

GUIDELINES FOR AN EXPERIMENT TOWARD A GLOBAL
SYMBOLOLOGY

Nancy Grow
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For nearly thirty years the Ecumenical Institute and its affiliates, the Institute of Cultural Affairs and the Order:Ecumenical, have been experimenting in renewal of symbols and rituals. For many years the focus was on the re-empowering of the Christian liturgy. Then for a period of time the focus shifted to the secularizing of Christian symbols for broad use in society. Both of these emphases were called for because of the shift in paradigm and the increasing pluriformity of the community with which we were working. Now we are faced with a new need: a symbolic life which will sustain and nurture a body of some 30,000 including 1500 residential staff in 40 nations and from every major religion of the world. It needs to be a symbolic life based on the shifting paradigm yet honoring the particularities of the traditions from which we have received life.

Because unity in common life and mission already exists, I believe the basic commonality in life understanding and operating paradigm is already present. There are symbols and rituals which we already share world wide. We already create songs in many different languages with the same themes, the same passions which we sing around the world. Our task is to call to consciousness the symbols which we share and empower them (as the Roman Church empowered Thomism thru incorporation into the liturgy, architecture, calendar of the late middle ages).

Further, the Order: Ecumenical, the staff of the Ecumenical Institute, has long understood itself to be the Corporate Office, the embodiment of the liturgy in much the same sense as the Eastern Orthodox Church has understood itself. This has largely been forgotten in the past ten years for many reasons, but now it seems appropriate that we re-examine that understanding.

The life of the Order:Ecumenical is centered on two symbolic sequences which are the basic requirements of its unwritten rule and which are primary to their total work and life experience. One of these is the daily ritual and the other is the weekly ritual of the residential community. The work of this paper will be to describe these sequences and their parts, to trace their historic, ontological and existential roots, and to indicate the way in which the experiment may proceed to transmute them to serve more effectively as the Order becomes increasingly more pluriform in make-up and more self-consciously present to the emerging paradigm.

First it will be necessary to describe the sequences and relate them to the self understanding of the Order:Ecumenical. It has been said at times that the Order is the Daily Office, the daily ritual. The sequence of the daily ritual has six distinct parts: the ritualistic wake-up and pronouncement of the Word; the dramatic rehearsal of the common life stance in a formal, objective mode; the singing and accountability of the breakfast meal; the scripture/news conversation; the collegium; and the send-out to the tasks of the day. All these parts are present at least five days a week in all 140 Houses of the Order in all countries. The wake-up ritual varies according to the cultural context. The daily rehearsal may be the rich cultic act of the Christian tradition or a more intellectual litany based on a poet such as Tagore. In either case it will be participatory and appropriate

and appropriate to the cultural setting. The same songs are found in the song books in all Houses. The formula of accounting for each individual and for pronouncing absolution is the same everywhere. In non-Christian contexts a reading from the daily Journal, a collection of short sayings from all cultures spanning some 3000 years replaces the Bible as the focus for conversation. It is linked with a brief discussion about the news of the day. The Collegium takes the longest period of time. It may deal with current issues or strategies either local or global or it may be part of a program of common study or research. The send-out always involves the announcing of plans for the day, any special assignments and a missional context in which the day's task is signified.

The weekly celebration, known as the Sunday Celebration or House Church also has seven parts. The first is the gathering and setting of a context with songs and a witness related to the ritual enactment. This is followed by an agape meal in which the bread and wine are broken and spilled and shared with the entire group and prayers are offered for the world and for the servants of the world's needy. After the meal special events are celebrated such as birthdays, anniversaries of marriage covenants, ordinations, etc., births, deaths, new members in the community. Then reports of a symbolic nature are made of the highlights of the external task and the internal life of the Order and received on behalf of the World, the Church and the Order. A final report tells of activities of the Order in other locations around the world. The sixth part of the ritual is accountability for participation in the communal life and task during the week that is past. Each individual participates and answers "yes and no" or "no and yes" since none is totally faithful or totally unfaithful. Absolution is pronounced by a member of the body and the group is sent into the coming week with appropriate words of commissioning. This is the more subjective of the two sequences.

Both these ritual sequences have long rootage not only in the Christian Church but in common rituals of humanness itself. They permeate directly and indirectly all that we do, say, or think during the day. They inform our stance and style. This paper will trace some of the more relevant roots and analyze the dynamics which have made them effective to this time. On the basis of this, guidelines will be suggested for further experiment and for other groups who seek a way to symbolize commonality while affirming the uniqueness of local groups and particular traditions. This will require a consideration of the pluriform nature of the Order: Ecumenical and also of the paradigm which will increasingly effect its images and language as we move into the 21st century as global people. The concept of being the symbol in the sense of being the liturgy or office will need to be explicated, particularly from the writings of the Orthodox Church and such experiments as Taize.

GUIDELINES FOR AN EXPERIMENT TOWARD A GLOBAL
SYMBOLGY

- I. The Liturgical Office of the Order: Ecumenical
 - A. The Presence of the Corporate Office
 - B. The Daily Ritual
 - C. The Weekly Ritual
 - D. The Crisis in the Office today

- II. The Historic and Ontological Roots: Holy Ground
 - A. The Judeo-Christian tradition
 - B. Anthropological Commonality
 - C. Ontological relations to cosmos and Numinous
 - D. Profound Humanness and "the Other World in the midst of This World"

- III. The Paradigm of Century Twenty-One
 - A. The shift in paradigm
 - B. The pluriform nature of life
 - C. Changes required in symbols and language
 - D. The embodiment of paradigm in-ritual sequence

- IV. Guidelines for the Liturgical Orchestration of community life
 - A. The content of liturgy
 - B. The message to be conveyed
 - C. Dynamics involved:
 - knowing, doing and being
 - local, regional and global
 - humility, gratitude and compassion
 - architecture, choreography and liturgy
 - D. Unto the last - the embodiment of Office in every deed

PLAN

It is intended that the basic research for this paper be done in connection with course requirements and that all courses taken in fulfillment of requirements feed directly into the project. This will be outlined in detail at the next session.

Some of the reading to be done includes:

- research into the scandal of particularity as it involves the uniqueness not only of Christ but the particular versus the universal
- profound ecumenism as described by J.W. Mathews as "the one, the few, and the many"
- basic to the age: Whitehead, Barth, Jung, etc.
- thinkers re pluralism: Hocking, Van Dusen, Kraemer, Samartha
- current edge thinkers: Smith, Rupp, Tracy
- symbol in its many forms: Eliade, Douglas, Otto, Taize, Turner

Questions by group:

1. Actual make-up of O:E
2. Is focus on symbols or on group as ideal type
3. Audience?
4. Hypothesis of possible symbols.
5. How different from Unitarians
6. Is Cobb's work (Pluralistic Society) helpful?
7. What is a fitting relationship of diverse cultural expressions?
8. I am more interested in the struggle for unity than in the symbol of unity.
9. What methodology for relating to people of diverse backgrounds.
10. What does this interaction do to your Xn Faith? your own tradition?
11. Most interest in the method of pushing beyond particular to universal esp as working with other traditions
12. Schleiermacher? what influence?
13. If your own faith is deepened by this journey does that exclude the possibility of adding to your experience from Buddhism, etc.
14. Have you looked at Bahai, Swedenborgianism?
15. Is this an elitist religious movement within Ch.
16. Self-conscious as to Whitehead
17. Do you have a common symbol (picture not word) for God?
18. Do members attend mosque, Ch, or is the symbol sequence fulfilling enough?

