

THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHURCH YEAR

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Nancy Grow

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When people in the street or in the church today say that they have no time, they are literally telling the truth. We have no time in our age. Many factors such as mobility, mass opiation through televäsion, loss of identity and sense of personal or communal history, and many other factors have caused us to lose a sense of historic belongingness or chronos. Superficial bedazzlement with an urban, secular world has cut us off from the experience of cosmic time. Popular "isms" combined with fear of being old-fashioned or trapped in ritual has led to the relativizing of eschatological time. Contemporary people live in the NOW without either the past or future prehensions which make the now eternal. If it were possible, it would not be desirable to retreat to some past time, but the church is faced with a question similar to one faced many times in the past: what does it mean to redeem time for this contemporary society. But if the question is not new, our age is and so must be the answer.

Langdon Gilkey has put the issue well:

The change in the social role of traditional religion has had two major results...: 1) the religious has begun to appear in other modes and guises and 2) traditional religious communities have been forced to rethink, reinterpret and revise their structures, their roles, their beliefs -- their most basic self-understanding.¹

Others concur. Leonel Mitchell speaks of the phenomena as two contradictory tendencies: a movement away from ritualism which seeks to substitute a private internalizing of religious experience for external ritual actions, and at the same time, increasing interest in and sensitivity to symbols, especially, for instance, body language and other non-verbal communication.² Anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists join theologians in concern for what this means for human life today and in the future.³

The concern of this paper is not to bolster a lost cause or retreat to a past age, but rather to recover the basic symbologies out of which humans -- consciously and unconsciously -- exist. Ritual is a part of every life, and all ritual is finally religious.⁴ In what way can the church's wisdom and experience in ritualizing time serve now in a world of new concepts and many new patterns of time? This paper will review the depth understanding of time and times which were brought to the calendar of the Christian Year, the forms of the liturgy of the Christian Year in the past, and some contemporary discoveries and rediscoveries. It will conclude with some implications for the consideration of both the church and Christian families.

I. Time and the Origin of the Christian Year.

The earliest remnants of rituals observed by human beings are found in caves in the Alps and date back to about 180,000 BC.⁵ The animal skulls, laid in careful patterns, suggest some form of hunt ritual, perhaps related to the much later cave paintings. These rituals likely had to do with survival, with gaining power over the animal prey and with the conscious struggles of birth, living and dying.

It was probably not until tribes became somewhat agriculturally oriented or more restricted in their wanderings, that the seasonal cycle of rituals developed. The story, Ancient of Days,⁶ puts forth a fascinating thesis that the building of Stonehenge was a liturgy, a work of the people on behalf[&] all tribes, to "mark the light". By indicating where the shadows would fall on the shortest and longest days of the year, the monument stood as a symbol and proof for countless generations that the days would indeed stop getting shorter and one need not live in the terror that summer might not return.

It seems that every grouping of people came to celebrate in some way, and amazingly similar ways, the return of spring, the harvesting of crops, and the passing of the shortest day. That is to say, all people living sufficiently far north or south of the equator to experience contingency in relation to the seasons. In Britain and much of northern Europe spring (lenten) was celebrated by very cautious eating patterns and sometimes religious fasts. The reason was the reduced stock piles of food and the fear that immediacy would lead to the eating of the laying hens and the seed grains. Harvests have been celebrated with thanksgiving festivals involving wild partying and often sacrifice to the giver of harvests. Not enough is known in detail of the rituals in the southern hemisphere, but it would appear that the shortest night has usually been marked with some sort of festival of lights, worship of the sun or fire.

