'Hare Krishna', not that these are perfect models of such fertilizations but only that they are symbolic of an awakening in religious worship, which may assume global proportions meeting a specific human need not covered by other areas of man's life and endeavours.

2. *Conclusion:* Phenomenology of the contemporary religious worship reveals a proliferation of groups of diverse nature, which are not large configurations. Human sciences have tried to explain the emergence of these new patterns of worship, from their own different standpoints. These are valid but incomplete explanations because of the complex nature of worship, which springs from the fact that rite in its positive orientations is constitutive of man's being-in-the-world and his being-with-the-others, so

64. "Liturgie et art" *Concilium* (French), Section 62 (1971), 71.

65. As for its questionable character when introduced into Europe and white America, cf. Hollenweger, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

66. For a first attempt at the adaptation of such classical Indian dance forms for Christian liturgies, cf. A.R. Sequeira, *Klassische indische Tanzkunst und christliche Verkündigung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978).

much so that the emerging primary religious symbol of our time is the human person. Consequently, we are led to an enquiry into the structure and meaning of worship or religious rite itself. The key word here is 'expression', which may be thought of as an act uniting a symbolic gesture to an inner disposition, a concurrence of the two devoid of any logical priority. Understood as operative expression, religious rite then opens the way for a divine-human encounter through its capacity for symbolic realization of man's existential experiences.

This insight into the nature of worship immediately makes its demand on us to search for every possible means that would make worship, christian liturgies in particular, really expressive, and indirectly helping us to understand the multiplication of worship forms as so many unfinished attempts for self-expression in accordance with the exigencies of our time. Body-movement, including dance-postures and gestures, has yet to find its place among such possible means for making liturgy expressive. This dimension which belongs to the essence of elementary human expression (symbolic play in children, for example), helps man to pray with body as well as mind. However, its integration into worship has to take different forms according to socio-cultural contexts.