Review Module:

- Dr. Yoshio Fukuyama - Dean of Studies
- Dr. Clyde Manschreck - Prof of Ch History
- Peter Brenner - UCC - Milwaukee
- Dorothea Blakey - AME Zion - presiding Elder
- Ms. Pat Lund-Lers - UP
- Lee Wesley - UCC - TV ministry CFC
- Mongezi Guma - Epis priest - S. Africa - Johannesburg
- Ron Green - UMC - drama

LIVING RITUAL

Nancy Grow

INTRODUCTION: In 1975, when Joe Mathews returned to Chicago from visiting the twenty-four Human Development Projects which had recently been begun in communities in each of the time zones, he startled us by suddenly asking: "How are we going to deal with those Muslims who are going to be part of our Order? How are we going to deal with these Hindus? I'm not playing some abstract game. There are Hindus in the villages who know what I mean when I say, 'I believe', 'I care', 'I hope the hope of God.' The word 'ecumenical' means the whole civilized world. The church is universal. It cannot be anything but universal. In this complicated, pluralistic world, what is going to be the form of this?"

This paper does not seek to answer that question. But it is in the context of that question that the rituals of the Order:Ecumenical become an issue. This paper deals with the experiments of the last three years and the discoveries of the last thirty years.

I. Rituals maintain power only in a common context. In our pluralistic community, commonality lies in an existential passion and style. We are a pluriform group representing many forms of religion, of race and language. We share a common concept of concern for the innocent suffering of the whole world and a life attitude of possibility in the midst of realistic difficulties. For three years we have worked with texts of ritual, but we are clear that our unity is not in a theology or a philosophy, but in a commonly discerned social contradiction and a common dedication of our lives in radical obedience to spiritual and social task to which we feel ourselves called.

II. The second point follows, we have long said of our courses, and now can also say of our symbolic life, that the structure freights the meaning. This means that it is not only the make-up of each ritual element or ritual sequence, but the ritual process as a whole which carries our life understanding. Because of the centrality of symbol, myth and ritual to every part of our existence as the Order, our time design as a whole is a ritual process which embodies and to varying degrees reveals the root paradigm, innately Christian in origin, on which all our activities are founded.

III. This root paradigm, and therefore the message of the entire ritual process, is cruciformity and resurrection, the open secret that to die is to live. This meaning is hidden and revealed in the visual symbols in all our houses, in the structure and form of the occasional and cyclical rituals as well as the open rituals that mark each transition of the day, the week and the year. It is even the basis of the rituals of polity, assignment, resettlement and corporate style.

IV. The implication is that living and sharing this ritual system is being liturgy to the world; we don't do the daily office, we be the daily office. This does not mean we do not need to be concerned about the texts or the enactments of individual rituals; on the contrary, we need to intensify consciousness of what we are doing. This involves grasping again the reason for the secularizing of rituals before our expansion overseas. It means self-consciousness of how our missional tasks as well as our study and communal life are extensions of the three acts and moods of worship. In some cases it will mean sharpening the address of courses and consultations. Living this tradition to the hilt will reveal new horizons of profound unity with other religions, it will proclaim (declare) both absolutism and possibility to all we touch, and it will provide (manifest) a living and reasonable sacrificial hope.

V. The Ritual edges with which we must deal are: the cultic dimensions of short forms of ritual office, the experience of the Mystery's intrusion, and the intentional forms of sacred space, particularly in small and crowded houses.

In August will begin the task of sifting through this data and relating it to the local congregation. In order to do this effectively, I will need to be in dialogue with representatives from five or ten churches which have been directly appropriating the work which we did earlier on the canonical hours and the Church year and who have attempted, in consultation to use this in both congregation and community to bring significance and meaning into the passing of time. I will draft the professional paper and submit it to them for reflection before doing the final draft. In this way I hope to guarantee that the suggestion and theories incorporated will be understandable and relevant in local communities in this country. I will not make any attempt to particularize the application beyond North American culture at this time.

The final product, then, will include basic theories relative to ritual in a pluralistic community, weekly, daily and yearly time designs and suggestive rituals which both empower and follow from the concept of ritual process. I believe this will demonstrate that a ritual cannot be fully understood outside the context of the total ritual process in which it is involved and that when local rhythms and rituals are designed to significate and empower the emerging patterns of the community, they will in fact be pluralistic, globally relevant and deeply religious.

happening in this age of transition and how ritual in particular relates to the total process. In spring quarter further studies will be needed especially in Whitehead's concept of time and how that informs the rituals of time rhythm, anthropological approaches to globalizing culture, (eg. Panikkar) and advantage will be taken of the meeting of the Annual Missions Institute at ISTS to interview individuals on what steps the church is taking in Finland, Latin America, Africa and South East Asia to deal with the redeeming of time. The information and insights gathered will again need to be shared with those involved in the next step of the project.

Beginning in May there will be a task force planning the Global Research Assembly to be held in Chicago in July for about 600 representatives of the Institute staff from around the globe. I will be part of that task force and will have special concern for two things: the actual time design and symbolic life of the four week assembly and the outline of the research to be done during the assembly on the theoretics of the ordering dynamics of such a global body. This will include and utilize all the study which I have done and will deal specifically with our global symbolic life, patterns and rhythms of time and the relation of these to historic Christian tradition and to the situation of global civilization in the present time. These two arenas will provide an opportunity to make modifications in the practices in the light of the evaluation and analysis of the experiments now going on.

At the end of the four weeks, the planning group will collect reflections and evaluations from the total assembly as well as the consensus for the symbolic life patterns for the coming year. This will give a broader base for looking at the effectiveness of the overall time rhythm and the rituals which mark it; the "new rubrics" of spontaneity, universalism, concreteness, truthfulness, continuity and orthopraxis and the new rubrics of adoration, knowledge and action.

THE RESEARCH METHOD

The research for this project will involve several arenas and phases. Two of these have already begun: the study of contemporary wisdom and initial experimentation in time rhythms and rituals which mark them. In addition there will need to be analysis of the experiments going on in the light of present scholarship; modifications; the formulation out of this data of a combined study and ritual-time experiment to be held in July, gathering of feedback, final analysis and application of learnings to local congregations.

In a sense this project began many years ago with experiments in the use of the canonical hours and of structuring and ritualising time in the Ecumenical Institute. When the work went global, local Houses were encouraged to modify the time design and the daily rituals and periodic cultural celebrations to fit the milieu in which they were located. The findings, or indeed, the details of these experiments have never been collected nor analysed. I have begun to collect the information, notably from five very different areas: Japan, Indonesia, India, Kenya and the United States of America. Beginning in the spring break, this data will be looked at first for commonality, second for adaptations needed to be appropriate to the culture involved, including the rhythms of the day, week and annual celebrations, and third the evaluation of the marking rituals in light of current insights into the integrating and enabling power of ritual. This stage of evaluation and analysis will be done with a small task force of our research staff in the Chicago Nexus. It is hoped the first stage will be complete by the end of March.