Later the rhythm of the day and the week were to be noted, although the week is much more an invention than a discovery and lengths of weeks have had a great deal of variety even long after the Gregorian Calendar was accepted. The month's rhythm, on the other hand, was early noted and was seen to effect human life more intimately, if not more completely, than the sun's rhythm. For this reason the waxing and waning of the moon have been celebrated universally. The 'month's mind' is a living tradition in many countries even today.⁷

The Jewish nation, like other nations around it, celebrated the rotation of the sun and moon, the day and night, and laid down a seven day week which we still follow. It was not until after the Exile that a different sense of time was structured into their consciousness. From this time the seasonal celebrations were given an overlay of historic significance. The Exodus story was associated with the spring solstice;

the Day of Atonement with the autumn solstice and later, Hanukkah with the winter solstice. With the development of liturgy and ritual around these events, the task of the people was seen to be the children of Israel again in such a way that the Kingdom might come. The many laws were contrived ^{not} to be a burden, but to aid the people to know how to behave so that the end time they longed for might arrive. The early church preserved two of these festivals (Passover and Pentecost), and

If the Church preserved these two festivals of the Old Israel, even when the idea of their consummation in Christ saturated the whole of her life, then this was because she preserved that theology of time of which they were an expression.⁸

The church, in fact, from the beginning celebrated the seasons and the history of the action of God in history, both in Jesus Christ and in the ~~the~~ Jewish people, and related both of these to the eschatological events which were part of her belief in the future. Explicit connections and symbolic connections were made from a very early period between the natural cycles and the non-cyclical events of the Resurrection and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. In so doing, the church created a sense of time for western civilization. Bouyer has well stated the situation:

Our created nature is so bound up with this created time in which all living beings live that our being cannot be taken up into the divine unless the time that is co-natural to us is also in some way taken up. And we might add, the natural rhythms of time, the days and months and years in which life develops, are not merely some external frame for time, but are of its very essence. And our lives, which have begun with this kind of "death" are made up of days which all begin with the "birth" of waking and end with the "death" of sleep.... Each of us must go through the periods of childhood, youth, maturity and in each of them in some way be born anew, develop the potentialities of that period to the full, and in some way "die" to the perfection achieved in one period in order to begin afresh to work for the perfection of the next period.⁹

With the Edict of Toleration in 313 a new sense of time was born for

the church. Dom Gregory Dix speaks of the early period of the church as a time when it was necessary to teach people to die well for their faith. This, plus the eschatological hope of the imminent return of Jesus, led to an emphasis on the translation of the temporal into the eternal, that is, to become here and now in Christ. When the church was no longer underground, the emphasis came to be on living for the faith rather than dying for it. Therefore the concern was to translate the eternal into the temporal, into history and time. The liturgy remained the teaching tool, but the liturgy itself had to change. As the church came to "feel at home in the world she became reconciled to time".¹⁰ The eschatological emphasis did not disappear, kairotic time remained a part of active experience, but the Church extended her understanding of lineal history in both directions. Where the life, death and resurrection of Jesus were once seen to be at the end of time, it came to be understood to be at the center of time, the event which redeemed and sanctified all time. The task of the liturgy was to see that the redeeming act was imbedded in every moment of life. This was done through the structuring and honoring of time by associating it with the acts of redemption. The lived moments of the early church, the history of Israel, the cycles of the days and years, all were molded in time into the great drama of redemption.

In our day, with the gifts of phenomenology and existentialism, we have become aware that the events, motifs, mysteries and moods of the liturgical year reflect the life and the states of being of every human. Part of this is explained by the commonplace projection of meaning and personal experience. The life of faith involves the very dynamics which came to be revealed in the observances of the Christian year. Every mature person knows what it means to keep vigil, to wait with longing; to experience

events which fulfill and overwhelm expectation; to be gifted in strange and surprising ways; to feel guilt and unease about the future; to experience dread, horror, inadequacy; to know life born again, and to sense a calling to destiny which cannot be denied. Every mature Christian knows the long march of faith; the endless, it seems, periods when nothing seems to happen. Try as you will, no great success; stumble as you may, no overwhelming failure meets you. These are life phenomena which can be related to the Christian Year. Ed Hobbes once preached a sermon on how it is that we never want to be in the season we find ourselves in, we want to skip ahead. It is interesting, as we shall see, that this is especially true in Advent, of course, for children, but more seriously for adults in Epiphany. The church has always had a struggle to keep folk from pushing into Lent and guilt and repentance too soon. But the point is that the Christian Year reflects internal as well as external time and as such is a phenomenal spirit tool, and centers all on the Easter reality.

Brenneman would take it even further and declare that our relativistic, holistic understanding of life gives us another sense of time by which the Christian year must be measured in our time, This is the whole Einsteinian time-space relationship.

Its (ritual's) world is a world of symbols which contain themselves within the horizons of ritual time and space. These time-space boundaries are determined macrocosmically by the cultural time and space in which the rite is found, and macrocosmically by the attitude of consciousness of the ritual participant. Space and time, then, determine the quality, functions and content of a given ritual or of ritual itself. They establish the ritual world.¹¹

The Christian Year, then, has become an overlay of many kinds of time, internal and external, kairotic and chronological, historic and phenomenological. The work of the liturgy is to redeem them all, or perhaps more aptly, to declare Good News in the midst of all times. But

it is also the liturgy of the church to center time, to give focus and significance to the times of all people, to provide a reference point in the midst of a relative universe, by which all times can be measured. The Christian Year is not an eternal model to be reintroduced into the consciousness of the faithful. It is, rather, a service of transparentizing seasons, events, history and life itself so that all people may see the way life really is and the Good News that means for everyone.

II. The Church Year

The story of the development of the Christian Year through the first six hundred years of the ^bChristian Era is a fascinating one. For the purposes of this, the chart on the following page will serve to hold the developmental story along with the picture of the year as it has come to us. It will be enough to say that the Christian yearly celebrations at first were simply Easter and Pentecost, then the days in between them. As martyrs were added to the rolls of the Church, the anniversaries of their deaths were celebrated locally, and in time some came to be world-wide celebrations. There is no clear picture when Lent was first marked. We do know that it became a time of preparation for baptism somewhere around the turn of the first century and at the same time a period of public penance for those who had denied the faith. Easter and then Pentecost became the great festivals of baptism and of reinstatement in the body of believers. It may have been as late as the fourth or fifth century before it became a time of repentance for all believers. Epiphany was celebrated as early as the beginning of the second century in order to lay claim to the winter solstice and the wild celebrations of the birth of Aeon in Mediterranean countries. The birthing of the sun was a natural time to celebrate the birth of the Son of Righteousness.¹² It is interesting that the events of Holy Week, a scandal indeed, were not

The Christian Year

The Year of the Lord						Pentecost	The Year of the Church		
Awakening to Life			Awakening to Death						
Advent	Christmas	Epiphany	Lent	Holy Week	Easter		The Long March of Care		
Length	4 Sundays	12 days	varying	40 days	7 days	50 days	8 days	varying	
Beginning	c. 490	before 336	end of first century	converts 1st C general 4th C	Vigil 1st C week 4th C	30 CE	30 CE	14th Century	
Historic Precedent		Natalis Solis Inuicti	birth of Aeon winter solstice	spring solstice	Passion	Passover	Pentecost first fruits		
Color	purple	gold (or white)	white (or green)	purple	black	white	red	green (or red)	
Theme	judgement + hope	humble incarnation	glorious manifestation	penance + preparation	death	resurrection new life	mission + Holy Spirit	redeeming all of life	
Rubrics	wreath calendar	manger tree	Magi baptism	fasting + spirit growth	Palms Last Supper	rejoicing	white robes baptism	service	
Existential Mood	anxious waiting	gift of love, grace	effulgence	repentance + guilt	mourning + contrition	rebirth of hope	vocation	day after day	
Related Celebrations		Innocents St Stephen's Day	Candlemas	Annunciation Mardi Gras	Palm Sunday Maundy Thursd.			All Souls + All Saints	

celebrated with Easter until well into the second century. Indeed, it was after the Edict of Toleration that the first and second Easters (the season of Easter through Pentecost and the season of Epiphany) were separated into event and post-celebration. The latest addition to the calendar was the season of Trinity, sometimes called Pentecost, which was formalized in the fourteenth century.

It is clear that the Christian Year was first defined by the great shared events which changed the lives of the early Christians: Easter and Pentecost. Later reflection added more celebrations for both pedagogical and cultural purposes, and the celebrations based on doctrines were the last added. This is important for the presuppositions to be made later in this paper. It is events not theories that change lives, and it is events not theories that will redeem time for contemporary society.