In order to facilitate this process, the studies which I have engaged in at CTS, particularly in the arenas of symbol, ritual, and ecumenical theology, will need to be summarised and passed on to the task force to enable the creation of criteria of evaluation and a broad context for understanding what is

RITUAL IN A PLURALISTIC COMMUNITY:
AN EXPERIMENT IN TIME

At the end of my position paper I have indicated the need for renewed symbolic integrity "to demonstrate the life-giving power of symbols when they are comprehensively rooted in the love of God and neighbor". I outline four tasks: 1) the reempowerment of Christian symbols, 2) the discovery and sharing of non-Christian symbols that are effective today, 3) recreating liturgies to reflect the changing paradigm and 4) the development of a solitary office. My professional paper will deal with the first and third of these in a very specialized concern: that of the sanctification or redemption of time.

I will outline the learning of the Christian community regarding the daily weekly and yearly rhythms which were part of the tradition until this last part of the century. I will outline some of the cultural changes which made these rituals unpopular and tended to cause them to be neglected. In the light of modern scholarship on ritual process, secularization and a pluralistic globality, I will suggest ways in which time rhythms may again become the liturgy or service of the church to the world.

Part of the project will be analyzing experiments which have gone on in the past ten years, particularly in Japan, Indonesia, India, Kenya and the United States in the Houses of the Ecumenical Institute. On the basis of these learnings a time design for the summer assembly and a proposal for an annual rhythm for the global body will be projected. After the four week intensive, responses will be gathered from the participants, who will come from some forty nations, and implications will be drawn up for local congregations. The final product will include the theory and suggestions for practices which will significate time, that is, both broad rhythms and examples of what the highlighting rituals for each rhythm might look like.

the ritual relates to the overall time design of the day, week and year of the people involved and the other rituals which are part of the process. An attempt will be made to create a picture of this relationship for each of these four areas to dialogue with in terms of their experience of ritual time. The rituals will be looked at for evidence of Panikkar's 'new rubrics' (spontaneity, universalism, concreteness, truthfulness, continuity and orthopraxis). In order for the task force to do this, some corporate study of Panikkar will be necessary and new rubrics (adoration, knowledge and action) On the basis of this study and analysis, suggestions will be made for modifications of these experiments for inclusion in the summer program of the Global Servant Force. During July some six hundred representatives of the GSF will gather for research and planning in Chicago. It will be possible, in consultation with others assigned to plan

Prepare context

for use in the events, to incorporate learnings into the design of the three weeks of the summer of values, processes and how they apply summer and to have a corporate reflection on the results at the end of that time. The immediate product will be a further modification of the ritual process in use and self-consciousness of all concerned in the effect which it is having.

During July these further reflections and experimental forms will be studied and will form the basis of a paper which suggests the way structuring of time can be a liturgical act for sensitive clergy and laity

ie: Stages in Research

1. initiation of experimental rhythm and rituals to mark it
2. Choosing one ritual out of the day to be key nexus of ritual process
3. Gathering the societal wisdom on liturgy and ritual especially from history and current anthropology
4. Studying the experimental rituals and time designs to see how they utilise or inform the theories.
5. Molding a time and ritual design for the Global Research Assembly
6. Gathering feedback from colleagues
7. Analysing and modifying models,
8. Applying learnings to use in local churches.

THE RESEARCH METHOD

The research involved in this project has already begun. It was initiated with the use of daily, weekly and annual time rhythms to expedite missional engagement. In the course of this the canonical hours were studied, the church year, and the dynamics which relate the two and enable people to objectify their states of being and therefore find health in the observance of these activities were investigated. Similarly, with the expansion of the staff to non-Christians, experiments have been done in creating liturgies or daily rituals using the images and idioms of the national people.

Research has also begun here at CTS in the courses and independent study which I have been able to engage in this year in order to discover objective criteria from history and from current scholarship with which to assess and hopefully make more effective this experiment. These studies will carry on this quarter. The courses which have been taken in Dynamics of the Sacred, Interpretation, Theological Concerns for a Global Servant Force, Rituals, Christology and Cultures and Ecumenical Theology have all fed into the one concern of this paper. In the next term I hope to study Whitehead's concept of Time, ^{Re} Contemporary Sources in Literature and Drama, Contemporary Missions and the House Church.

The experimental rituals from Japan, Indonesia, Kenya and India have been collected and will be analysed by a task force which I will direct. The analysis will be on the basis of criteria to be drawn up from the earlier analysis of the canonical hours, Turner's concept of Ritual Process, and Panikkar's anthropological basis for worship. The questions asked will be first what is the basic presupposition and memory event recalled. What are the aspects of future anticipation? How does this provide for the relationship of lived moments to all of time/space?

The second category of analysis will have to do with ritual process. How

Pnikkar is very helpful here in suggesting already emerging symbols. It may be that the remembered kairotic event is not of the ancient past but of contemporary time. This is rather shocking to those who think of religion as being primarily archaic. It is conceivable, as I hope to show in this paper that the "return to creation" which Eliade talks of may not be through an ancient myth but a new reality, which in time will become a myth. This notion, of course, involves a radical faith that God is moving in our era as dramatically as he did in the days of Moses of Jesus

blem of the one and the many. And in each case, Teilhard tries to understand these relationships in such a way that the multiple can be unified without being destroyed.

p. 156-7 Gray: The One and the Many

In existentialism is found both the commonality and the distinctiveness and perhaps therefore the grounds of symbolic life. The concern of ecumenical liturgy is not to eliminate distinctions but to discover the unity in the midst of differences. It is for this reason that I use the word pluriformity as the structure we are seeking, the inter-relationships and basic unity of bodies which give form to the pluralism of our age. In contrast to Gray's explanation of Teilhard's position, I would say we seek not "higher and higher forms of union with the ultimate goal being union with God, but rather more and more basic discoveries of humanness which will lead us to an understanding of the relationship of humans with God which already and a priori exists.

III, The Contents of Liturgy. Very briefly, the key contents of liturgy in our tradition have been anamnesis or the re-lived memory (as opposed to paralysing amnesia), prolepsis or the foretastes which rouse expectation and anticipation (as opposed to debilitating lethargy). In this generation I believe these must be related to time in a different way than they have been in the past. Healing would come to the rootlessness of our generation if it could grasp Whitehead's other concept of the inter-relatedness of all things, the inclusion theory of time. This suggests that liturgy contain relativity or relatedness to all things (as opposed to immediacy of lived moment.)

The questions that will be asked to the experiment, then, will be regarding the remembered event that can center history, the foretaste that can bring common anticipation, and the method by which the atomicity of actual occasions can be extended to include and be included by "salvation time".

self-conscious about the issue might begin to discover our common global symbols, symbols of our one reality, for the sake of the many forms of faith which are struggling to grasp the meaning of life.