As the chart on page eight indicates, the Christian Year has two main portions: the Year of the Lord and the Year of the Church. The Year of Our Lord is now considered the first part of the year, though originally the year, birthed at Pentecost, was differently conceived. This, however, is a good place to begin. The Year of Our Lord is also divided into two parts: the Christmas sequence of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, and the Easter sequence of Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Each has a period of preparation, a humiliating central event, and a great period of rejoicing at the victory which marks the entire life of Jesus the Christ. The Year of the Church begins with the week of Pentecost and is followed, virtually unbroken for Protestant churches, by Trinity. The feasts of all souls and all saints, sometimes marked more by Hallowe'en than any other event, has not strongly maintained the Christian transposition from pagan festivals, but potentially marks a third dimension of the Year of the Church. In passing, it is of significance

to note that although Christmas and Epiphany have their roots in the same event, the Incarnation,

The differentiation was made in such a way that on Christmas the fact of the birth of Christ is considered mainly from the standpoint of His weakness and the poverty of his human nature, while on Epiphany it is viewed from the standpoint of the divine majesty shining through the human nature of Christ and illuminating the world.¹³

The first six months of the Church Year, from Advent through Easter, rehearse not only the earthly life of Jesus but also the life of profound humanness and faith. As the Church brings the events again to light and to life by recreating the eschatological time, church members experience their own anticipations and dread at the coming of the promised one, the sense of judgment which it brings. The Christ event itself is a time of magic, of unbelievable delight and effulgence. Here is the time of abject poverty and humility yet in it is the fullness of life itself. The church has experienced this constantly, but only too often in retrospect rather than at the moment. Christmas gives the opportunity to recall that the meanest circumstances are for that very reason filled with possibility and hidden wonder. The season of Epiphany, the time of gifting by the Magi, is the time when we followers of Christ become ourselves the incarnation, the manifestation, and immediately shy away from the implications of the immense love of God for us. It is amazing how, throughout history, the church has foreshortened Epiphany, whether by the 'little lent' of northern Europe or the moving back from Quadregesima even to Septuagesima. Then, having realised we have failed to 'walk on water' as the audacious children of God, we, the church, have thrown ourselves into the celebration of Mardi Gras as a final fling before legitimately marking ourselves with ashes and turning to repentance for our unfaith. Even then, we don't actually repent in Lent; we do penance and seek to discipline ourselves as though works really were required for salvation.

The sequence of Easter begins, then, with a look forward to the death of Jesus and to our death as His body on earth. There is a warranted mourning over the tremendous cost of redemption. But even Lent is not unremitting gloom. Sundays and the little feast¹⁴ remind us that we are post-Easter penitents. Holy Week has us rehearsing all the fickle roles our lives are prone to and experiencing again the call to be the totally committed, crying out at the cost yet surrendering to fate and thereby creating "meaningful destiny".¹⁵ And then Easter: not just Jesus' resurrection but the commemoration of the many times our lives and spirits have been raised from the dead and given new power. This is the story of our Lord, and we rehearse it because we so easily forget how the immediate moods and events of life flow into the story of mankind and of redemption.

The Year of the Church begins with Pentecost, the sudden release of insight, power, decision and collegiality. It is no coincidence that this day falls on the Feast of First Fruits. The white robes of the catechumens gave the name of Whitsuntide or Whitsunday in the western world. Pentecost has been a seven day festival, and has been marked with amazing "dropping games": everything from birds to fireballs to rose petals have been dropped from church steeples to mark the coming of the Spirit. It is a day of vocation needing to be reclaimed in our time.

Then follows Trinity which relates "the profound implications of our Lord's incarnation: life, death and resurrection, to the life in time of the Christian and of the Christian community".¹⁶

From the perspective of 1982, the question is rightly raised as to what happens in the celebration of the Christian Year. "Is it to be understood merely as a kind of high evangelical pedagogy?" asks Bouyer.

In particular, how can we understand this revival of the Passion, which, far from needing to happen again and again in a cyclical recurrence of death and rebirth as did the dro-

menon of the pagan mysteries -- was endured by our Lord precisely to free us from slavery to... the elements of this world as it now is, shut up in itself, and closed off from the ever new freedom of divine love.¹⁷

If this question could have a simple answer, we would no longer be dealing in the realm of symbol. The Christian Year is a pedagogical device; it is an anamnestic event which reconstitutes the experience; it is a mirror which allows us to see more clearly what is happening in our own lives; it is the reenactment of a type of creation myth which unites all of time and significates the great and little victories and defeats of our lives. The depth of these times makes the celebration unendingly valid.

III. Recovering the Liturgy of the Christian Year

1. Content. The content of the Christian Year is primarily the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ. It includes both the anamnesis and the significance which the church has attached to the story through the ages. To celebrate without telling the story would be to float off into naturalism or pantheism again. But just to celebrate the story without tying it in to the whole experience of creation and particularly the life experience of the present day would neither do justice to the whole story nor accomplish the task of redeeming time. Timeliness and timelessness meet in the effective liturgy of the church. An important part of the content, therefore, is the whole socio-cultural context of the people, in fact all that forms the consciousness of the gathered congregation. But it also contains the private lives and concerns of the people gathered for they are a significant part of any liturgy.

The difference between "corporate" and "private" worship must be discarded. The purpose of worship is to constitute the Church, precisely to bring what is private into the new life, to transform it into what belongs to the church.¹⁸

This has been an ongoing struggle; Dix claims it was the intent of the radical turn of the liturgy in the fourth century.¹⁹ The struggle of our time is to keep the balance between the objective and the subjective dimensions of the story, the context and the participants. It is only when this is done, however, that the prolepsis, the remembering forward can be meaningful. This is the prophetic element of proclaiming faith. It is not just the vision but the vision proclaimed that is required if the people are not to perish.

These, then, are the four basic contents of the liturgy of the Christian Year: the horizons and broadest contexts of time and space in which we live, the specific remembering of the acts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and of the church in its historical setting, the promises and hopes of the future, and the human situation of the gathered people with all the states of being of all the ages present.

2. Rubrics. In his fascinating book, Spirals: A Study in Symbol, Myth and Ritual,²⁰ Brenneman states

The space of ritual is the body and the time of ritual is gesture.... Body is infused or filled with gesture, and in the corresponding manner, space is filled with time and a world is born. ... Gesture is body coming into consciousness; it is the temporal dimension of body, ie. lived time.

This is suggestive both as to the external actions (rubrics) and the internal intentions and conscious efforts (which Panikkar calls the nigrics). Indeed, Panikkar spells out most helpfully how worship is in fact created in his discussion of the "new rubrics."²¹ He names six rubrics:

1. spontaneity, by which he means the use of symbols already latent or active in the community. Rituals and symbols can not be imposed from out of the blue.
2. universality-- symbols and rituals meaningful for all. Panikkar points to nature symbols and such activities as eating, singing, friendship and, more particularly in our time, technology, liberation and food.

3. concreteness. Unless the liturgy or ritual is grounded in life experiences it may become invested with old, unhelpful or even demonic overtones.
4. truthfulness or authentic meaningfulness.
5. continuity with past tradition and experience.
6. "orthopraxis"

When rubrics translate nigrics into living symbol such as self-confidence, dancing or particular service to our neighbour... people can share in Christian worship by participating in the expression of the Christian neighbours.²²

These rubrics are very similar to those laid out by Snyder in Contemporary Celebration.²³ But Panikkar pushes further in his concern for global commonality:

In any real, popular and living religious worship...the rubrics have such a splendour and power of their own that the participants are never simply the exclusive group of the orthodox. For instance, in any pilgrimage or popular feast no matter where, Christians, Hindus and Muslims join together and in fact nobody can stop them. The same is true of any Christian feast in the Middle East or Buddhist celebration in the Far East.²⁴

If the content, as we have maintained through the years, is applicable to every human being, the rubrics themselves are media for depth humanness.

3. Ritual Process. Victor Turner makes it clear in his book by this name that it is virtually impossible to understand one ritual in a culture without knowing the entire ritual system into which it fits. Similarly, it is virtually impossible to create liturgy without grasping the total pattern into which it fits. Historically, this has been acted out in the celebration of the Christian Year by the intentional inclusion of the whole story -- whether by the creed or other means -- in every liturgical events.