Such an ecumenical liturgy would begin, I submit, with anthropology rather than theology. It would begin with the empirical, scientific analysis of man's situation and need and relate it to the processes which have brought healing and wholeness in the past. The concern would be not to reconstruct past rituals but to grasp the ritual dynamics and to use them to empower the emerging global symbols. ~~An ecumenical liturgy would find its form in the existential dimensions of life: in the relationships and states of being that exist~~ The insights of Victor Turner, Raimundo Panikkar and Roy Snyder are helpful in giving concrete suggestions of how this may be done. It is these men who direct our thinking relative to the comprehensive inter-relatedness of all rituals in any one culture, the use of all the senses in the creation of liminality and communitas, the new rubrics of liturgy which include spontaneity, universalitum continuity, concreteness and truthfulness.

But if the nature of man as anthropologically described is one pole of concern, another is the existential situation, the real life experiences of our particular time. It is my contention that the radical changes in life style and of knowledge has already changed the lives of the rest of the world. The woman's revolution, rise of minorities, power of multi-nationals, global dispersion of races, liberation movement in all its aspects, have changed all life. Some talk of this as the situation of pluralism. Teilhard Chardin spoke of it as the problem of the one and the many, a threefold problem:

When man reflects on the relationship between spirit and matter, or between the person and the community, or between God and his creatures...he is brought face to face with the pro

understandings of the religions of the world. Hans Kung is one who has initiated dialogue with theologians of other faiths from the rational grounds of the nature of God and man. Jacques Ellul has pioneered in the idea of the comprehensiveness of The Presence of the Kingdom. John Dunne has approached it in terms of the Way of All the Earth. Chardin deals with the unifying of science, philosophy and theology which, he says, all deal with the relationship of multiplicity and unity.

In the sense that theology is lived before it is written, another dimension of Ecumenical Theology has taken place in our time. There is something magnetic about the enactment of a living symbol, and the mobility of people has allowed many to participate in worship beyond their religion. Thousands flock to the Shinto shrines with the Japanese on New Year's Day, everyone in the country, native and foreigner, attends the celebration of Buddha's birthday in Korea; and it is reported that several thousand Hindus received mass when the Roman Catholic Eucharistic Congress was held in Bombay a few years ago. While some symbols seem to be going out of existence or losing their power, other symbol events seem to be becoming global phenomena. (See Panikkar: Worship and Secular Man.)

The Global Servant Force of the ICA/EI is one of a number of ecumenical bodies united in the service of innocent suffering around the world. The pluralistic groups which share corporate living for the sake of a corporate task have had in some cases ten years of working, celebrating, eating and singing together. This is their liturgy, their service to God and human-kind. In their locations in forty different nations, they have experimented with affirming and dramatizing their common life understanding. It will be the purpose of this project to analyse their experience for the sake of discerning possible liturgical directions by which the few who are now

Time has become relative for all people who deal in any way with communications around the continent or the world. But far more serious, the atomicity of actual occasions has become the primary notion of time and the concept of continuity or relatedness in time has not been captured with equal force. Therefore lives are fragmented and meaningless, relationships are fleeting and ultimately unsatisfying. The technology of our time has taken away the significance of the passing of the seasons to a very large degree, so that they are no longer associated with the economic cycle or the contingency of life. Time is literally dead for many in society. There is culturally and individually a breaking in of kairotic time, time that holds one before all of life and its meaning, but this is rare, and there are few popular tools that allow one to grasp what is happening. The liturgy of the Church is to bring again the gift of anamnesis and of prolepsis to the dimension of relative time, the gifts of active participation in the creation of meaning and of hope and anticipation for the future as a result. Such liturgy would indeed be service to all humankind; it is the task of the self-conscious religious, and uniquely the contribution of the Christian Church because of its long experiments with this dimension of life. In the long run, however, the aim is to allow the marking and significating of time to become the work of the laity and then of all humankind. It is only as this happens that time will in fact be redeemed.

II. An Ecumenical Theology of Liturgy. The great work of this past century in the church has been the ecumenical movement. Begun as a strategy for more effectively spreading the Gospel to all nations, the ecumenical movement has had results far beyond the expectations of the early pioneers. Today by ecumenical theology is meant not simply an acceptable statement of the Christian faith, but a theology which includes both the people and the life

11. Whereas the canonical hours per se do not speak to mankind, the marking of time, through the day, the week, the year, the centuries, is a mark of all religious people. The Chinese years, the Aztec calendar, the Jewish cycles of time are but a few examples. The canonical hours have clues for the future in that they had four parts: the psalms, the lesson, the hymn and the prayers. The psalms were carefully chosen to fit the cycles of the day and the year to articulate the states of consciousness of awakened people. Penitence, gratitude, longing, anxiety, are all reflected. Almost in response to this, (if phenomenology is allowed to interpret the action of the liturgy) came the Word of the gospel or epistle. This was the anamnesis of the good news over against the state of being. It permitted a self-conscious decision to be made relative to one's most personal relationship to the situation. This I believe was the role of the hymn, generally a song of praise. Out of this response came the freedom to pray for the situation, for self and for others. I do not mean to suggest that this was the rational intent of Benedict and other creators of the liturgy; I suggest rather that these are human dynamics found in all people when they allow the transcendent to inform the temporal.

Both the canonical hours and the Christian year allowed people not only to rehearse their salvation story, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, but to relate their own lives to it. ie. It is natural and healthy to have periods of anxiety and repentance, of joy and anticipation, of being kings and of being servants, of grasping yourself chosen for a mighty deed. There is time to think and time to work. A serious weakness in our culture today is the absence of a way to corporately and openly acknowledge the way life is. I suggest that these dynamics can be recovered, not by the imposition of a ritual, but by the ritualising of the practices already common in life

THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

I. Liturgy and Time. According to the thinking of Dom Gregory Dix, liturgy in the Christian Church had its origin in the action of Jesus when he "im-

posed on the events of his death (a judicial murder) the character of voluntary sacrifice to God, redeeming his circumstances by bringing them, along with him, under the Kingship of God. His proclamation of the Gospel in His circumstances and his offering of Himself to bear the outcome of it in the circumstances, are a 'liturgy', a voluntary service. The Church... did nothing else in her liturgy but enter into his. (The Shape of the Liturgy, p.393.)

For some three hundred years the worship of the Church was thus dealing with kairotic time, with manifesting and securing the eternal consequences of the act of Jesus and in the process teaching the people how to die as martyrs. With the passing of time, and particularly when the Church was no longer outlawed, the concern of the liturgy changed. It now emphasized with the training of confessors rather than martyrs, the translation of the eternal into history and time. Chronological time was to be redeemed. The key to both liturgies and to the continuity between them was the anamnesis, the active participative memory of the act of Jesus

Somewhere about this time, the two great celebrations of the Vigil which had marked the coming of the Sabbath, Vespers and Lauds or evening and morning prayer, became the common domain of the faithful among the laity. They organized and for a long period maintained these daily offices in the place of public worship. With the rise of monasticism, these activities disappeared within the convent walls and were expanded notably by the rule of St. Benedict. His concern was to inject the very work of Jesus into every portion of the day and thereby to sanctify the passing away of earthly time.