Another aspect of the ritual process, however, is the manner in which it allows detachment and reentry, accountability and absolution, liminality and the sealing of a transition. It is here that the makeup of a specific community must be taken into consideration in refining the liturgy or ritual

Ritual process also has to do with the outward forms, signifiers such as setting, decor, objects and artifacts, gestures, actions, movements, sounds, words and spatial arrangements. Each of these is infused with meaning and is what Turner calls a "storage unit" packed with information regarding values, norms, beliefs, sentiments, social roles and relationships honored by the culture. To deal with ritual as though it were only a matter of words would be to risk miscommunication.

The ritual process itself deals with time. According to Turner it does not so much combine times as it abolishes all time but the sacred time of myth. This is an image close to that of anamnesis. For a few moments or a few days even, other concerns are removed and all attention is focused in one transmundane act, which in itself contains all meaning and all of life.

Whoever refuses assent to reality as a whole, no matter how well off s/he may be, is by that fact incapacitated for either joy or festivity. Festivity is impossible to the nay-sayer. The more money s/he has, and above all the more leisure, the more desperate is this impossibility to him/her.²⁵

Liturgy of the Christian Year will not be empowered until it becomes ritual again, until the depth dimensions of content, rubrics and ritual process are self-consciously molded into a life-giving and life-saving experience. When this happens, the worshippers will experience a detachment from their specific involvements but also a deep and refreshing return to the world's time, God's time and their own life time. Time itself will vibrate with meaning.²⁶ All of this may seem to make the liturgy of the Christian Year so complex that one dare not touch it, but the contrary is more true: one dare not evade it. The life dynamics or phenomenology behind and within the rhythm of the Church Year is simply the way life is. Not to deal with it in the church is to allow it to be misdealt with by Madison Avenue or the soap operas.

IV. Some Implications for Church and Family.

1. A new liturgical theology. A first implication is that liturgy, both in the home and the church, and ritual in both places, be looked at seriously in the light of the radical changes in the concept of time and life in our century. The content of the anamnesis will not change, but the prolepsis, the rubrics and the ritual process, that is the total hermeneutics of the Christian Year must be updated. We will need to find a symbol as powerful as the great cathedral bells of the middle ages to constantly call people to stand present to the wonder of their lives and the activity of God in history. One wonders how the idea of bells got started; was it the sound of sheep bells reminding a shepherd turned pastor? We need to think of the sounds and sights and activities of utter common mundanity: perhaps the sight of the city (as in Coventry Cathedral), or the sound of traffic, or the view of the earth from the moon, or the coffee rites in offices; and we need to relate them to the times and rhythms of the Christian faith. As Hoon points out

The Christian life in its totality is also understood as a liturgical life: the cultic action of the congregation and their apostolic action in the world are the same action performed under different modes.²⁷

We will need, most specifically, to articulate the meaning of the life of Jesus and of every life in the newly understood microcosms and macrocosms of time-space.

2. Ritualization of liturgy. Though there is always a need for flexibility and creativity in liturgy in order that it may speak directly to the gathered group, in our time it is the opposite to this which is the greater need. For the nurture of individuals and groups there is a need for consistency to the point where some elements of the message become part of the conscious memory and therefore at the service of people through recall. Total spontaneity eliminates the depth ritual values. It may be that the consistent use of

songs, collects or objects throughout a season of the year and for a period of years in a row needs to be rethought and perhaps experimented with again. Certainly the use of an advent wreath will not have the impact on a family in one year that its continued use would have over time.

3. Secularization. Once again, Panikkar:

Only worship can prevent secularization from becoming inhuman, and only secularization can save worship from being meaningless. If worship is something with a universal value and not merely tied to a particular form of culture or religion... then it must have some meaning in a secular society and this meaning has to be rediscovered or, if needs be reforged.

If secularization... exists as a historical ...situation for at least an important sector of mankind, it has to come to grips with one of the most widespread cultural phenomena of all times, i.e. worship.²⁸

The word "worship" might be replaced with "the Christian Year" or with "sacred time" and our point would be made. We are at a point of radical change in the thinking, the paradigm, of society. We must avoid either ignoring the reality of this on the one hand or selling out to faddism on the other. The Christian Word is a cosmic Word; further discoveries in any form of learning only disclose the riches and majesty of the Good News we have to bear. The Christian Year remains a practical and numinous liturgy whereby time may be redeemed for all society.

4. Computing Time. The Calendar Wheel on the front^{of the back cover} is a serious joke.

It shows only a small part of the multivalent nature of time to be celebrated, but if we take seriously the phenomenological states of the hours, the days, the seasons and the liturgical season, as well as of the age phases, we may come at a "scientific" way of grasping some of the predictable elements of the "lived moments" of those for whom liturgy is designed.²⁹

The outer ring of the circle stands for the four seasons of the year. It has been a matter of fascination to me that countries of the southern hemisphere, for instance Australia, continue to use snow seasons on Christmas ^{cards} and spring flowers on Easter cards, even though Christmas comes in hottest summer and Easter in the autumn. The colors here are suggested by studies that link moods to seasons. (In the northern hemisphere, for instance, there are more suicides and depressions in early Lent.) To be relevant in the southern hemisphere would be to turn the celebrational dial to account for the mood the season brings.

The second ring is of the Christian Year and shows the traditional -- or one traditional -- set of colors. Because of the interweaving of the total Gospel into each part of the year, it is applicable north or south, but needs to be self-consciously related.

The days of the week have also been related to the salvation story. Every Sunday is a little Easter, every Friday a Good Friday. I have not found a convincing reason for Wednesday also being a fast day but evidence shows it has been one since very early days. It may be that midweek one needs to gird their loins, especially when the work week was six (or more) full days. When the week day overlays with Christmas or saints days, it becomes a consideration.

The hours of the day were finally ordered by the Benedictines but were of much older tradition. At least the offices of vespers, matins and lauds go back to Easter vigil in the early church. Later, probably tying in with natural instincts in society timed by the sun, vespers and lauds, the evening petition and the morning praise, became daily events. Every sunrise is a dawning of salvation. Every noon marks the crucifixion again. The burst of the spirit comes, as did Pentecost, when morning is fully broken. In far northern countries where the sun set very early in winter, the office of compline was added as a bed-time prayer and the nature of vespers made a slight shift.

Finally, the inner circle follows the suggestion of Erikson and others, including the great Hindu schema. The age of youth, roughly one to twenty, is the time of preparation and anticipation. Young adults share the fire of the spirit and the willingness to risk. Mature adults make the maximum contribution to society as their vocational skills and physical strength peak, and elders, over sixty, contribute the effulgence of their wisdom and experience.

To match up the season, the Christian calendar, the day, the hour and the age of those for whom liturgy is being prepared would give a rough objective picture of where the mood and needs of the group might be. Specifics, of course, need to be added, and then the task of the liturgist is to assess in faith what the address of the Word needs to be to bring the appropriate wholeness and healing.

NOTES

1. Langdon Gilkey, Society and the Sacred, Crossroads, New York, 1981, p. 105.
2. Leonel Mitchell, The Meaning of Ritual, Paulist Press, New York, 1977, pp.ix-xv.
3. For instance: Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols; Peter Berger, The Heretical Imperative; Erik Erikson, Toys and Reasons, Raimundo Panikkar, Worship and Secular Man.
4. Josef Pieper, In Tune With the World, trans. by Richard and Clara Winston, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1973, p. 27.
5. Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 2-6.
6. Irving A Greenfield, The Ancient of Days *Non Paperbacks, 1974*
7. Josef A Jungmann, The Early Liturgy, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1959, p. 142.
8. Alexander Schmemmann, Introduction to Liturgical Theology, Faith Press, Portland, Me., 1966, p. 68.
9. Louis Bouyer, Liturgical Piety, University of Notre Dame Press, South Bend, Indiana, 1957, p. 194.
10. Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, Dacre Press, Westminster, 1952, pp. 394f.
11. Walter L. Brenneman, Jr., Spirals: A Study in Symbol, Myth and Rituals, University Press of America, 1977, p. 73.
12. The chief source in this section is Edward T. Horn III, The Christian Year, Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1957, pp 2-30.
13. Jungmann, op. cit., p. 151.
14. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches have 'little feasts' such as the Feast of the Annunciation which generally fall and are celebrated during Lent.
15. Paul Tillich, "You Are Accepted".
16. Horn, op. cit., pp. 39-41.
17. Bouyer, op. cit., p. 186.
18. Schmemmann, op. cit., p. 19f.
19. Dix, op. cit., p. 304.
20. Brenneman, op. cit., p. 74.