In our day time has become a problem. In one sense it is a symptom of the total framework of life that appears to be undergoing reconstruction.

INSERT →

*Insert
Common prayer
people
The liturgy becomes
not the work of the
people but a work
on behalf of people*

draft re practicability & usefulness to summer institute in general I'd appreciate it.

If you have a chance to scan this rough

RITUAL IN A PLURALISTIC COMMUNITY
AN EXPERIMENT IN TIME

The symbolic life of the Global Servant Force of the Institution of Cultural Affairs/ Ecumenical Institute is a matter of great significance not only for the forming of that body but also as a prototype of symbolic life for ecumenical groups throughout the world and for religious in any community. In the past few years we have experimented with x daily rituals written from the poetry of different cultures yet holding the basic presuppositions common to all. These have been a fine and helpful beginning. They do not yet hold the richness which was held in the rituals developed over the centuries by the Christian Church. That is *evolved over time and struggle.*

~~not to be expected, nor necessarily desired. We are in a new day of ritual.~~

The project I propose is to build on the work that has been done a model for the comprehensive liturgical life of the Global Servant Force, involving the structuring of time ~~and~~ ^{weakly and} in daily, yearly rhythms and then focusing on the daily rituals now extant and allowing study of the ritual process and the divine office or canonical hours to inform the direction in which they might become more effective in the "work" which they perform. This may seem like a large project, but significant work has already been done. The main task would be to analyse the learnings, to design and experiment with a modification of the ritual as a focus of the ritual process and then to summarise the results as reflected by members of the community who will gather in Chicago this July.

The professional paper will deal with claiming time for life and ministry. It will elaborate of the image of the ritual process as bringing accountability and absolution to every moment of life through ?

The framework of all of life is undergoing reconstruction. In the midst ~~From~~ of this there is a ^{worldwide} task once more of redeeming time, sanctifying or significating time. This will be done, as before, by a few on behalf of all. It is therefore a missional liturgy, a service on behalf of the world.

tures of society, discerns to be the contradiction which we can effectively address. I have a responsibility, with all the others, of deciding what is needed and how it shall be dealt with. The mission is my life. But I say with Reinhold Niebuhr:

Nothing that is worth doing
can be achieved in our lifetime;
therefore we must be saved by hope.

Nothing which is true or beautiful or good
makes complete sense in any immediate context of history;
therefore we must be saved by faith.

Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone;
therefore we are saved by love.

No virtuous act is as virtuous from the standpoint
of our friend or our foe as it is from our standpoint.
Therefore, we must be saved by the final form of love
which is forgiveness.

Three days before his death in 1977, the Dean and one of the founders of the Institute made this statement of our purpose to a visiting dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church:

We tried to get the established Church to see that it's not about peddling abstract dogma but about awakening people into life and significant engagement in the historical process so that they might truly experience the glory of life through intensification of engagement. The hope that is God's hope belongs to humanity. The joy that is unspeakable is of the Lord. The peace that passeth understanding is ours -- on loan from God, of course. I hope it breaks through its provincialism of defending the doctrine of Church members into concern for all humanity -- which will save the Church and purify it.¹⁶

My task within the Institute has been, first, simply to be part of the community, sharing in the common life: the housekeeping, childcare, self-support, worship, planning and celebration of the body. This is ministry first simply in its experiment with communal care but most importantly as it frees all of us -- economically, physically and socially -- to be about the task of research and demonstration in the structures of society and in the new articulation of the Good News.

My second task has been participation in the programs of the Institute. I have been directly involved in setting up Human Development Projects in areas of need in Latin America, Europe and South East Asia. I have taught courses to laity and clergy in five continents. I have prepared the study guides and spirit tools for my colleagues.

In the future I expect to do more of the same: to work directly with the Christian churches and with pockets of human need around the world. I expect also to work with non-Christians particularly in the arena of our common mythology of care for the future. My assignment will depend on what the Institute, in consultation with the institutional church and the struc-

c. Renewed Symbolic Integrity

By renewed symbolic integrity I do not mean a rationalising of the use of symbols; almost the opposite. I mean the rediscovery of the symbols which are directing people in comprehensive care for their fellow humans and re-investing these with power by their use and the use of ritual and story. We saw in Germany in the thirties an illustration of how symbols can be empowered. It is time for a demonstration of the life-giving dimension of symbols when they are comprehensively rooted in the love of God and neighbor. This means first the re-empowering of the Christian symbols and rituals and then openness to discover and share non-Christian symbols and rituals which freight for others the same concerns. It means recreating the liturgies to reflect the change in paradigm regarding the nature of God and the change in the articulation of wholistic language. It also means a highly developed individual solitary office including myth, ritual and symbol which will enable a sense of openness and integrity in the midst of pluralism. This is a particular arena of my passion because it is here, I believe, that the eternal reality of God and the existential situation of our lives must be held in tension.

d. The Ecumenical Institute

For the past sixteen years, my ministry has been within the Ecumenical Institute. We are a research, training and demonstration group dedicated to the task of the Church in the Twentieth Century. We live in community in order to experiment and in order to devote total time to this task. We are something over a thousand people, scattered in "Religious Houses in forty nations. We are mainly family groups, though there are many single members. Roughly a third of our total body is from North America. Probably three quarters are Christian.

ations are: corporate ministry, social engagement, renewed symbology and the Ecumenical Institute.

a. Corporate Ministry

By corporate ministry I do not simply mean a professional team ministry. I mean that in the light of the pluralism of every community and the complexity of life today, no single individual can effectively minister to the needs of a parish nevermind the needs of the world. Therefore, in whatever situation I minister, I will seek colleagues with whom to work, be they professional or lay, within or beyond the confines of one denomination. Our basis of commonality may be structural but it will certainly be functional and relate to a common stance of care for the world and acknowledgement of the Mystery whom we call God. This would not be a hierarchical relationship but a collegial one in which all would be responsible for the forming of consensus on directions, methods and implimentary steps. All would share in the leadership. The make-up of the group would be as diverse as possible so that the entire needs and perspectives of the community might be adequately known and represented.

b. Social Engagement

It is not possible for me to conceive of Church inactive where there is human suffering. The compassion of Jesus present in the Church today will compel us to feed the hungry, heal the sick, seek the lost. In our age that will mean giving active guidance and direction not only to the local and national governments but also to the multinational corporations, the schools, the courts and relief agencies at every level. The Church has vision, methods, motivation and staying power which the world needs. Today the contradiction is the structures of civilization and it is there that my efforts must be directed.

Korea was such a shock. Not a street in Seoul free from bomb holes. Not a shop open or a whole house standing in the city. People huddled in caves and cardboard boxes. Beggar children with no homes and no one to care. A new widow with six children crowding around her for warmth in a miserable shed; a newborn nursing at her breast and the oldest, a ten year old seriously stirring a handful of rice into a pot of water while she fed leaves to the fire. The one English word that loomed from the cardboard walls: CARE. And the whisper "Do you care do you care do you care do you care do you?"