21. Raimundo Panikkar, Worship and Secular Man, Orbis, London, 1973, pp. 70-84.
22. Ibid., p. 83.
23. Ross Snyder, Contemporary Celebration, Abingdon, Nashville, 1971, chap. V, "Designing a Celebration"; esp. p. 83.
24. Turner, Victor and Turner, Edith, Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture, Columbia University Press, New York, 1978, p. 243.
25. Pieper, op. cit., p. 21.
26. John Dunne, The Way of All the Earth, Macmillan, New York, 1972.
27. Paul W. Hoon, The Integrity of Worship, Abingdon, Nashville, 1971, p. 292.
28. Panikkar, op. cit., p. 1f.
29. The color code: green - growth, faithfulness, fullness.
purple- penance, mourning, anticipation, expectancy
red - the Spirit, enthusiasm, passion
gold - effulgence, fulfillment, totality
white - purity, joy, celebration, newness
black - despair, mourning, death

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The Christian Year

Nancy Grow - from
"Celebration of the Christian
Year" 1980

The Year of the Lord						Pente- cost	The Year of the Church		
Awakenment to Life		Awakenment to Death							
Advent	Christ- mas	Epiphany	Lent	Holy Week	Easter		The Long March of Care		
									
Length	4 Sundays	12 days	varying	40 days	7 days	50 days	8 days	varying	
Beginning	c. 490	before 336	end of first century	converts 1stC general 4thC	Vigil 1stC week 4thC	30 CE	30CE	14th Century	
Historic Precedent		Natalis Solis Invicti	birth of Aeon winter solstice	spring solstice	Passion-----Passover	Pentecost first fruits			
Color	purple	gold (or white)	white (or green)	purple	black	white	red	green (or red)	
Theme	judgement + hope	humble incarnation	glorious manifestation	penance + preparation	death	resurrection new life	mission + Holy Spirit	redeeming all of life	
Rubrics	wreath calendar	manger tree	Magi baptism	fasting + spirit growth	Palms Last Supper	rejoicing	white robes baptism	service	
Existential Mood	anxious waiting	gift of love, grace	effulgence	repentance + guilt	mourning + contrition	rebirth of hope	vocation	day after day	
Related Celebrations		Innocents St Stephen's Day	Candlemas	Annunciation Mardi Gras	Palm Sunday Maundy Thurs.			All Souls + All Saints	

BUDDHIST	O'BON August 15 Memorial Day for All Beings		BODHI December 8 Buddha's Enlightenment	NIRVANA February 15 Buddha's Death	VESAK April 8 Buddha's Birthday	
HINDU		DIVALI November 15 Festival of Lights		HOLI March 9 Victory over Tyranny		
JEWISH	ROSH HASHANAH Sept. 18 YOM KIPPUR Sept. 27	SUKKOTH Oct. 2	HANUKKAH December 11	PURIM February 21	PASSOVER March 29	SHABUOTH May 18 Feast of Weeks
MUSLIM	Idul A'had Sept 28			Idul A'had MARCH		Ramadan 10 th June 1983 5 th July 12 th July 82
LUNAR NEW YEAR				February 15-19		

C H R I S T I A N	THE CHURCH YEAR									
	THE YEAR OF OUR LORD					THE YEAR OF HIS CHURCH				
	The Gift of Our Life			The Gift of Our Death			P E N T E C O S T	TRINITY		
	ADVENT	C H R I S T M A S	EPIPHANY		H O L Y W E E K	EASTERTIDE				
	anticipation	event	walking as kings	humility of expenditure	sacrifice of hope	resurgence of spirit				
	Purple	Gold	White	Purple	Black	White				
Special Dates	Advent	November 28 - December 24			Mardi Gras	February 15	Good Friday	April 1		
	Christmas	December 25			Ash Wednesday	February 16	Easter	April 3		
	Epiphany	January 6			Palm Sunday	March 27	Pentecost	May 22		