I found myself glued to the television. I do not recall ever being more excited in my life. There is full color center screen was my home, the Earth. Off to the side was little Moon. Voyager II was approaching Mars and the pictures coming back were alive. This was the way it really was. I turned to share my amazement and wonder with a physicist friend. "Wait til you see Saturn!" was his reply. I waited, and sat in awe as he pointed out what was known and unknown about the rings, the moving of the vapors, the time involved in making what we were seeing, the possible links and contrasts between the rest of the galaxy and planet Earth. He spun off to the perfection in a grain of sand, the worlds within worlds within worlds of the microcosm. Perfection in a grain of sand; precision in the galaxy; change in everything. What is this world and what are we, we Earthlings?

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY

At least four things come to me as direct and immediate implications of the position which I have attempted to state in this paper. (I say attempted because as the poet says, "Words are as the reflection of the moon upon the lake: however clear the reflection, it is not the moon."¹⁵) These implica-

one flag, one throne". It didn't make me particularly British or anti-British but it did make me aware there was a world full of people who were somehow kin to me.

One day when I went to school, my friend Martha was not waiting at the corner as she usually did. I waited a bit, but then went on thinking she would come. She didn't come that day, and I supposed that she was ill. The next day she didn't come either. The third day I went to her home and knocked on the door. No one answered and there was a strange emptiness about the house. I was frightened and went home to tell my mother about it. She told me that Martha and her family had been taken to prison, to an internment camp. Her grandparents had come from Japan. I cried and stamped my feet, "But my grandparents aren't Canadian. She's my friend. She's as Canadian as I am! It's not fair; it's not right!" But I never saw or heard from her again.

"I don't want your goddammed turkey basket, I want a job!" I had gone with my father to deliver food to neighbors, a family with six children and no employment for nearly two years. Later, when I heard a similar illustration, I began to understand the dilemma. The Church has no jobs; all we can do is give turkey baskets. But it's not enough. It doesn't deal with the issue.

We feel that something radical, total, and unconditional is demanded of us, but we rebel against it, try to escape its urgency and will not accept its promise.¹⁴

It all swirled together, the God who confronts us in the dilemma of human crisis, the demanding and acceptance that is in the demand, the freedom and guidance of the Spirit to decide and do the will of God. The forming of a body of people to study, to worship, to act, to care for the world,--this was the event of the Religious Studies I with the Ecumenical Institute.

responsibility is precisely the one who sees his actions finally committed to the guidance of God. The free deed knows itself in the end as the deed of God; the decision knows itself as guidance.... It is in the free abandonment of knowledge of his own good that a man performs the good of God.¹³

The institutional church of Jesus Christ, with its global networks, its memory of the action of God in history, and its example of the Christ, is prepared and experienced as well as motivated more than many to fulfill the task of providing rudder and pilots for these new beginnings of what some have called "post-civilization". But if not the total church picks up this task, certainly those within it with memory and motivation will join hands with other witnesses to the same reality to accomplish the task.

III. EXISTENTIAL WARRANTS

I have been led to this position through a lifetime of experiences which caused me see that I was called to be a global person and a Church person. I will share here only a few experiences in the understanding that what finally moves a life is not rational argument but an existential question that does not go away.

In our classroom in school there was always a very large world map at the side of the front blackboard. It was not just for teaching; it was found in the music and home economics rooms as well as general class rooms. It was a meditation piece, and it did its job. In those days most, it seemed, of the world was colored a dark pink to indicate relationship to the British Empire and Commonwealth. Our nation, Canada, was pink, of course; we had been independent since 1867 but we were part of the Commonwealth. So was India, Australia, the Rhodesias, Nigeria, most of the Caribbean, Malaysia, and so on. There was no part of the world that had no pink on it. When the war started in 1939, a caption appeared over each map: "One Lord, one fleet,

employment and knowledge-access require new spirit tools, new articulations of doctrine, and new cultic practices for the Church in its local and global manifestations. This does not in anyway negate the contributions of our predecessors; it simply affirms that we are in a new age at the call of God. Some elements, theology for one, will take many years to be clearly articulated in the new paradigm, and one might well be suspicious of any attempt to foreclose dialogue on this subject. But "Theology is lived before it is written", and the Church needs to be about the task of experimenting while at the same time realizing that for our day it is the Church itself which will be both media and message to a large degree.

c. The Witness of the Historical Church

Though there has never before been a time quite like this, the People of God, certainly from the time of Abraham on, have been called to enter with faith into radically new and strange situations. They have lurched and stumbled many times, but they have been held in being by three things: sheer faith in the One who has called, visible symbols of the covenant such as the rainbow and the cross, and the internal witness to the covenant. It is clear that they have not at all times been confident and filled with faith. They have grown weary, discouraged, uncertain, felt ineffective and full of resentment at the call that will not go away. Yet, in retrospect, because of the human, intentional and transcendent nature of their lives, the Church has acknowledged them to be agents from God. Herein is the "deep secret of history" according to Bonhoeffer:

The action of the responsible man is performed in the obligation which alone gives freedom and which gives entire freedom, the obligation to God and to our neighbor as they confront us in Jesus Christ.

The one who acts in the freedom of his own most personal

First, nothing exists in isolation. Everything is related to some degree, directly or indirectly, to every other thing or entity. Nothing exists except by participation. The universe, the cosmos, is one gigantic network of interconnected events and mutual influences. Man is no exception biologically, mentally or socially.... The world is seen holistically despite its many parts.

Secondly, nothing is static in the universe....

Thirdly, reality exhibits novelty, spontaneity and re-creation.... Reality as an interwoven network of dynamic complex events is constantly giving birth to new syntheses of events.... God himself is possessed of (such) aims for His creation.... This means there is a kind of real openness for the future. Man, especially, is able to contribute or add something to creation as it continues.¹¹

We are not called to make minor changes (like the Order of nuns who, in response to the demand of Vatican II that they change, raised their skirt length to three inches from the floor); we are called to be change, to be part of the Great Transition (Boulding's phrase) from the past to the unborn tomorrow. Mission is engagement in the process of change. It is risking all not only to see that some values of humanness are preserved from the past but also that new values be incorporated. This activity takes place in the midst of a scurry of opportunists, reactionaries, and befuddled do-gooders. It is a radically different task from that of the missionary movement of the last three hundred years; but if they had not been so very successful in carrying Good News and structures for freighting it, mainly schools and hospitals, to all the world our task would have been less complex but much more difficult. Now as never before

Faith in God involves us in a permanent revolution of the mind and of the heart, a continuous life which opens out infinitely into ever new possibilities. It does not therefore, afford grounds for boasting but only for simple thankfulness. It is the gift of God.¹²

The explosion of time and space with expanding macrocosm and microcosm, the scientific, secular and urban revolutions of our time, the rise of feminism, minorities, multi-nationals, changes in patterns of education,

nations meeting at Taif declared that their intent was to trade their oil for technology, not for themselves alone, but for all the nations of the Third and Fourth Worlds to enable them to have a share in creating the future.

In light of all this, H. Richard Niebuhr's definition of the Church does not seem strange:

The church is that part of the human community which responds first to God-in-Christ and Christ-in-God. It is the sensitive and responsive part of every society and of mankind as a whole. It is that group which hears the Word of God, which sees His judgments, which has the vision of the resurrection. In its relation with God it is the pioneer part of society, somewhat, we may say, as science is the pioneer in responding to pattern or rationality in experience and as artists are the pioneers in responding to beauty.¹⁰

b. The Shifting Paradigm

Though the operating paradigm of this civilization has been shifting notably since the Enlightenment, it is in the last few years that the immensity of change implied has begun to bring a new level of self-consciousness and dis-ease to contemporary people. The old authoritarian, hierarchical, cause-and-effect, two storey universe of absolutes and ideals has vanished literally before the eyes of common people. A world of wholism, pluralism and relativity has taken its place but has not yet found a cohesive societal form. In many cases the institutional church continues to operate as though this was not happening or at least did not effect the life and worship of the Church, yet the Church standing in the temporal situation and before the eternal truth of God is called to deal precisely with this issue.

The Einsteinian world, as Whitehead analysed it, is totally different from the universe our grandparents knew.

sion in the existential situation. What is happening in religion as in nations, races, classes, and sex relations, is that a whole new gestalt is taking place. The "heretical imperative" is that we are obliged to choose beliefs and stances in the midst of universalized uncertainty. We are similarly obliged to choose the peer group with which we will align as primary community.

In Faith and Belief, Wilfred Cantwell Smith argues that in our day for whatever reason, beliefs are multiplying and are of infinite variety whereas the similarities of religious faith itself are greater than one might suppose. The faith of

a particular Christian may, once the outward wrappings are set aside, differ from the faith of a Muslim or a Hindu less than it differs from the faith of another Christian, next door or in a different denomination or a different century.⁸

This becomes important in an age when the continuance of human life and the sharing of human resources, rather than the continuance of a religious body of people, has become the overwhelming issue. In view of the tremendous suffering and need already present in the world, people of all religions feel they

cannot support just any kind of humanism which simply affirms all that is true, good, beautiful and human. But they can support a truly radical humanism which is able to integrate and control what is untrue, not good, unlovely, inhuman; not only everything positive, but also... everything negative, even suffering, sin, futility, death.

Those who share the passion and compassion of Jesus, of whatever religion, are hungry for the community of others with whom they can unite as mission to the suffering world. A World Conference of Buddhists meeting in Tokyo in 1978 issued a statement that their major priority was to work with all those who shared concern for the peace and welfare of human life. The OPEC

II. THE RATIONAL WARRANTS

Warrants, as I understand it, are the evidence in society and experience, rational and existential, which authenticate the contention of the position. Warrants, then, are not the source of the position but lend support and credence to it. I have chosen warrants from historic events of the past thirty years, from philosophical scholarship regarding the shifting paradigm, and from historical witness of the Church in history.

a. The World we Serve.

The primary warrant for the position described in the first section of this paper is found in the situation of the world in the 1980's. I use the word "situation" in the sense that Tillich uses it:

"Situation"... does not refer to the psychological or sociological state in which individuals or groups live. It refers to the scientific and artistic, the economic, political and ethical forms in which they express their interpretation of existence.⁷

The pluralism of the present situation hardly needs to be documented in our day. In nearly every arena of life interpretations of existence manifest themselves in radically different life styles, institutions, sciences, traditions and theories. One of many excellent analyses of this situation is found in Peter Berger's book, The Heretical Imperative. He describes contemporary humanity -- especially in the western world -- as bombarded with conflicting pre-thematized data which tradition and reflection have not prepared people to choose between. The choices being made do not divide neatly into religious faith groupings, but rather into groupings of the self-conscious religious as over against reactionary traditionalists, hedonists or materialists. By religious here is meant, again, those who stand before the way life is, as Augustine says, and see the ontological dimension in the existential situation. What is happening in religion as in national population make-up, class systems and sex relations is that a

d. The Church as Mission from God to the World

The Church is mission from God to the world in the first instance in the sense of being about the mundane concerns of everyday existence. It is the fundamentals of life, health, food, dignity, community and justice that are the appropriate concerns of the Church. The spiritual life is intrinsic not extrinsic to these concerns. The Church is mission to the structures of this world as well as to the individuals: to nations, races, corporations, families, communities and to all the networks which inter-relate them. In these days of increasing complexities and of increasing population, it is through structures that the Good News must be mediated and the care of humanity enabled. Finally, the Church is mission to the whole world and not to any one part of it exclusively. Suffering, meaninglessness, finitude and fear are not the prerogatives of the poor or the rich. Nor are joy and pleasure without their need to be sanctified and given significance in every community in the context of the wholeness of life.

The context in which we will live for the next hundred years is wholistic, pluralistic, global, chaotic and unpredictable. The Church has no ready-made answers simplistic or otherwise. The Church is called to risk its institutional security by embodying the courage and care and creativity exemplified in Jesus and engaging in the Godly task of creating a new earth. The Church which responds to this need will be the Church of the Spirit of Jesus, a functioning dynamic which will include all those of like-mind and intent of whatever religious affiliation.

ing to the plight of Indians as second-class citizens in South Africa, but when he had initiated legal action and organized schools and care structures for his countrymen, his sense of call did not vanish. He moved, rather, to care for the suffering of India, political, economic, racial, and ultimately his concern was for the peace and welfare of the world. By called as mission from God, then, I do not in the first instance mean a mystical experience but a sense of being comprehensively responsible to God for the quality of life on planet Earth.

Moreover, as mission from God, the Church demonstrates again the style and compassion of Jesus. Living by this image, there are no "out-groups", her service is unto the least and unto the greatest. Like Jesus, the Church visions a world ruled by justice and love, discerns the contradiction preventing that vision's fulfillment and, counting on the goodness of God to empower her, she sets about changing, repenting, both herself and society. The Church may delimit arenas of concern locally and temporarily for strategic reasons, but her intent is to deal with every individual, every problem, every village and to deal with them at the level of the spirit issues involved through the use of symbol.

As mission from God, the Church experiences a unity with a community of saints or an invisible college which has been active throughout history. She foresees the continuance of this community into the future. It is this experience as well which enables the Church to gain perspective on her engagement, to give her whole life and yet be detached from immediate victories or defeats. The ultimate victory is in the hands of God; the Church as mission from God is called to be faithful. That is her victory.

d. The Church as Mission from God to the World

ment of their lives in the continuing creation of humanness.

The cost of being mission in this sense is tremendous, and so are the rewards.

He requires of us sacrifice of all we would conserve and grants us gifts we had not dreamed of -- the forgiveness of our sins rather than our justification, repentance and sorrow for our transgressions rather than forgetfulness, faith in him rather than confidence in ourselves, trust in his mercy rather than sight of his presence, instead of rest an ever recurrent torment that will not let us be content, instead of the peace and joy of the world, the hope of the world to come. He forces us to take our sorrows as a gift from him and to suspect our joys lest they be purchased by the anguish of his son incarnate again in every neighbor. He ministers indeed to all our good but all our good is other than we thought.⁵

c. The Church as Mission from God

As mission from God, the Church apprehends the ontological and numinous dimensions of life, involves itself in symbolic action, understands itself called or vocationed and therefore embraces spiritual discipline.⁶

There are many bodies of people who have a mission, and even many who experience themselves as mission. The Church as mission from God is unique in that in oneness with the Creator, she finds no bounds to her responsibility or care. Because her care is rooted in the exigencies of the immediate situation and in the ontological realities of life and death, the Church is enabled to transcend the limitations of time and space in self-understanding of mission. Her task is always grounded in the specific sociological situation, but it does not take its rottage nor its motivation simply from the milieu in which it appears. The endlessness and the unconditional nature of the call marks her as distinct. That is to say, when the immediate reason for the sense of call is dealt with, the call remains. An illustration would be Gandhi. His initial call to care came from awaken-

Jesus was himself mission, or as astronauts are themselves the mission as long as they are in space. The people are the presence are the thrust in history. This is a concept learned in reflection on the effect of the missionary movement around the globe.

The Church as mission is about the historic task of witnessing to the love of God for human lives and of creating and empowering the structures of justice and healing which make the significance of each individual part of the fabric of world society, both locally and globally. In our day, the Church as mission is called particularly, I believe, to bridge the gap between the 15% of the world who control or have direct access to the goods, wisdom and decision-making apparatus of the Earth and the 85% of the population who suffer from lack of these things. The Church as mission is in both groups, the haves and the have-nots, and works with both to awaken individuals and groups not only to the social situation but to their power to do something about it as children of God. The Church as mission in both worlds engages people in the active, structural task of reformulating the economic, political and cultural processes at the local, regional and global levels to reflect the oneness of all humanity which was theoretically affirmed in the Four Freedoms of the United Nations, but which has never been acted out in world history. The mission is not to recreate a Christendom such as Europe once knew, even if that were possible; the task, as Chardin put it, is to build the earth for all its inhabitants.

The Church as mission receives the inspiration and insight which was present in Jesus, both intellectually and existentially, responds in gratitude and in responsibility for the world, and mediates the vision and the Good News to others that they may also experience the significant engage-

moments, the institution has kept the story of Jesus alive, and that story has influenced such people as Marx and Gandhi and through them masses of people who would never self-consciously choose to hear the Christian message. At its best, the institutional Church has carried the healing and teaching ministry to the remotest corners of the world. As a result, people in every nation, in religious and in secular language and idiom, stand in the vantage point of Jesus, announcing the significance of human lives and calling for structures of justice and mercy. The institutional Church may point a finger, as the disciples did, and say "Master, they are not part of us", but the boundaries are very hazy indeed, and the liberal answer of Jesus would likely still stand.³ I would include within the definition of Church the self-conscious religious, the ones

bound back (religari) or having regard to an absolute reality; living within the horizon of an absolute ground of being, oriented to something that involves them unconditionally.⁴

These may or may not name the name of Jesus as the Christ, but they embody his compassion for others and his sense of kinship with God.

It is my contention that the Church is most vitally present when the teachings and the spirit of Jesus are re-called and interiorized. When the knowing and the doing are both intensified, the presence of the Body of Christ is apparent. But in the pluralistic times we are given to live in, given the immense social contradictions which we as a world are facing, one cannot with impunity restrict the term Church to only the professing followers of Jesus. This is a key understanding with which I approach ministry.

b. The Church as Mission

The Church in this sense does not have a mission, it is mission as

the core leadership and the loosely connected body of adherents who call upon its services from time to time. We also use the word to refer to the institutional bodies of historic Christianity, not only the denominations but also the ecumenical bodies such as the local federation of churches or the World Council of Churches and the movements which trace their origins to the Church and which came into being to serve a particular need in the name of the Church. Examples might be the Student Christian Movement and the YWCA. These are basically structural bodies with varying degrees of formal polity and doctrine. The word symbol Church is also used in a non-structural way to refer to a dynamic or a function in history. When we talk of the Church through the ages, the Body of Christ, the glorious company of saints, apostles and martyrs, the Church militant and triumphant, we are referring to such a reality. This "Church" is the body of people who, whatever their relationship to the institutional structures may have been or be, maintained the memory of Jesus either by their words or their actions and likely by both. It was because they were recognizable as being followers of Jesus that they warranted the name of Church and not because of membership in any given body.

When I speak of the Church as Mission from God to the World, I am speaking of the function and not of the structure per se. Obviously there is overlap and it is not my intention to enter a philosophical debate on the Church visible and invisible. I would insist that it is the Church as the Body of Christ and not as an religious institution that is the hope of the world.

In our day, the success of the Church (and its failure!) in embodying the mission and message of Jesus has become clear. At its weakest

his people with the Reformation, and the Church came to image itself as a prophetic voice against the ills of civilization, calling for the formation of the Kingdom of God on earth. In time this led to an in-group self-righteousness and segregation from society. Over-emphasis on individual salvation caused the Church as an institution to disengage itself from the social process. Once again, in our century, crises in the structures of society -- the family, education, economic distribution of resources, racism, threats of nuclear war, to name a few -- are calling the Church to re-think its role. It is likely that in time this role also will need to be replaced, but in the meantime we are faced with an ever-clearer message to proclaim and an ever more complex world in which to proclaim it. It is my contention that the Church needs to image herself no longer as container or glue or prophetic remnant but as mission from God to the world. It seems that to enact this will be to embody pluralism in a new way than we have ever done in the past, and I believe that the future of this planet depends on the ability of the Church to begin to act out of this image.

In this paper, then, I will first define my understanding of the Church, the Church as Mission, the Church as Mission from God, and the Church as Mission from God to the World. I will then give rational and existential warrants for this position and finally outline the implications for ministry which follow from this position.

I. THE CHURCH AS MISSION FROM GOD TO THE WORLD

a. The Church

The Church is understood in our day in at least three ways. The word symbol Church refers to the local church including the congregation,

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rough -

so far, most criticism is \rightarrow "sexist language".
THE CHURCH IN A PLURALISTIC AGE

Tillich begins his Systematic Theology with the statement:

Theology moves back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the truth must be received.¹

The task of the Church is to live in that tension between memory and need, between revelation and interpretation, between rational and intuitive insight, between the ontological intent and the existential requirement, between the Jesus of history and the living Christ of faith.

As I reflect on my ministry in the past and my anticipations for the future, my mind returns again and again to "The Local Church, the Body of Christ, the Hope of the World", or less poetically to the Church as Mission from God to the World. The Church through the ages has always had an image of her role and task which both defines and was defined by the culture and specific social situation in which she existed. In early days the Church understood herself to be the container or vessel for the Good News and therefore spent hundreds of years getting very clear and articulate on what the Good News was. She even took to the desert to preserve the integrity of the Word from invading cultural forces. Unfortunately, in time the desert became comfortable and the Church neglected her calling to the world. But the Lord of history pulled the rug from under her feet with the collapse of Greco-Roman civilization and sent Augustine back to begin the formulation of the image of the Church as the glue of civilization, an image that was to predominate through the Middle Ages. It also became perverted in time until the Church lost its unique identity as separate from society. An extreme example of this is the position of bishop being inherited along with the title of prince by newborn infants.² But in the Lord recalled